Instructional leadership practices of Louisiana elementary and middle school principals

Michael Ramon Hicks
Louisiana Tech University

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Supervisor of Dissertation Research
Head of Department
Dept Curriculum Instruction & Leadership Department

Advisory Committee

Approved:
Director of Graduate Studies
Dean of the College

Approved:
Dean of the Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

For principals in Louisiana, instructional leadership, in theory and practice, informs the foundation of ways they are trained and evaluated as school leaders. Identifying the specific instructional leadership practices that are tied to gains in student achievement has become critical for principals, and more importantly for their students. The focus of this research is in the area of principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement in two northwestern Louisiana school districts. Such a study is important in order to provide effective training and development to Louisiana principals.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement. The researcher used *The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* to survey 198 teachers from two school districts regarding their perceptions of principals' instructional leadership practices. The non-experimental, correlational research design included a hierarchical regression analysis of 10 instructional leadership practices and school-level student achievement as measured by School Performance Score (SPS). The study revealed no significant direct relationship between principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement. However, the findings provided evidence that student achievement was indirectly affected by principals' instructional leadership practices.
The main conclusions drawn from this study were a) other factors exist that may conceal the direct effect of principals' instructional leadership practices on student achievement, and b) principals who were rated highest based on the ten instructional leadership practices were leading schools with the lowest student achievement. Recommendations include further examination of the relationship between principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement in efforts to inform the principalship in Louisiana.
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Finally, the writer is extremely grateful to the superintendents, principals, and teachers who participated in this study.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership has been studied as a construct since the late 1970s (Hallinger, 2011). More than three decades of research on instructional leadership has produced several frameworks and models to help articulate what is instructional leadership and how principals can align with it as an ideal. The last ten years, in particular, have moved this discussion of instructional leadership from the idealistic into the operational. In 2008, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) revised the 1996 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, renamed and presented them as the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008. The ISLLC standards are the bar upon which school leaders' licensure requirements are based in the majority of states across this nation and abroad. The revisions made to the ISLLC standards in 2008 reflected a shift toward embracing those distinct instructional leadership practices that the recent literature has revealed vital to leading effective schools (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008).

For school leaders in Louisiana, identifying effective instructional leadership practices is becoming increasingly more vital in practice and in evaluation. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) recently reported the results from the first year (i.e.,
school year 2012-2013) of its new educator support and evaluation system, Compass.

Under the new Compass system, the school principal in each public school in Louisiana is evaluated annually using a four-tiered rating – Highly Effective, Effective: Proficient, Effective: Emerging, and Ineffective (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013).

According to the Compass explanation, “Half of a school leader’s evaluation is based on student learning targets they establish in collaboration with their evaluators and half is based on observations by their supervisor using the state’s Compass leader rubric” (Louisiana Department of Education, 2014). The principals district-level supervisors are guided by the three domains of the Compass Leader rubric; school vision, school culture, and instruction. These three domains appear repetitively throughout the literature on instructional leadership practices.

Though extremely useful, the benefits that the Compass results provide to principals may be limited because the results do not include data from teachers, who are the most influential mediating factor in transferring instructional leadership practices to increases in student achievement. The researcher in this study considered this circumstance and, consequently, did not rely solely on principal self-reported data or evaluations from their district-level supervisors.

Statement of the Problem

Principals assume a variety of roles as school leaders. The research literature on effective schools has produced a focus on those roles that are directly tied to the curricular and instructional role the principal plays in leading an effective school. The findings of these research studies have been inconsistent, with some findings showing
relationships between the constructs of instructional leadership and others not showing these relationships (Hallinger, 2013b).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement as measured by the *School Performance Score* (SPS). Teacher perceptions of principals' instructional leadership practices were measured using the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* (PIMRS). The PIMRS (see Appendix A), developed by Hallinger (1982, 1990) has been shown to be reliable and valid with the precise metrics will be detailed in a subsequent chapter of this dissertation. The PIMRS was used to measure principals' instructional leadership practices in three instructional leadership dimensions: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning environment. School Performance Scores generated in the spring of 2013 were used in this study.
Significance of the Study

In Louisiana, 50% of a school leader's evaluation is directly tied to student achievement (Louisiana Department of Education, 2014). The investigation into the refinement of school leaders' instructional leadership practices is appropriate and necessary. This study sought to add to the body of existing knowledge by examining teachers' perceptions of their principals' instructional leadership practices and their impact on student achievement. This express focus on instructional leadership as a construct rather than a focus on student achievement and effects of leadership type or style (e.g., transformational, collaborative, shared, situational) placed this investigation in the minority of research designs conducted in Louisiana schools.

Instructional leadership is evidently important to how Louisiana school leaders are evaluated. The Compass Leader Rubric (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013) is expressed in three domains: vision, culture, and instruction. These three domains are closely matched with the three domains of the Instructional Management Framework. The Instruction Domain, which comprises one-third of the evaluation rubric, identifies components from the contemporary literature on instructional leadership. The intent of this study was to provide building-level school leaders with information regarding specific instructional leadership practices that are associated with higher student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Score.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the Instructional Management Framework developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1986). The Instructional Management Framework incorporates three dimensions of the principal's role as
instructional leader: Defining the School’s Mission, Managing the Instructional Program, and Promoting a Positive School Learning Culture. The three dimensions of instructional leadership are further extrapolated into 10 functions of instructional leadership. Introduced and briefly described here, these functions along with examples from the literature, are detailed in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

**Dimension 1: Defining the School Mission**

In essence, an effective instructional leader sets a clear and concise mission for the academic school year. The first dimension of this framework aligns all of the instructional leadership practices that involve academic goals and school mission statements. These practices include the shaping of school goals as well as the clear communication of those goals (Hallinger, 2013b).

**Framing clear school goals**

Framing clear goals refers to the principal’s ability to determine the exact areas that require resources and focus in order for the goal(s) to be accomplished (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). Goldring and Pasternack (1994) drew attention to the issue of framing school goals in their study of elementary school principals. Their sample consisted of principals from community schools in Israel. They found that the principal’s role in framing school goals (i.e., establishing a clear mission) was more profound and instrumental to producing an effective school than other more mainstreamed instructional leadership practices.

**Communicating clear school goals**

This instructional leadership function is formed around how the school principal communicates the school goals to students, teachers, and community
stakeholders. Several opportunities exist for principals to execute this function: school newsletters to parents, regularly scheduled staff meetings with faculty members, school-family-community partnership functions, and even informal discussions with staff members can be used to communicate clearly the academic goals of the school (Hallinger, 2013b).

Bamburg and Andrews (1991) investigated the effects of communicating clear school goals and instructional leadership practices of principals. In a single urban school district, the researchers identified 10 high performing schools and 10 low performing schools to be included in their study. They found that high achieving schools had principals who communicated clear academically focused goals at a higher rate than principals who led low performing schools.

**Dimension 2: Managing the Instructional Program**

The second dimension of the Instructional Management Framework comprises each of the instructional leadership practices that concern the coordination of the school’s curriculum and instruction. This dimension asserts that the principal must be fully engaged with the teaching and learning that exists within the school building. Clearly, this dimension assumes that the principal is well versed in curricular issues affecting the school as well as general teaching and learning pedagogy. With that assumption in place, principals who can adhere to the practices delineated in this dimension do so in a stimulating and deeply connected manner (Hallinger, 2013b).

**Supervising and evaluating instruction**

Instructional support to teachers is manifested through the supervision and evaluation of them by their principal. It is indeed the principal’s role to match the goals
of the school with the classroom teaching practices of the teacher. Both the supervision and evaluation of teachers provide the opportunities for principals to ensure that the academic goals of the school are being articulated on the classroom level. Several researchers have studied the effects of principal instructional support of teachers through formal classroom observations and informal class visits or “walkthroughs” (Hallinger, 2013b).

**Coordinating curriculum**

Curricular coordination is essential in the development of an effective school. The curricular goals of the school must align with what is being taught everyday in the classroom, and must also coincide with state/district-mandated assessments of student learning. The instructional leader who is committed to coordinating the curriculum increases the opportunities for teachers to interact across grade levels in regards to curricular planning and coordinating (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

**Monitoring student progress**

The current push toward “data driven” decisions in schools has ushered in a new era of assessments in schools. Pre-tests, post-tests, and end of the year state assessments are commonplace in most schools. The role of the principal in this area is to ensure that teachers receive relevant assessment information in a timely manner. The principal can also decide the pattern of dissemination of the student progress data; that is, whether it should be discussed among subject matter departments or by grade-level departments. It is the responsibility of the instructional leader also to provide the interpretive context in which to analyze student progress data (Stallings, 1980).
Dimension 3: Promoting a Positive School Climate

The third dimension of the Instructional Management Framework involves the highest number of functions—five. This dimension is the most broad of the three, and it asserts that the environment created by effective instructional leaders through the development of high expectations, standards and culture of continuous learning, and high student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2008). Also present in schools with effective instructional leaders are rewards or incentives to increase achievement—both for students and teachers. These “incentives” help to encourage the continued positive school culture and the instructional leader ensures that they are aligned with carrying out the mission or vision of the school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

Protecting instructional time

Teachers need uninterrupted time to focus on student learning. Interruptions to classroom instruction include announcements made to the class, students entering the classroom late or tardy, and fulfilling administrative requests. Effective school principals establish school-wide policies to mediate these classroom interruptions (Hallinger, 2013b).

Maintaining high visibility

A highly visible principal is more likely to have increased interactions with both teachers and students (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). These interactions are critical for strong instructional leaders. Their visibility on the school campus indicates that they place interaction with students and faculty members high on their list of priorities. This stance of the principal can have positive effects on student achievement (Thapa, 2013).
Providing incentives for teachers

It is natural for someone within or outside the educational system to assume that this function implies that the principal, in operating as a strong instructional leader, will find ways to pay more money to teachers as an incentive to increase their students' achievement. However, research exists that negates this assumption (Latham & Wexley, 1981). Principals who adhere to this function of instructional leadership typically use public praise, personal notes, and other non-financial means to highlight the deserved praise earned by teachers.

Promoting professional development

Certainly, a principal who promotes the professional development of his/her staff does not block opportunities for their continued development as professionals. In contrast, principals who are strong instructional leaders often lead, direct, or connect teachers to professional development opportunities. When the principal is involved in coordinating or planning the staff's professional development, it should align with the school's overall mission (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

Providing incentives for learning

Just as teachers can be motivated with the use of incentives, so can students. Students need opportunities to be positively recognized by an audience of their teachers and their peers. Principals who know the value of this function routinely provide opportunities for students to be recognized for their high achievement within the classroom and on the school campus (Hallinger, 2011).
Assumptions of the Study

The researcher assumed that the teachers who participated in this study provided honest and reflective answers to the questions and did not allow personal issues with or characteristics of their principal to affect their responses on the instrument employed.

This study was based on the assumption that School Performance Score (SPS) data reported by the Louisiana Department of Education in the spring of 2013 was valid. Another assumption this study was based upon was that the instrument utilized in the investigation, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), did effectively measure teachers' perceptions of their principals' instructional leadership practices.

Limitations

The data collection process commenced during the spring semester of the 2014 school year, the week immediately following the spring administration of the LEAP/iLEAP, which is the series of annual assessments in Louisiana. This is often a stressful time for teachers and principals, and teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ leadership practices may have been skewed, providing a reflection of the heightened stress for all educational stakeholders preceding administration of the states’ mandated high-stakes testing program.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between any of the instructional leadership practices, as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS).
2. If there is a relationship between the instructional leadership practices, as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS), and which relationship is more significant?

**Null Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant relationship between any of the instructional leadership practices, as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS).

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms were defined for the study:

1. *Compass* – Compass is the Louisiana Department of Education sponsored support and valuation system for Louisiana teachers and principals. Compass was designed to provide all educators with regular, meaningful feedback on their performance and with online support to foster continuous improvement (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013).

2. *Integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program iLEAP* – The series of annual assessments in grades three, five, six, and seven is known as the “integrated” Louisiana Educational Assessment Program. The iLEAP is referred to as an “integrated” LEAP because it combines a criterion-based component, which measures whether a student has mastered the academic standards, with a
norm-referenced component, which provides a percentile ranking of students (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013).

3. *Louisiana Educational Assessment Program LEAP* – The series of annual assessments in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies in fourth and eighth grades. The LEAP is a criterion-based test, it is aligned to the state academic standards and determines whether a student has mastered the content of the academic standards (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013). In order to be promoted from the fourth or eighth grades, students must score *Basic* or above in either English language arts or mathematics and *Approaching Basic* or higher in the other subject. Students who do not earn these scores must attend summer school or be retained (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013).

4. *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale PIMRS* – The instrument employed in this study and created by Dr. Phillip Hallinger (1982).

5. *School Performance Score (SPS)* – A performance score assigned to every public school in Louisiana. The score is based on student achievement on the annually administered state standardized tests, the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP/iLEAP).

6. *School Report Card/School Letter Grade* – Also known as School Performance Score or SPS, student achievement data is converted from a raw SPS to a letter grade (A, B, C, D and F) and presented in a school report card. Adopted by the Louisiana Department of Education in 2010, the school report card presents a
simple way for parents and students to measure the quality of school attributes in a highly recognizable manner (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013).

7. *SES* – Socioeconomic Status.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of relevant literature expanding from the concept of instructional leadership and is divided into three sections. The first section is a review of recent research that focused on the instructional leadership skills, behaviors, and practices of principals. The second section of the chapter examines the Instructional Management Framework, which forms the basis of this study. The final section of this chapter summarizes empirical research highlighting the variables of principal leadership and student achievement.

Review of the Recent Literature

For more than three decades, principal leadership has been a focus of scholarly research. Much of that research arose from the *effective schools movement* (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003). This movement inspired a multitude of studies specifically investigating the variables and factors within the school building that have the strongest effect on student achievement. Edmonds (1979) conducted one of the first effective school studies and identified that a strong school leader, focused on curriculum and instruction, was essential for effective schools. Thus, the concept of instructional leadership took roots and began to develop as a construct.
The next 20 years produced a solid body of literature relating the school principal to his instructional duties as the school leader; however, the early to mid-2000s marked a significant shift in how researchers assessed the variables of instructional leadership and student achievement outcomes. This resurgent interest, or shift, is reflected in the literature and is noted here by Hallinger (2005):

During the mid-1990s, however, attention shifted somewhat away from effective schools and instructional leadership. Interest in these topics was displaced by concepts such as school restructuring and transformational leadership. This is reflected in the decreasing number of studies completed during the second half of the review, 1991–2000. Yet, somewhat surprisingly, interest in studying this role of the school principal has remained quite stable since then. This is probably related to the growing policy interest in instructional leadership and performance standards noted earlier. (p.8)

The scholarship that has emerged since 2003 on instructional leadership has been immense and is shaping the way principals are trained and evaluated today. In January of 2003 the American Educational Research Association (AERA) issued a special task force brief entitled "What We Know About Successful School Leadership" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The brief was prepared by the Task Force on Developing Research in Educational Leadership and co-authored by Dr. Ken Leithwood, then and still, a preeminent scholar on the subject of school leadership. The brief recognized the then growing and intense national focus on student achievement outcomes. The authors' purpose was twofold: a) to present a summary of well-documented beliefs regarding school leadership at the school building level, and b) to provide a knowledge source about school leadership that could be used to help guide future policies, practices and research in the field of educational leadership.

The brief summarized major findings from the literature on school leadership and presented the following five assertions:
1. Leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers instruction.

2. Currently administrators and teacher-leaders provide most of the leadership in schools, but other potential sources of leadership exist.

3. A core set of leadership practices form the basis of successful leadership and are valuable in almost all educational contexts.

4. The successful school leaders respond productively to challenges and opportunities created by the accountability-oriented policy context in which they work.

5. Successful school leaders respond productively to the opportunities and challenges of educating diverse groups of students.

The brief concluded with a call for further dialogue about the future of educational leadership and to use the five claims highlighted within to help refine the methods for which school leaders are trained and evaluated (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003)

Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003) developed a new framework for educational leaders based on three distinct bodies of knowledge: a quantitative review of 30 years of research, an exhaustive analysis of literature on leadership theory, and their research team's combined professional wisdom on school leadership. The findings from their investigation demonstrated that there was a substantial relationship between school leadership and student achievement. Waters et al. also found the average/small affect size (expressed as a correlation) between school leadership and student achievement was set at .25. Their findings suggested a differential impact of school leadership on student achievement (Waters et al., 2003). Just as principals can have a positive effect on student
achievement, the researchers showed from their review that the principal could also have a marginal, or worse, a negative effect on student achievement. Their contribution to solidify the link between school leadership and student achievement resonates throughout the literature until present day.

In addition to validating the notion that enhancing and increasing the specific leadership ability of principals could translate into higher levels of student achievement, their analysis yielded 21 specific principal leadership responsibilities that were significantly correlated with student achievement. The 21 key leadership responsibilities formed the basis of the “Balanced Leadership” framework the authors set out to develop (Waters et al., 2003). Developed a decade ago, they are still very relevant in a review of literature involving instructional leadership and student achievement. Table 2.1 shows the 21 leadership responsibilities and their operational definitions.

**Table 2.1**

*Twenty-one Key Leadership Responsibilities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>The extent to which the principal...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Establishes the set of standard operating procedures and routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Protect teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum, instruction, assessment</td>
<td>Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the schools attention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.1 (Continued)

| Knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment | Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices |
| Visibility | As quality contact and interactions with teachers and students |
| Contingent rewards | Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments |
| Communication | Establishing strong lines of communication with teachers and among students |
| Outreach | Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school all stakeholders |
| Input | Involved teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies |
| Affirmation | Recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures |
| Relationship | Demonstrate an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff |
| Responsibilities | The extent to which the principal… |
| Change agent | Is willing to and actively challenges the status quo |
| Optimizer | Inspires and leads new and challenging innovation |
| Ideals/beliefs | Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about school |
| Monitors/evaluates | Monitor the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning |
| Flexibility | Adapts leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with the same |
| Situational awareness | Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school in uses this information to address current and potential problems |
| Intellectual stimulation | Ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current barriers and practices and makes the discussion of these regular aspect of the schools culture |

(Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003)

Only one year following the release of the landmark meta-analysis presented by Waters et al. (2003), a second “new framework” was presented in an analytic report authored by researchers from the Universities of Minnesota and Toronto. The report,
entitled *Review of Research: How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, probed the role of school leadership in improving student achievement (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). The authors analyzed a diverse range of empirical research and related literature guided by a framework based upon ten interdependent variables, illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

*Interdependent Variables of Principal Leadership*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interdependent Variable</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State leadership, policies and practices</td>
<td>standards, testing, funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District leadership, policies, and practices</td>
<td>standards, curriculum alignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student/family background</td>
<td>family educational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leadership</td>
<td>no example given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other stakeholder</td>
<td>unions, community groups, business, media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School conditions</td>
<td>culture/community, school improvement, planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>individuals’ capacity, professional community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom conditions</td>
<td>content of instruction, nature of instruction, student assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders’ professional learning experiences</td>
<td>socialization, mentoring, formal preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning</td>
<td>no example given</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004)*

In addition to the variables listed in Table 2.2, proxy variables such as school attendance and retention rates were employed (Leithwood et al., 2004). Their first step
was to review the available evidence in light of five distinct questions: a) What effects does successful leadership have on student learning? b) How should the competing forms of leadership visible in the literature be reconciled? c) Is there a common set of "basic" leadership practices used by successful leaders in most circumstances? d) What else, beyond the basics, is required for successful leadership? and e) How does successful leadership exercise its influence on the learning of students? The authors concluded their findings by stating:

Our purpose was to summarize the starting points for a major new effort to better understand the links between leadership and student learning. There seems little doubt that both district and school leadership provides a critical bridge between most educational reform initiatives and their consequences for students. Of all the factors that contribute to what students learn at school, present evidence led us to the conclusion that leadership is second in strength only to classroom instruction. Furthermore, effective leadership has the greatest impact in those circumstances (e.g., schools "in trouble") in which it is most needed. This evidence supports the present widespread interest in improving leadership as a key to the successful implementation of large scale reforms. (Leithwood et al., 2004)

Hallinger (2005) revisited the topic to which he had added much scholarship. In a paper entitled *Instructional Leadership and the School Principal: A Passing Fancy that Refuses to Fade Away*, he combined evidence from several extensive reviews and meta-analyses of the educational leadership literature where "instructional leadership" was used as a key focus. Included in his investigation were 110 empirical studies from 1982-2005 that utilized the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). The PIMRS is based on the Instructional Management Framework developed by Hallinger & Murphy (1986). By the mid-1990s, the Instructional Management Framework, and its related instrumentation (i.e., PIMRS), had become the most extensively used model of instructional leadership used in empirical investigations.
(Hallinger, 2003). The Instructional Management Framework is comprised of three dimensions of the instructional role of the principal, which are further filtered into ten instructional leadership functions. Figure 2.1 graphically presents the dimensions and the ten instructional leadership functions of the Instructional Management Framework.

**PIMRS Framework**

- **Defining the School Mission**
  - Frames the School's Goals
  - Communicates the School's Goals

- **Managing the Instructional Program**
  - Coordinates the Curriculum
  - Supervises & Evaluates Instruction
  - Monitors Student Progress

- **Developing the School Learning Climate**
  - Protects Instructional Time
  - Provides Incentives for Teachers
  - Provides Incentives for Learning
  - Promotes Professional Development
  - Maintains High Visibility

(Hallinger & Murphy, 1985)

Figure 2.1 *Instructional Management Framework*

Hallinger (2005) calls for a reconceptualization of the Instructional Leadership Model. Based on his broad literature review spanning the preceding 25 years, he explained the then current model emerging from the empirical literature could be described in a list of actions on which that instructional leaders should focus their attention. The actions included a) creating a shared sense of purpose in the school, including clear goals focused on student learning; b) fostering the continuous
improvement of the school through cyclical school development planning that involves a wide range of stakeholders; c) developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture aimed at innovation and improvement of teaching and learning; d) coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student learning outcomes; e) shaping the reward structure of the school to reflect the school’s mission; f) organizing and monitoring a wide range of activities aimed at the continuous development of staff; and g) being a visible presence in the school, modeling the desired values of the school’s culture (Hallinger, 2005).

Several conclusions were reached from the Hallinger (2005) research, and of the most compelling was the finding that the most influential avenue of direct and indirect effects of instructional leadership on student achievement concerns the principal’s role in shaping and defining the school’s mission. This finding is substantiated and supported in research on leadership outside of education. The author further concluded that instructional leadership models should incorporate a two-way process of interaction taking into account the ability of the school leader to shape and to be shaped within the school context. Viewing instructional leadership as a model of mutual influence has ignited inquiry into school climate as a mediating variable between principal leadership and student achievement (Hallinger, 2005).

Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) presented seven strong claims about school leadership that were supported in the literature and are evident in the practice of educational leadership today. The seven strong claims about successful school leadership are:

1. School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning.
2. Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices.

3. The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices - not the practice themselves - demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work.

4. School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions.

5. School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed.

6. Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others.

7. A small handful of personal traits explain a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness. (Leithwood et al., 2008)

The authors referenced the American Educational Research Association’s special task force report entitled “What We Know About Successful School Leadership” in their conclusion and noted that the report issued a call for further inquiry into instructional leadership. Their presentation of the seven strong claims answered that call and summarized the most important results gleaned from the previous literature on school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2008).

The final vigorous meta analytic work spanning the ten-year period between 2003-2013 was produced by authors Seashore, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson (2010). The 309-page report entitled Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning birthed implications not only for school principals, but for other stakeholders as
well, including district-level leaders and state-level education policy makers. Their purpose was broad: to identify the nature of successful educational leadership and to better understand how leadership could improve educational practices. (Seashore et al., 2010) The researchers in this case drew upon similar sources of empirical evidence, as did the researchers representing the meta-analyses cited and discussed earlier within this section of this chapter. This study stands as perhaps the most thorough and comprehensive of all the previously reviewed analyses due to several significant features of the research including: the size of the database, the multiple methodological approaches employed, the multiple theoretical perspectives on leadership covering several disciplines, and the comprehensiveness of sources of leadership used in the study (Seashore et al., 2010).

Survey instruments, interviews, and classroom observations were used to gather data from their sample that included 43 school districts in 9 states representing 180 elementary and secondary schools. Data were collected from teachers, principals, state legislators, representatives of the media, elected board members, senior district level staff, and other informants. Their data collection efforts generated survey data from 8,391 teachers and 471 administrators; interview data from 581 teachers and administrators; 304 district level respondents and 124 state personnel; and observational data from 312 classrooms (Seashore et al., 2010).

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to afford the researchers the benefits associated with mixed-methods research. One benefit was the opportunity to discover correlations and patterns in the quantitative data, and then explore those patterns in greater depth by reviewing the qualitative evidence. The theoretical framework
undergirding the study was formed from sociology, socio-psychology, political science and organizational theory. By utilizing multiple methods and developing a framework drawn from theory from several disciplines, the researchers hoped to present a rich account of their research findings (Seashore et al., 2010).

Seashore et al. (2010) uncovered several fine-grained behaviors and elements of effective school leaders. Of the many contributions to the literature that this study produced, the following four findings hold the highest implications for school leaders:

1. Principals are most effective when they view themselves as working collaboratively with district personnel, other principals, and teachers.
2. Working relationships are stronger and student achievement is higher when principals and teachers share leadership responsibilities.
3. Higher performing schools routinely seek more input and engagement from a wider variety of stakeholders.
4. State legislators must continue to use mandates to improve education but must also pay more attention to support and professional development for instructional leaders (Seashore et al., 2010).

Ever since the late 1970s, educational researchers have studied the instructional leadership qualities of school principals. Of the several frameworks regarding instructional leadership that have since emerged, one in particular, the *Instructional Management Framework*, forms the basis of much scholarly inquiry involving instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2013b). The framework’s related instrumentation, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), was utilized in this
investigative study. The underlying theories that support the framework are discussed in the subsequent section of this chapter.

**Instructional Leadership vs. Instructional Management**

The Instructional Management Framework (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986) is widely used by scholars as a theoretical reference when investigating the construct of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2008). Even the authors use the words “management” and “leadership” interchangeably when presenting the framework for heuristic scrutiny (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

**The Instructional Management Framework**

The Instructional Management Framework incorporates three dimensions into the role of school principals as instructional leaders: Defining the School’s Mission, Managing the Instructional Program, and Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate (Hallinger, Murphy, Well, Mesa & Mitman, 1983; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). These three dimensions were further outlined into 10 instructional leadership functions or practices.

**Defining the School Mission**

Effective instructional leaders set a clear and concise mission for the academic school year that helps promote a positive school culture and helps guide the students to high achievement. The first dimension of the Instructional Management Framework, *Defining the School Mission*, aligns the instructional leadership practices that involve academic goals and school mission statements. These practices include the shaping of school goals as well as the clear communication of those goals. In their analysis of
findings from more than 27 published studies on principal leadership and student achievement, Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) concluded that principals should adjust the focus of defining their mission and goals not just on the process, but on the educational content of those goals and their alignment with high student achievement.

**Framing clear school goals**

Framing clear goals refers to the principal's ability to determine the exact areas that require resources and focus in order for the goal(s) to be accomplished. This ability to frame school goals is an essential attribute an effective principal must possess. Admittedly, however, the principal does not frame the school goals in a vacuum. McEwan (2003) in his book, *Ten Traits of Highly Effective Principals*, explained the principal’s role in framing school goals. Based on his explanation, the principal must approach framing school goals from a collaborative perspective by including faculty and staff in the framing process.

Arnold, Watson, Minatra and Schwartz (2006) studied collaborative practices of principals when they set out to frame school goals. They started with a sample of 27 principals identified by the Missouri Professors of Educational Administration (MPEA) as being highly effective. Efforts were made to include a cross-section of schools based on rural/suburban, size, location and grade configuration. The MPEA selected the principals based on an increase in student performance on the state-mandated tests and/or maintaining a high level of student performance on the state-mandated tests. Of the 27 selected principals, 17 participated in the study. The principals were interviewed individually on their campus during the school day. Each principal was asked a series of 18 open-ended questions, including the following question: “What activities do you
engage your staff in to develop a common vision? The responses given included having regular meetings with the faculty, developing a common language, forming a committee, listening, and using data (Arnold, Watson, Minatra & Schwartz, 2006).

Likewise, Goldring and Pasternack (1994) examined the issue of framing school goals in their study of elementary school principals. Their sample consisted of principals from elementary community (neighborhood) schools in Israel. They found that the principals' role in framing school goals (i.e., emphasizing a clear mission) was more profound and instrumental to producing an effective school than other, more mainstreamed instructional leadership practices.

Salleh (2013) specifically examined the practice of framing school goals by the principals of secondary schools in Malaysia. A questionnaire was sent to 418 respondents made up of teachers and teacher-leaders. Frequency tables and mean scores were presented to highlight data observed from the following research questions: What are the best practices of framing and communicating school goals by secondary principals? The findings indicated that the best perceived practices of framing school goals by principals included using a theme of “tying data to student academic performance”. This “data centric” theme was also identified by Arnold et al. (2006).

**Communicating clear school goals**

This instructional leadership function is formed around how the school principal communicates the school goals to students, teachers, and community stakeholders. Several opportunities exist for principals to execute this function: school newsletters to parents, regularly scheduled staff meetings with faculty members, school-family-community partnership functions, and even informal discussions with staff.
members can be used to communicate clearly the academic goals of the school (Hallinger, 2013b).

Bamburg and Andrews (1991) investigated the effects of communicating clear school goals and instructional leadership practices of principals. In a single urban school district, the researchers identified 10 high performing schools and 10 low performing schools to be included in their study. They found that high achieving schools had principals who communicated clear academically focused goals at a higher rate than principals who lead low performing schools.

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) articulated a description of the principal who communicates clear school goals. In addition to their findings that identified strong themes in the empirical literature regarding instructional leadership, they specifically concluded:

Skillful leaders focus attention on key aspects of the school’s vision and communicate the vision clearly and convincingly. They invite interchange with multiple stakeholders through participatory communication strategies. They frame issues in ways that will lead to productive discourse and decision making. (p. 4)

Managing the Instructional Program

The second dimension of the Instructional Management framework, Managing the Instructional Program, is comprised of the instructional leadership practices that concern the coordination of the school’s curriculum and instruction. This dimension asserts that the principal must be fully engaged with the teaching and learning that exists within the school building (Hallinger, 2013b). To fully effectuate the instructional leadership practices within this dimension, principals should be well versed in curricular and instructional issues affecting the school.
Principals who actively manage the instructional program of their school tend to do so in a stimulating and deeply connected manner. Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) found that in higher performing schools, the principals played a direct role in the oversight and coordination of the school's instructional program.

**Supervising and evaluating instruction**

Traditionally, instructional supervision has been viewed as a way of controlling teachers (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2010). Although supervision and evaluation of instruction can (and perhaps should) be conducted by all levels of staff within a school, it is the principal's job as instructional leader to ensure that the proper instructional support is provided to teachers. Instructional support to teachers is manifested through the supervision and evaluation of them by their principal.

Hallinger (2013b) maintains that supervision and evaluation of teachers provide the opportunity for principals to ensure that the academic goals of the school are being articulated on the classroom level. Based on personal experience working in multiple K-12 settings, this researcher posits that teachers' often look unfavorably towards the supervision and evaluation process. Teachers can be overwhelmed with the prospect of having their value assessed in brief classroom visits by the principal.

The modern literature on teacher supervision and instruction shows a move away from the conventional principal-teacher interactions regarding supervision and instruction. Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon (2010) documents the paradigm shift toward a more collegial model of supervision and evaluation of instruction. It appears prudent for school leaders to consider this new, collegial view of supervision and instruction. It requires a deeper adherence to the construct of instructional leadership and
the practices that flow from that adherence. For example, Glickman et al. (2010) maintain that this new, collegial view of supervising and evaluating instruction includes the following components:

- A collegial rather than a hierarchical relationship between teachers and formally designated supervisors;
- Supervision as the province of teachers as well as formally designated supervisors;
- A focus on teacher growth rather than teacher compliance;
- Facilitation of teachers collaborating with each other in instructional improvement efforts; and
- Teacher involvement in ongoing reflective inquiry. (Glickman, 2010)

Despite how collaborative the process becomes, principals, as instructional leaders, are ultimately responsible for delivering the supervision and evaluation of the instruction program on their campuses.

**Coordinating curriculum**

Curricular coordination is an essential aspect in the development of an effective school. The instructional leader who is committed to coordinating the curriculum increases the opportunities for teachers to interact across grade levels in regards to curricular planning and coordinating (Hallinger, 2013b).

Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) explored how teachers experience principal leadership. The sample set used for their study was 4,165 teacher-completed surveys as this research was part of the Learning from Leadership Project (Wallace Foundation, 2002-2008) whose companion studies have been referenced in the preceding section of
this chapter. Their findings have numerous implications for reexamining the principalship; however, their attention to the curricular coordination practices of principals can be expressed as such:

As an instructional leader in the building, the principal is expected to understand the tenets of quality instruction as well as have the sufficient knowledge of the curriculum to know that appropriate content is being delivered to all students. This presumes that the principal is capable of providing constructive feedback to improve teaching or is able to design a system in which others provide this support. (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008, p. 459)

Marks and Printy’s (2003) investigation shed light on how principals work with teachers on curricular issues in their efforts to enhance the quality of teaching and increase student performance. Their sample consisted of 300 schools nationally recognized for their reform efforts. Of the initial 300 schools, 24 schools (eight elementary, middle and high schools) were selected for participation. Data were obtained from both surveys and in-depth interview sessions. The researchers found that principals who embraced an integrated form of leadership consisting of transformational and instructional leadership practices saw positive gains in teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

**Monitoring student progress**

The current push toward data-driven decisions in schools has ushered in a new era of assessments in schools. Pre-tests, post-tests, and end-of-the-year state assessments are commonplace in most schools. The role of the principal in this area is to ensure that teachers receive relevant assessment information in a timely manner. The principal can also decide the pattern of dissemination of the student progress data and whether it should be discussed among subject matter departments or by grade level departments (Hallinger,
2013b). It is the responsibility of the instructional leader to also provide the interpretive context in which to analyze student progress data (Stallings, 1980).

Stecker and Fuchs (2000) examined the importance of programs based on student progress monitoring. Twenty-two special education math teachers from a southeastern United States metropolitan school district were selected to participate in the study.

Stecker and Fuchs (2000) found that school effectiveness is enhanced when instructional decision making is tied to data from individual student progress monitoring. The clear implications from this and studies like these is that for principals, it is vitally important that they assume the leadership role in the process of student monitoring which typically is delivered primarily by teachers.

**Developing a Positive School-Learning Climate**

The third dimension of the Instructional Management Framework involves the highest number of functions—five. This dimension is the most broad of the three, and it asserts that the environment created by effective instructional leaders is done so through the development of high expectations and a culture of continuous learning and high student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2008).

Hallinger and Murphy (1986) focused attention on an additional factor of school climate present in schools with effective instructional leaders: rewards or incentives to increased achievement—both for students and teachers. These “incentives” help to encourage the continued positive school culture and the instructional leader ensures that they are aligned with the carrying out of the mission or vision of the school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).
Protecting instructional time

Teachers need uninterrupted time to focus on student learning. Interruptions to classroom instruction include announcements made to the class, students entering the classroom late or tardy, and fulfilling administrative requests. Effective school principals establish school-wide policies to mediate these classroom interruptions (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

Smith (2000) analyzed formal and informal data comprised of school system documents, class observations, interviews and conversations with teachers and administrators. All activities presented by the teachers to the students were divided into two categories: instructional and non-instructional. Instructional activities included reading, taking notes, didactic question and answer sessions, basic skills exercises, estimating and analyzing. Non-instructional activities included attendance taking, announcements, passing out papers, setting up, and getting into groups. Smith (2000) found that actual instructional time in the Chicago schools participating in the study was only 40% - 60% of the districts goal, based on the school calendar. He concluded with strategies that school principals could implement to reclaim and protect the instructional time allocated for their students.

Maintaining high visibility

A highly visible principal is more likely to have increased interactions with both teachers and students (Hallinger, 2013b). These interactions are critical for strong instructional leaders. Their visibility on the school campus indicates that they place interaction with students and faculty members high on their list of priorities (Thapa, 2013). This stance by the principal can have positive effects on student achievement.
Hallinger and Murphy (2012) have most recently addressed the several barriers to the successful enactment of all instructional leadership practices. The focus of their examination was the main challenge facing school principals both past and present—finding the time and capacity to lead.

Despite not always having the time to interact and be visible with students and teachers, the benefits of principal visibility have been expressed throughout the literature on school improvement, instructional leadership, and effective schooling. Formal and informal classroom visits, often termed “walk-throughs” are one of the methods time-strapped principals can implement to increase their visibility. Promoting visibility or the methods that help increase it is not simply for the sake of having the principal being seen more often. Moss & Brookhart (2013) noted:

> As principals look for and learn from what students do, say, make, or write during a lesson, they develop a keener eye for what learning looks like and an ever-growing understanding of how effective teaching supports the learning process. (p. 42)

**Providing incentives for teachers**

It is natural for someone within or outside the educational system to assume that this function implies that the principal, in operating as a strong instructional leader, will find ways to pay more money to teachers as an incentive to increase their students’ achievement. Principals who adhere to this function of instructional leadership use public praise, personal notes, and other non-financial means to highlight the deserved praise earned by teachers.

In their study of effective instructional leadership, Blase and Blase (1999) examined the teacher perspectives on the everyday instructional leadership practices of their principals. Eight hundred American teachers were included in the study. Each
teacher responded to an open-ended survey created by the research team to investigate the question: What characteristics (e.g., strategies, behaviors, attitudes, goals) of school principals positively influence classroom teaching, and what effects do such characteristics have on classroom instruction (Blase & Blase, 1999)?

Data from the 800 teacher respondents were coded according to guidelines for inductive exploratory research and comparative analysis. Two themes of effective instructional leadership emerged: a) talking with teachers to promote reflection, and b) promoting the professional growth of teachers. The first theme included significant responses regarding principals giving praise to teachers. According to the respondents, praise from the principal significantly increased their motivation, self-esteem and efficacy. In addition, praise from the principal fostered teacher reflective behavior including reinforcement of effective teaching strategies (Blase & Blase, 1999). Thus, the more the instructional leader praises teachers for effective teaching, the more incentive the teacher has to continue the effective teaching strategies.

**Promoting professional development**

Certainly, a principal who promotes the professional development of his/her staff does not block opportunities for their continued development as professionals. In contrast, principals who are strong instructional leaders often lead, direct, or connect teachers to professional development opportunities. When the principal is involved in coordinating or planning the staff's professional development, it should align with the school's overall mission (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

Blase and Blase (1999) discovered two main themes from their research on effective instructional leadership practices. The first theme, talking with teachers to
promote reflection, was highlighted in the prior subsection. The second theme they found was: promoting the professional growth of teachers. Within this theme of promoting the professional growth of teachers, the researchers found that the principals typically relied on a certain set of strategies to promote the professional growth of teachers. These strategies of promoting professional growth included: emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, supporting collaboration efforts among educators, developing coaching relationships among educators, encouraging and supporting redesign of programs, applying the principles of adult learning, growth and development to all phases of staff development, and implementing action research to inform instructional decision making (Blase & Blase).

Providing incentives for learning

Principals, as instructional leaders, must promote incentives for learning. The use of providing incentives was discussed in the prior subsection detailing "Creating a Positive School Climate." These two areas of instructional leadership (positive school climate and providing incentives) go hand-in-hand, as best expressed here by Hallinger (2013):

It is possible to create a school learning climate in which academic achievement is highly valued by students by providing frequent opportunities for students to be rewarded and recognized for their activity achievement and improvement. The rewards need not be fancy or expensive; the recognition before teachers and peers is the key. (p. 17)

Just as teachers can be motivated with the use of incentives, so can students be motivated as well. Students need opportunities to be positively recognized by an audience of their teachers and their peers. Principals who know the value of this function
routinely provide opportunities for students to be recognized for their high achievement within the classroom and on the school campus (Hallinger et al., 1983).

**Summary of Studies Investigating Instructional Leadership and Student Achievement**

Reardon (2011) investigated the relationships among elementary school principals' perceptions of their own leadership behaviors and student achievement as measured by Virginia state-mandated standardized tests. Findings from the study suggest that two of the six core competencies (rigorous curriculum and performance accountability) were significantly related to increased reading scores. The study provides additional support for the direct impact of principal leadership on student achievement outcomes (Reardon, 2011).

Another study conducted in consideration of the light of accountability and focused on principal leadership reaffirms the link between principal leadership behaviors and student achievement. Rammer's (2007) investigation of superintendents and their hiring practices, their consideration associated with effective principles and the correlation with student achievement produced intriguing findings. A sample of 200 randomly selected superintendents was used in this study. Each superintendent was asked to indicate the importance of 21 distinct responsibilities that they felt were important in the consideration of hiring a new principal. These are the same 21 principal responsibilities identified through the work of Waters et al. (2004) and referenced in Table 1.1 of this chapter. The researcher developed the instrument and there was one question matching each responsibility for a total of 21 items. A constant comparative analysis was employed to analyze how the superintendents assessed the responsibilities
of the principal candidates. Giving further strength to the established correlations between the 21 responsibilities and student achievement, the superintendents in this study overwhelmingly (92%) reported that consideration of the 21 responsibilities was extremely important in the hiring of building-level principals (Rammer).

Robinson et al. (2008) examined the impact of the different types of leadership on students' academic and nonacademic outcomes. They employed an analysis of 27 peer-reviewed published studies each examining the relationship between school/principal leadership and student outcomes. Dividing the study into two sets of analysis, their first approach compared the effects of transformational and instructional leadership on student outcomes, and their second approach compared the effects of five sets of leadership practices culled from the research on student outcomes. The five leadership practices are (a) identifying and establishing goals and expectations; b) strategic resources, (c) planning coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum, (d) promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, and (e) ensuring an orderly and supportive school environment. Their findings showed that the impact of instructional leadership is three to four times that of transformational leadership on student achievement.

Litchka (2011) investigated the leadership practices of principals from high poverty, high achieving schools located within a mid-Atlantic urban school district. The variables for the study were the five leadership practices as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The five leadership practices are (a) challenge the process, (b) inspire a shared vision, (c) enable others to act, (d) model the way, and (e) encourage the heart. The LPI was administered to the principals as well as to members of their
faculty. The LPI questionnaire consists of 30 items, with each of the five leadership practices having six statements. Principals and teachers were asked to respond to each of the 30 items. In addition to the LPI, qualitative data were collected through face-to-face interviews, both in individual and group settings.

Results from the LPI questionnaire showed that of the five leadership practices, *inspiring a shared vision* was rated highest as the leadership practice most exhibited by the principals. Similar results were yielded from the interview data, which showed that *inspiring a shared vision* was the most critical leadership practice exhibited by these principals of high poverty, high achieving schools (Laskitch, 2011). In essence, visionary leadership was found to be a significant attribute of successful principals from high poverty, high achieving schools. These findings suggest that principals who adhere to those leadership practices associated with having a vision, such as those within the first dimension of the Instructional Management Framework (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986) can greatly contribute to schools with student populations described as low SES, economically disadvantaged, or high poverty—much like the student population that constitutes the majority of public elementary schools in Louisiana.

Spillane and Hunt (2010) applied cluster analysis to data obtained from 38 school principals from one Midwestern United States school district. Four approaches were used in the collection of data on school principal practice. Interviews were logged using the Experience Sampling Method (ESM.) A Principal Questionnaire (PQ) and School Staff Questionnaire (SSQ) were used and supplemented with observations and interviews with a sub sample of the school principals.
In extricating data from the ESM interview log, three patterns of practice were identified: a) administration centered, b) solo practitioners, and c) people centered. In an effort to explicate these three patterns, the investigators combined qualitative interview and observation data with quantitative survey and observation log data to develop three mini-cases of principals – one representing each pattern of practice. The findings of this investigation, or better said, the suggestions from this investigation are centered on the three cases or types of school principal (Spillane & Hunt, 2010). Although discussion included in this study neither confirms nor negates consensus portrayals of school principals described in the body of literature related to instructional leadership, two distinct suggestions can be gleaned. First, the study suggests that how school principals work, whether in isolation or in collaboration, and whether they take a more hands on or a more back-seat approach, are dimensions of the school principal’s work that are important and necessary in differentiating them. Second, the investigation supports the sound premise that maintains the efforts to collect, describe and analyze the instructional leadership and management of the school principal must extend beyond the focus of the school principal and must also include other formally or informally designated leaders within the school building (Spillane & Hunt, 2010).

Gulcan (2009) examined whether instructional competencies of school principals vary depending on the type of school they work at and their field. Utilizing a descriptive survey method, data were obtained from a 21-item questionnaire that was given to teachers and administrators from 15 randomly selected primary schools. Statistical analysis was applied to this data yielding frequency tables, chi squares and mean scores. Interpretation of the findings confirmed that school principals, though
knowledgeable in administrative tasks such as initiating and maintaining discipline and knowing the appropriate school laws, remain largely incompetent in curricular issues pertaining to education psychology and pedagogy as well as new instructional methods. This deficit in curricular knowledge existed for principals regardless of school type or size (Gulcan, 2009).

Baker & Dickerson (2006) compared the relationship between teachers’ characteristics and preferences and school principals’ instructional leadership practices. Next, he investigated whether those relationships were different in charter and traditional public schools. Teachers and principals were asked to complete confidential questionnaires on-line. The principals’ questionnaire was designed to elicit data on instructional leadership practices. The teachers’ questionnaire was designed to elicit data on teacher characteristics and preferences. The teachers’ questionnaire included measures of (a) working conditions, (b) classroom organization, (c) instructional innovation, (d) instructional conditions, (e) influence on school wide decisions, (f) professional development, (g) principal leadership, (h) career decisions, and (i) teacher qualifications.

Baker & Dickerson (2006) employed a standard entry regression analysis to determine if a relationship existed between teacher characteristics and principal instructional leadership practices. The researcher found that teachers’ characteristics do not shape their principal’s instructional leadership practices. Adding to the literature this premise that principals’ instructional leadership practices are independent of their teachers’ characteristics opens the door to future inquiries focusing on the alternative aspects of school principals’ instructional leadership practices.
In developing a better understanding of the instructional leadership practices of charter school principals, a specific and deliberate focus on their daily priorities and actions is needed. In this embedded analysis by Baker & Dickerson (2006), the focus of the researchers was to examine the express concerns of charter school principals, and how do charter school principals spend their time. Starting from a relatively large population of schools and utilizing criteria and convenience sampling methods, the list of schools was narrowed to a more manageable sample. Based on the sampling criteria, each school was located in the same state; each school represented a separate type of charter with respect to authorization, and a newly hired principal was leading each school. These criteria limited the potential cases to two school sites, which were then selected for the study (Baker & Dickerson, 2006).

From a constructivist paradigm, the researcher utilized a cross-case analysis in search of patterns and themes. The two school principals were interviewed multiple times throughout the school year and the research team analyzed their responses. The research team, as a result of this analysis of the principals' interview responses, developed six cross-case themes. The six distinct themes that emerged from their research were; a) accountability, b) personnel issues, c) student-related issues, d) management issues, e) school promotion and f) instructional issues.

Multiple triangulation devices were applied in an effort to help validate the thematic approach used here to help give a richer and deeper explanation of these principals' concerns and how they spent their time. The introduction of these six themes is helpful to the further investigation of charter school principals' daily priorities and actions. The six themes, although beneficial, are not nearly as compelling when
examining these findings. A comparison of the charter school principals' daily priorities and how they spent their time revealed an almost obsessive focus on state testing and accountability related issues. The other variables or themes were not noted as high on the charter school principals' priority chain, and even when the principals were involved in work related to any of the other five themes, the relevance of that work and its relation to state testing and accountability remained a consistently expressed concern of the principals (Baker & Dickerson, 2006). These findings hint at the common supposition that despite having the desire to effect positive change as true instructional leaders, most school principals simply do not have the time in the school day to actualize those desires. Hallinger & Murphy (2013) analyzed three challenges that principals face in their efforts to engage the instructional leadership role. In addition to not having enough time, they cited the normative environment (traditional role) of the principalship and administrator inexperience as additional barriers.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The methodological characteristics of this study are discussed within the three sections of this chapter. The first section of this chapter includes an explanation of the research design used to test the null hypothesis generated for this study. Also in this section are descriptions of the data collection and sampling techniques employed herein. The second section describes the analytical procedures used to examine instrument reliability and validity. The third and final section of this chapter consists of a discussion of the statistical methods that were used to analyze and interpret the data.

Research Design

This quantitative study investigated the relationship between perceptions of principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement. Specifically, teacher perceptions of principals' instructional leadership practices were studied. A non-experimental, correlational design was deemed most appropriate for this study based on the designated variables of principal instructional leadership practices and student achievement and the underlying purpose of the study as one to identify the relationships between the PIMRS domains and student achievement. A descriptive correlational design is a study wherein the researcher is observing variables in their naturally occurring state
(Tabachnick, Fidell & Osterlind, 2001). Relationship studies involve the collection of data on at least two variables and data collected are then analyzed using correlation methods.

Population

As of 2013, there were 1,574 public schools located within the State of Louisiana. Two school districts situated in northwestern Louisiana were selected for the study. In school district A, there were 32 schools in total. School district B contained a total of 65 schools. Each district contained schools of various configurations that served pre K through grade 12. The sample for this study was restricted to every public (non-parochial, non-Recovery School District) school within the two selected school districts that served grades three through eight.

Sample

The purposeful sampling technique used in this dissertation study included the following criteria: a) the willingness of the principal to allow his or her faculty to participate in the study and b) the ability of the researcher to include principals and teachers from both selected school districts. Creswell and Clark (2007) give a two-fold rationale for purposeful sampling: a) to explore cases vital to the research and its questions, and b) to compare differences between settings or individuals.

A purposeful sampling method yielded a total of 73 total schools from the two school districts. The 73 schools represented the total number of schools within the two selected districts that served grades three through eight. Superintendents of each district were first contacted for consent to have their school site faculties participate in the study.
(see Appendix B). Each superintendent provided the researcher with written consent to contact the building-level principals for the purpose of conducting this research. The researcher then converted the Principal’s Instructional Management Rating Scale to electronic form and uploaded it to Survey Monkey (see Appendix C). Next, a letter of introduction and explanation, as well as an agreement to participate in the study, was sent to each building-level principal (see Appendix D). A link to the survey was included in the letter to the principals. The principals were asked to forward the letter and the survey link to every teacher on staff. Once the teacher received the survey link in the forwarded email from the principal, the teacher could then participate in the survey.

The researcher sent each of the 73 principals from the sampled schools a request to forward the survey link to each teacher on their staff. Of the 73 schools, teacher responses used in this study represented 40 of those schools. Based on district composite data from the Louisiana Department of Education (Louisiana Department of Education, 2014), the combined number of teachers from the 40 schools totaled 1,773. The number of teachers who completed the survey and included in this study was 198, or 11.16% of the total (N=1,773) population of teachers. The teacher participants represented 40, or 54.79% of the 73 sampled schools.

When the response data were compiled and analyzed, the researcher found the total number of teachers, who participated in the study by accessing the survey link, was 301. Of the 301 total responses gathered, the total number of responses that contained completed responses for each of the ten subscales was 239. From the 239 completed surveys, 198 surveys contained completed responses for each of the ten subscales and completed responses for the demographic portion of the survey. The demographic
portion of the survey allowed the researcher to match the teacher perception responses to its corresponding school within the sample. In summary, the purposeful sampling technique used in this study yielded a sample of 198 teacher respondents representing 40 schools within two northwestern Louisiana school districts.

## Instruments

**Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS)**

Since the original PIMRS was first developed in 1982, more than 200 studies have utilized it as the instrument to assess principal instructional leadership practices (Hallinger, 2013b). The PIMRS is a 50-item Likert scale questionnaire divided into 10 subscales that measures teachers’ perceptions of principal instructional leadership practices. Each item is a behavioral statement that describes principal instructional leadership practices and behaviors and teachers are asked to rate the frequency their principal engages in these behaviors based on a 5-point scale with the following anchors:

- 5 represents *Almost Always*
- 4 represents *Frequently*
- 3 represents *Sometimes*
- 2 represents *Seldom*
- 1 represents *Almost Never*

For analysis purposes in this study, the scale for responses was inverted, and 1 represented *Almost Always*, 2 represented *Frequently*, 3 represented *Sometimes*, 4 represented *Seldom*, and 5 represented *Almost Never*.

Calculating the mean score for the items within each subscale scores the instrument. The scored instrument presents a
profile of teacher perceptions of principal performance on each of the 10 instructional leadership functions (Hallinger, 2011).

The PIMRS consists of two sections. The first section requests demographic information from the teacher including the name of the school, the name of the district, number of years at their present school, number of years teaching overall, and the gender of the respondent teacher. Neither the teacher's name nor any other specific identifiable information is requested in this section.

The second section of the PIMRS includes the 50 items and spaces for the teacher respondents' ratings based on the 1-5 scale detailed in the prior section. There are 5 items for each of the 10 instructional leadership functions identified in the Instructional Management Framework by Hallinger and Murphy (1986). The 10 instructional leadership functions promulgated by the framework and measured by the scale are:

1. Framing the school's goals;
2. Communicating the school's goals;
3. Coordinating the curriculum;
4. Supervising and evaluating instruction;
5. Monitoring student progress;
6. Protecting instructional time;
7. Providing incentives for teachers;
8. Providing incentives for learning;
9. Promoting professional development, and
10. Maintaining high visibility.
Reliability of the PIMRS

The original validation study of the PIMRS found that the instrument met high standards for reliability (Hallinger et al., 1983; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The instrument’s internal consistency was chosen as the appropriate form of reliability. The internal consistency of an instrument refers to the degree to which items that have been grouped together conceptually as subscales correlate with each other. According to Latham and Wexley (1981), the minimum standard reliability for behaviorally anchored rating scales should be set at .80 when assessing the internal consistency of an instrument. Ten (the original instrument prior to preliminary revisions consisted of 11 subscales) functional categories, or subscales, met the standard of .80 (Hallinger et al., 1983). The size of the Alpha coefficients for the subscales ranged from .78 (the lowest) for “Providing incentives for teacher,” to .90 (the highest) on three different subscales “Supervising and evaluating instruction,” “Coordinating the curriculum,” and “Monitoring student progress.” The reliability coefficients are displayed in Table 3.1. Because the individualized subscales were conceptualized to represent related but discrete principal job functions, the reliability of the instrument as a whole was not measured.
Table 3.1

*Reliability Estimates (Hallinger, 1982)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Reliability*</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame Goals</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate Goals</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision/Evaluation</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Coordination</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors Student Progress</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects Instructional Time</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives for Teachers</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Standards</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives for Learning</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reliability estimates are Cronbach Alpha coefficients (Hallinger, 1982).

In 2011, Hallinger conducted a review of research on the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* and he found that the PIMRS had maintained a consistent record of yielding valid and reliable data. Hallinger also found that the PIMRS continued to be an instrument of choice among researchers when studying the variables of principal instructional leadership practices, particularly in the ten-year span ranging from 2000-2010 (Hallinger, 2011).

**Content validity of the PIMRS**

Content validity was established for the PIMRS by convening a panel of judges consisting of four educational leaders, each familiar with instructional leadership, assign
the potential items from a randomly ordered list into functional categories (Hallinger, 1982). Each judge was given the random order list of items and a sheet of paper to record which functional category (e.g., communicating school goals or promoting professional development) the item fit into (see Table 3.2). If a judge felt that an item did not fit into a functional category, the item was left unassigned. This process yielded 81 items within 11 functional categories. After further review with a participating superintendent, 10 items were discarded and 71 items formed the rating scale (Hallinger, 1982).

Table 3.2

*Content Validity Agreement Scores (Hallinger, 1982)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Average Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame Goals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate Goals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision/Evaluation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Coordination</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors Progress</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects Time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives for Teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Standards</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives for Learning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Construct validity of the PIMRS subscale intercorrelations

Theoretically, the intercorrelations of subscales should be low. Validity is further established when the subscales are measuring discrete job functions (Latham & Wexley, 1981). Additionally, the intercorrelation between subscales measuring different job functions should be lower than the subscale reliability coefficients. This would seemingly indicate that the items within each subscale correlate more significantly with each other than with groups of items in other subscales.

Admittedly, the Intercorrelations among several of the subscales of the PIMRS are quite high; many are above .60 (Hallinger, 1982). All of the intercorrelation coefficients were statistically significant at the .01 level indicating that the intercorrelation did not result just by chance. Hallinger (1982) explains this by pointing out that despite the higher within subscale correlations, many of the job functions are closely related. In his words,

This result is not surprising given the relatively narrow job area (i.e., instructional management) being appraised. For example, one would expect closely related job functions such as framing and communicating the school’s goals to be highly correlated. The fact that the intercorrelation between these two subscales is quite high (.85) lends support to the conceptualization of the subscales. Overall this tests that the subscales are measuring different components of instructional management. (p.10)

A discussion of alternative instruments was not appropriate for this study; however, the researcher notes here that his examination of the most utilized, valid and reliability-tested instruments used by researchers to investigate instructional leadership and student achievement revealed this same pattern of high correlation among subscales. A critical analysis performed by the researcher ended with a similar explanation as
Hallinger’s (1982) that is highlighted within this subsection. Table 3.3 displays the intercorrelation of the PIMRS subscales.

Table 3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale Intercorrelation Matrix (Hallinger, 1982)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eval Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incen Teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Dev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acad Stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- All coefficients in parentheses are reliability estimates (Cronbach Alpha)

**School performance score (SPS)**

School Performance Scores are calculated for all public schools in the state and are based on student achievement on Louisiana’s LEAP and iLEAP. In elementary schools (K-6), 100% of the school performance score (reported also as a letter grade) is based on student achievement on the LEAP/iLEAP in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. In middle schools (7-8), 95% of the school
performance score (reported also as a letter grade) is based on student achievement on the LEAP/iLEAP in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, plus 5% based on the number of students who accumulate enough credits for high school by the end of 9th grade (Louisiana Department of Education, 2014).

In calculating the School Performance Score, schools receive points based on the LEAP/iLEAP achievement levels of each student. The points breakdown is as follows: 

- **Advanced**: 150 points,
- **Mastery**: 125 points,
- **Basic**: 100 points,
- **Approaching Basic**: 0 points,
- **Unsatisfactory**: 0 points. Due to the SPS being based on the LEAP/iLEAP achievement levels earned by students, the validity of the LEAP/iLEAP is subsequently discussed.

**Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP/iLEAP)**

The State of Louisiana tests students in the spring of each school year in grades three through eight. The students are assessed in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The assessments are referred to throughout the state as the LEAP and iLEAP, and they were designed specifically for Louisiana students. The assessments include multiple choice and constructed response items. Students can earn one of five scores based on their scores from the assessment. The scores and descriptions are as follows:

- **Advanced**: A student demonstrates superior performance in the subject.
- **Mastery**: A student demonstrates competency of challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.
- **Basic**: A student demonstrates fundamental knowledge and skills in the subject.
- **Approaching Basic:** A student partially demonstrates the fundamental knowledge and skills of the subject.

- **Unsatisfactory:** A student does not demonstrate the fundamental knowledge and skills.

The annual program of assessing Louisiana students in grades four and eight is known as the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP). The LEAP is a criterion-based assessment and it is aligned to the state academic standards and determines to what level a student has mastered the content of those standards. The LEAP is considered a “high-stakes” assessment. In order to be promoted from the fourth and eighth grades, students must score **Basic** or above in either English language arts or mathematics and **Approaching Basic** in the other content area (Louisiana Department of Education, 2014).

The annual program of assessing Louisiana students in grades three, five, six, and seven is known as the *integrated* Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (iLEAP). The iLEAP is considered an integrated LEAP because it is comprised of a criterion-based component and a norm-referenced component. The criterion based component of the iLEAP measures whether a student has mastered the academic standards appropriate for his or her grade level. The norm-referenced component of the iLEAP provides a percentile ranking of students. The iLEAP is not considered a “high-stakes” assessment. Students’ performance on the iLEAP does not impact their promotion to the next grade (Louisiana Department of Education, 2014).
Reliability of the LEAP/iLEAP

Reliability is referred to when describing the consistency and accuracy of assessment scores. The more reliable an assessment is, the less measurement error is associated with the scores from the assessment. For the LEAP and iLEAP, test means and standard deviations are based on number correct, or NC data (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012b). The NC data refers to the raw score obtained by each individual student.

Cronbach’s alpha is the traditional method for calculating reliability. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were computed and reported for the LEAP/iLEAP; however, these calculations represent an underestimation of reliability for both the LEAP and iLEAP (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012b). Because of this underestimation of reliability based on Cronbach’s alpha, an additional method of calculating reliability was employed. The stratified alpha, used to analyze the LEAP/iLEAP scores, takes into consideration the characteristics of the test design, specifically, the inclusion of constructed response items on the LEAP/iLEAP and how those responses are graded and scored (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012b). Table 3.4 displays the NC data and reliability coefficients (Both Cronbach’s alpha and the stratified alpha) of the 2012 LEAP/iLEAP test administration for grades three, four and five in English language arts and math. Also, presented in Table 3.4 is the SEM or standard error of measurement. SEM is reported in raw score units and it is expected that 68% of the time a student’s true score will fall within 1 SEM of the student’s observed score (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012b).
Table 3.4

*Number Correct and Reliability Test Level Summary for the LEAP/iLEAP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade and Content</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Total Score Points</th>
<th>Mean p-val</th>
<th>NC Mean</th>
<th>NC Standard Deviation</th>
<th>NC SEM</th>
<th>Stratified Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 ELA</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>53.38</td>
<td>14.52</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 MA</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>31.55</td>
<td>9.32</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ELA</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>42.21</td>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 MA</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>46.71</td>
<td>12.11</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ELA</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>62.67</td>
<td>14.49</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 MA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>36.66</td>
<td>8.87</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Louisiana Department of Education, 2012)*

**Content validity of the LEAP/iLEAP**

Content Validity of the LEAP/iLEAP was established by convening in state committees comprised of Louisiana educators, Louisiana Department of Education curriculum and assessment staff, and outside consultants to initially define the content domains for the LEAP/iLEAP. Once the content domains were defined, the committees then developed the content standards for each grade level and subject. Next, these standards were circulated across the entire state and public input was solicited. After the round of public comments, the committee made necessary changes to the standards (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012b).

The next step in establishing validity for the assessments was to develop content frameworks and to construct a test blueprint. The purpose of the test blue print was to
make sure that the test design was aligned to the earlier established content standards. A content review committee was formed composed of Louisiana educators and staff, and representatives from the test contract. The items developed for the assessments were then reviewed for grade level and content alignment. A field-test was administered and each item was analyzed to ensure its fit according to content standards. The Louisiana Department of Education maintains that this detailed process of ensuring content validation is incorporated in each step of the LEAP/iLEAP development process (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012b).

**Data Collection**

Data were collected in the Spring of 2014, per doctoral committee approval and Louisiana Tech University’s Institutional Review Board approval (see Appendix E). A total of 73 elementary/middle schools within two northwestern Louisiana school districts were identified for sample inclusion. The researcher, upon receiving consent from the two superintendents, sent an electronic letter of information, copy of the superintendent consent letter, and a link to the survey to principals at each of the 73 schools. Principals were requested to forward the survey link to each teacher on their campus. The first research participation request letter was emailed to the 73 principals at the end of April. A second research participation request letter was sent in early May. Several of the principals courtesy copied the researcher in the forwarded request letter with the survey link to the teachers on his or her faculty. The researcher made phone calls to the principals after the first research participation request letter was emailed in order to encourage participation. The survey remained open as an online survey for two weeks. When the researcher closed the survey, all response and item data were exported from the
online survey host (Survey Monkey) as an SPSS file, and imported into SPSS 22.0.0 for Macintosh. The response and item data were also exported as a Microsoft Excel file allowing the researcher to code and randomly assign numbers to the respondents and schools represented.

The researcher checked the online survey host daily during the period of time that the survey was open. The teacher respondents submitted the majority of the surveys in the immediate day or days subsequent to the principal receiving the study participation package from the researcher.

A total of 198 out of 1,773 potential respondents completed the survey. The teacher respondents received a forwarded link to the survey from their principal. Thus, each principal decided whether or not the teachers on their faculty would be included in this research. The survey distribution method presented a limitation that will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this study.

Permission to utilize the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale – Teacher Form 2.1 was granted by Phillip Hallinger in a written communication dated January 3, 2014, and the permission letter is included in the appendix (see Appendix F). The PIMRS (Teacher Form) was completed online by the teachers and the responses were collected using an online survey host (Survey Monkey).

**Null Hypotheses**

This study tested the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between any of the instructional leadership practices, as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale
(PIMRS) and student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS).

**Data Analysis**

For this study, a hierarchical linear regression design, employing ordinary least squares calculations, was used to determine the relationship between each of the ten instructional leadership practices and student achievement.

Hierarchical, sometimes referred to as sequential or stepwise regression, is one type of regression analysis in which the researcher establishes the order of inputting the independent variables into the regression equation. Independent variables that are predetermined to be related to the dependent variable are given priority for entry into the regression equation.

The following explanation guides this stance:

Researchers often use regression to perform what is essentially covariates analysis in which they ask if some critical variable (or variables) adds anything to a prediction equation for DV after other IV's – the covariates – have already entered the equation. (Tabachnick, Fidell & Osterlind, 2001)

Stepwise regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the 10 instructional leadership practices and student achievement. The instructional leadership variables were entered in the second step of the regression analysis to estimate the relationship between the variable and student achievement.

The probability level of .05 was used to test if the regression coefficient for each of the independent variables was significantly different from zero. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.0.0 was used for data analysis.
Data Security

The researcher treated data collected and analyzed in this study with the highest respect for anonymity and security. The PIMRS was delivered to the teacher/participants via a link to an online survey. Data were compiled into a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet on the researcher’s personal computer. The computer was only accessible by a password protected lock feature, known only to the researcher. Once the data were compiled within the computer, the researcher ensured that no public Wi-Fi providers were allowed to connect to the computer, and all enhanced security settings were applied to maintain the fidelity of the research data. The computer was located within a locked home office room to which only the researcher had access.

A computer program, commonly referred to as a randomizer, was used to assign random numbers to identify the participating schools, principals, and individual teachers. The randomizer program used in this study, RANDOM.ORG, produced random integers based on atmospheric noise and is extensively used by educational researchers for instant sampling and assignment techniques. No identifiable information (i.e., principal, teacher, or individual school) was used in reporting the results from this investigation.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This study investigated the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement. Specifically, this quantitative correlational study investigated the instructional leadership practices of principals in northwestern Louisiana as measured by the PIMRS, an instrument designed by Dr. Phillip Hallinger in 1982, and used extensively in education research involving instructional leadership. School Performance Score data were obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), 22.0.0 for Macintosh, was used to analyze the perceptual data obtained from the teachers regarding their principals. The results of the study are presented in this chapter. The first section of this chapter includes descriptive statistics for the demographic variables included in the study. Inferential statistical analyses that were used to test the null hypothesis are presented in the second section of this chapter.

Descriptive Analysis

Three school districts within northwestern Louisiana were selected for sample inclusion. Superintendents of the districts were mailed letters requesting their districts' participation in the study. One superintendent declined the request for participation in the
research study citing the researchers' professional relationship to the district as an educational consultant. The remaining two superintendents gave written consent for the principals of their districts' elementary and middle schools to be contacted. Each of the two participating superintendents expressed that the building-level principal could decide whether or not to allow teachers on his or her campus to participate. A list of every elementary and middle school in both districts that served grades three through eight was compiled. The compiled list consisted of 73 schools. This number (N=73) represented the majority of schools within both districts, as only high schools serving grades nine through 12 and pre-K through two were excluded from the list. Demographic information regarding the number of schools represented in each district is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of Sampled Schools (N=73)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) was converted to electronic survey form (see Appendix C) and a link to the survey was generated. The survey form included a brief letter of introduction and information regarding the research study.
The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) contains 50 items. Each survey question has five possible responses based on the teacher's perceptions of their principal's instructional leadership practices. The stem of each question provides an example of an instructional leadership practice, and the respondent is asked "To what extent does your principal....?" The responses were scored in a 1-5 Likert scale order. The possible responses to each survey question (excluding demographic questions) were: 

1 = Almost always, 2 = Frequently, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Seldom, and 5 = Almost never.

Each response was averaged and a mean response was calculated for each item; then for each group of items (10) representing the 10 instructional leadership practices measured by the PIMRS. Demographic information regarding the principal collected from the teachers is shown in Table 4.2.
Table 4.2

*Frequency Data for Demographic Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency Count and Percent by Category</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of Principal</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30.30</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years worked with Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level of Teacher</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Master's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These 198 teacher respondents represented 40 of the possible 73 schools within the two school districts, representing 54.79% of the schools represented. This represented an overall response rate above 50%. Table 4.3 displays the range, mean and standard deviation of teacher responses for each of the 10 instructional leadership practices (subscales).
Table 4.3

*Range, Mean and Standard Deviation of PIMRS Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IL Practice</th>
<th>Mean Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSG</td>
<td>1.5500</td>
<td>0.08674</td>
<td>0.54859</td>
<td>0.301</td>
<td>1.737</td>
<td>2.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSG</td>
<td>1.7512</td>
<td>0.05751</td>
<td>0.36374</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>-0.996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>1.7620</td>
<td>0.06258</td>
<td>0.39580</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>0.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>1.7375</td>
<td>0.10595</td>
<td>0.67011</td>
<td>0.449</td>
<td>1.641</td>
<td>3.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSP</td>
<td>1.8945</td>
<td>0.10208</td>
<td>0.64564</td>
<td>0.417</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>0.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>2.1147</td>
<td>0.11256</td>
<td>0.71190</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>1.024</td>
<td>2.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHV</td>
<td>2.4128</td>
<td>0.11873</td>
<td>0.75090</td>
<td>0.564</td>
<td>-0.283</td>
<td>-0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFT</td>
<td>2.2445</td>
<td>0.13561</td>
<td>0.85770</td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPD</td>
<td>1.7060</td>
<td>0.09809</td>
<td>0.62038</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>1.360</td>
<td>2.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIL</td>
<td>1.8900</td>
<td>0.09919</td>
<td>0.62736</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td>0.377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: FSG=Frames School Goals, CSG=Communicates School Goals, SEI=Supervises and Evaluates Instruction, CC=Coordinates the Curriculum, MSP=Monitors Student Progress, PIT=Protects Instructional Time, MHV=Maintains High Visibility, IFT=Provides Incentives for Teachers, PPD=Promotes Professional Development, PIL=Provides Incentives for Learning.

The individual teacher response items with information linking them to their school (N=198) were grouped by school for inferential statistical analysis. Where there were multiple teacher respondents from a single school, the teacher responses were averaged and the mean score (per subscale) from each school was used for analysis.

Once the averaged (or mean) response was calculated for the 10 groups of items measured by the PIMRS and grouped by school, the School Performance Score (SPS) for
each represented school was recorded from the Louisiana Department of Education public data. Each of the 40 represented schools (and, therefore, principals) was then matched with the averaged response from the teachers' responses as well as with the School Performance Score. The researcher then defined subgroups by a) district, b) gender of the principal, b) SPS (one subgroup consisted of schools that received an SPS letter grade of A, B or C, and a separate subgroup was comprised of schools receiving an SPS letter grade of D and F). Mean scores for each of the subgroups are reported in Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6.

In comparing the mean scores of the subgroups, it is important to note that the principals were rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing the highest rating and five representing the lowest. Female principals were rated higher than male principals in five of the ten instructional leadership practice subscales: Framing School Goals (1.53), Coordinating the Curriculum (1.70), Protecting Instructional Time (2.12), Promoting Professional Development (1.66), and Providing Incentives for Learning (1.88).
Table 4.4

Comparative Mean Scores of Schools Based on Principal’s Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Leadership Practice</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing School Goals</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating School Goals</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising &amp; Evaluating Instruction</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating the Curriculum</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring School Progress</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting Instructional Time</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining High Visibility</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Incentives for Teachers</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Professional Development</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Incentives for Learning</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female principals and male principals were rated equally (1.89) on the instructional leadership practice subscale of Monitoring Student Progress. Female principals received the highest rating of the comparison on the Framing School Goals subscale (1.53), and also received the lowest rating of the comparison on the Maintaining High Visibility subscale (2.44).

Table 4.5 displays the comparative mean scores of schools grouped by school district. Principals from District B schools were rated higher on the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) in eight of the 10 instructional leadership practice subscales. Principals from District A schools rated higher than principals from District B
schools on two subscales: *Framing School Goals* (1.53) and *Monitoring Student Progress* (1.88). Principals from District A schools received the highest rating (1.53) of this subgroup analysis on the *Framing School Goals* subscale, and also received the lowest rating (2.50) of this subgroup analysis on the *Maintaining High Visibility* subscale.

Table 4.5

*Comparative Mean Scores of Schools Based on School Districts Sampled*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Leadership Practice</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing School Goals</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating School Goals</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising &amp; Evaluating Instruction</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating the Curriculum</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring School Progress</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting Instructional Time</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining High Visibility</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Incentives for Teachers</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Professional Development</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Incentives for Learning</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.6, an analysis of the comparative mean scores of schools grouped by School Performance Score shows principals from schools with lower school performance scores (D and F letter grades) were rated higher on every instructional leadership practice subscale than were principals of schools higher School Performance Scores (A, B and C letter grades). The lowest rating (2.45) of this comparison was given
to the A, B and C principals on the subscale of *Maintaining High Visibility*. The principals from schools with D and F School Performance Score letter grades received the highest (1.48) rating of the comparison on the subscale of *Framing School Goals*. This calculated mean score (1.48) represented the highest mean score of the three comparative means analyses presented in these findings.

Table 4.6

*Comparative Mean Scores of Schools Based on School Performance Score*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Leadership Practice</th>
<th>School Performance Score (Letter Grade)</th>
<th>ABC</th>
<th>DF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing School Goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating School Goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising &amp; Evaluating Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating the Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring School Progress</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting Instructional Time</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining High Visibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Incentives for Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Incentives for Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of the comparative mean analyses, principals were rated highest on the instructional leadership practice of *Framing School Goals*. Principals received the lowest ratings on the instructional leadership practice of *Maintaining High Visibility*. The
highest overall rating (1.48) was given to principals from D and F schools on the instructional leadership practice of *Framing School Goals*. The lowest overall rating was given to principals from District A in *Maintaining High Visibility*.

**Inferential Findings**

Research Questions:

1. *Is there a relationship between any of the instructional leadership practices, as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS)?*

2. *If there is a relationship between the instructional leadership practices, as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS), which relationship is most significant?*

   Question 1 examined the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS). To address this question, data from the teacher respondents on each of the 50 items were combined and correlated by the 10 leadership practices of the Instructional Management Framework, on which the PIMRS is based, which are Framing the School Goals (FSG), Communicating the School Goals (CSG), Supervising and Evaluating Instruction (SEI), Coordinating the Curriculum (CTC), Monitoring Student Progress (MSP), Protecting Instructional Time (PIT), Maintaining High Visibility (MHV), Providing Incentives for Teachers (IFT), Promoting Professional Development (PPD), and Providing Incentives for Learning (PIL).
The null hypothesis of this investigation is that there is no significant relationship between any of the instructional leadership practices, as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and student achievement, as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS).

Table 4.7 displays the bivariate correlations between each of the instructional leadership subscales and School Performance Scores. As reported in Table 4.7, no significant correlation exists between any of the 10 dimensions of instructional leadership practices and student achievement as measured by the School Performance Score. Based on this analysis, there may only be an indirect relationship between instructional leadership practices and student achievement as measured by the School Performance Score. This indirect relationship between instructional leadership practices and student achievement will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The attempt to analyze the data using hierarchical, or step-wise regression as the model statistic failed in that the model did not retain any of the independent variables (i.e., 10 dimensions of instructional leadership practices). The researcher then employed the standard enter method to test each individual dimension (independent variables). The ANOVA results for the regression model that predicts Student Performance score is shown in Table 4.8.
Table 4.7

**Bivariate Correlations Coefficients Among Instructional Leadership Practices and SPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FSG</th>
<th>CSG</th>
<th>SEI</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>MSP</th>
<th>PIT</th>
<th>MHV</th>
<th>IFT</th>
<th>PPD</th>
<th>PIL</th>
<th>SPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSG</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSG</td>
<td>.509**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>.553**</td>
<td>.727**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>.913**</td>
<td>.471**</td>
<td>.634**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSP</td>
<td>.878**</td>
<td>.618**</td>
<td>.677**</td>
<td>.908**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>.772**</td>
<td>.367*</td>
<td>.626**</td>
<td>.837**</td>
<td>.847**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHV</td>
<td>.585**</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>.519**</td>
<td>.631**</td>
<td>.692**</td>
<td>.767**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFT</td>
<td>.813**</td>
<td>.488**</td>
<td>.555**</td>
<td>.817**</td>
<td>.861**</td>
<td>.822**</td>
<td>.843**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPD</td>
<td>.879**</td>
<td>.390*</td>
<td>.543**</td>
<td>.888**</td>
<td>.871**</td>
<td>.859**</td>
<td>.668**</td>
<td>.879**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIL</td>
<td>.692**</td>
<td>.388*</td>
<td>.553**</td>
<td>.703**</td>
<td>.694**</td>
<td>.757**</td>
<td>.769**</td>
<td>.794**</td>
<td>.734**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>-0.033</td>
<td>-0.114</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>0.152</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). FSG=Frames School Goals, CSG=Communicates School Goals, SEI=Supervises and Evaluates Instruction, CC=Coordinates the Curriculum, MSP=Monitors Student Progress, PIT=Protects Instructional Time, MHV=Maintains High Visibility, IFT=Provides Incentives for Teachers, PPD=Promotes Professional Development, PIL=Provides Incentives for Learning.
Table 4.8

ANOVA Results for Regression of Instructional Leadership Practices on Student Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>2270.02</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>227.00</td>
<td>.440</td>
<td>.914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>14947.69</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>515.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17217.72</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .132$, Adjusted $R^2 = -.168$

For the regression analysis, School Performance Score was entered as the dependent variable and instructional leadership practices were entered as predictor variables. Table 4.9 shows that instructional leadership practices do not explain a significant amount of variance in School Performance Score ($R^2 = .132$, $F = .440$, $p > .05$). The relationship estimates for each of the 10 subscales of Instructional leadership practices were as follows: Framing School Goals ($\beta = -.272$, $p > .05$), Communicate School Goals ($\beta = .064$, $p > .05$), Supervise and Evaluate Instruction ($\beta = -.197$, $p > .05$), Coordinate the Curriculum ($\beta = .293$, $p > .05$), Monitor Student Progress ($\beta = -.497$, $p > .05$), Protect Instructional Time ($\beta = .576$, $p > .05$), Maintain High Visibility ($\beta = -.005$, $p > .05$), Provide Incentives for Teachers ($\beta = .309$, $p > .05$), Promote Professional Development ($\beta = -.285$, $p > .05$), and Provide Incentives for Learning ($\beta = .058$, $p > .05$). The results of this investigation indicate no significant relationships among the variables; thus, the null hypothesis of this investigation cannot be rejected.
Table 4.9

*Coefficients for Regression of Instructional Leadership Practices on Student Achievement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>83.711</td>
<td>24.39</td>
<td>3.432</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSG</td>
<td>-10.405</td>
<td>19.291</td>
<td>-0.272</td>
<td>-0.539</td>
<td>0.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSG</td>
<td>3.702</td>
<td>21.451</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.173</td>
<td>0.864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>-10.446</td>
<td>18.712</td>
<td>-0.197</td>
<td>-0.558</td>
<td>0.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>9.185</td>
<td>18.306</td>
<td>0.293</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSP</td>
<td>-16.16</td>
<td>19.963</td>
<td>-0.497</td>
<td>-0.81</td>
<td>0.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIT</td>
<td>16.999</td>
<td>13.467</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>1.262</td>
<td>0.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHV</td>
<td>-0.137</td>
<td>12.624</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>0.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFT</td>
<td>7.581</td>
<td>15.681</td>
<td>0.309</td>
<td>0.483</td>
<td>0.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPD</td>
<td>-9.655</td>
<td>19.623</td>
<td>-0.285</td>
<td>-0.492</td>
<td>0.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIL</td>
<td>1.947</td>
<td>10.903</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.179</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: FSG=Frames School Goals, CSG=Communicates School Goals, SEI=Supervises and Evaluates Instruction, CC=Coordinates the Curriculum, MSP=Monitors Student Progress, PIT=Protects Instructional Time, MHV=Maintains High Visibility, IFT=Provides Incentives for Teachers, PPD=Promotes Professional Development, PIL=Provides Incentives for Learning.

**Summary**

The purpose of this investigation was to estimate the relationship between teacher-perceived instructional leadership practices of their principals and student achievement to determine if and to what degree instructional leadership practices are related to student achievement. This study surveyed 198 public school teachers in
northwestern Louisiana to determine their perceptions of their building-level principals' instructional leadership practices.

Regression analysis was used to relate instructional leadership practices of principals to student achievement at the school level. Averaged scores on each subgroup represented separate variables and each was regressed on School Performance Scores representing student achievement. From the two resulting regression models, the results indicated that there was no significant relationship between instructional leadership practices of the building-level principal and student achievement.

This chapter presented and analyzed the collected data to respond to the research questions of the study presented in Chapter 1. The findings were:

1. There was no significant relationship between principals’ instructional leadership practices and student achievement in the public schools of northwestern Louisiana.

2. The nonsignificant relationship between instructional leadership practices and student achievement suggests that the instructional leadership practices of northwestern Louisiana principals have an indirect effect on student achievement.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The study findings are discussed in this chapter. This section of the chapter
includes: summary of research purpose and design, summary of research findings,
implications for practice, and recommendations for future studies. The chapter ends with
a summary conclusion.

Summary of Research Purpose and Design

For the majority of states in the U.S., the ISLLC standards form the basis for how
school leaders are trained, licensed, and evaluated. The ISLLC standards reflect the
importance of instructional leadership practices to building-level principals (Interstate
School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 2008). For principals in Louisiana, the Compass
evaluation rubric, based on observation of instructional leadership practices, comprises
half of the annual evaluation. The other half of the evaluation is based on student
achievement on the LEAP/iLEAP (Louisiana Department of Education, 2014).

Over the past 25 years, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale
(PIMRS) has been used extensively to measure the instructional leadership practices of
school principals. The PIMRS is based on the 10 dimensions of the Instructional
Management Framework, and it has been repeatedly validated as an instrument used in educational research (Hallinger, 2013a).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' instructional leadership practices and student achievement as measured by the School Performance Score (SPS). Teacher perceptions of principals' instructional leadership practices were measured using the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS).

The research design specified a regression analysis of the variables – the 10 functions of instructional leadership and student achievement. An attempt was made to conduct a step-wise regression analysis. This attempt led to a model that did not retain any of the independent variables. A second regression analysis was performed and results were reported in the immediately preceding chapter.

**Summary of Research Findings**

A regression model was used to test each instructional leadership practice (independent variables) and student achievement (dependent variable). Teacher perceptions of instructional leadership practices were matched with School Performance Scores. *There was no significant relationship found between any of the 10 instructional leadership practices and student achievement.*

Although the researcher found no significant relationship between the instructional leadership practices of building-level principals and student achievement, a comparison of mean scores from the total number of teacher responses was of interest. The teacher responses indicated that regardless of School Performance Score, gender of the principal, or district in which the school was situated, building-level principals were
rated lowest in three of the ten instructional leadership practice dimensions: *Protecting Instructional Time* (2.11), *Maintaining High Visibility* (2.41), and *Providing Incentives for Teachers* (2.24).

This comparison also showed that building-level principals were rated highest on the instructional leadership practice of *Framing School Goals* (1.55). This finding is most important in light of Hallinger's (2005) research that found that the most influential avenue of direct and indirect effects of instructional leadership on student achievement was through the principal’s ability to shape and define the school’s mission.

**Discussion of Research Findings and Limitations**

In an effort to explain the findings of this study, other factors that may have confounded the effect of instructional leadership practices were considered. Factors that could potentially explain the nonsignificant findings include: a) the socioeconomic status of the student b) the survey distribution method employed by the researcher, and c) other mediating variables emerging from the current body of research regarding instructional leadership practices and student achievement. Each of these factors is discussed with respect to their potential influence on this study and in regard to recommendations for future study.

A review of the relevant literature on student achievement clearly established that achievement gains vary across students of different socioeconomic status. The socioeconomic status of students and families affect student learning in several ways, including the students’ approaches to learning. A student’s approach to learning has been found to be a strong predictor of achievement (Moller, Mickelson, Stearns, Banerjee & Bottia, 2013). Of the two school districts under study in the present investigation, one
district had a higher percentage of students from low socioeconomic status households. This percentage of students from low socioeconomic status households may not have been present in the schools represented in this study. Possibly, a principal with a higher percentage of low SES students, and, consequently, a lower SPS, may not have chosen to allow his or her teachers to participate in this study. This possibility follows a loose rationale; however, it is addressed here based on the preponderance of literature that indicates controlling for low socioeconomic status may provide for more robust findings in investigations of leadership practices or styles and student achievement. The research involving and controlling for students’ socioeconomic status is rapidly evolving and developing nuances. It was not the intent of this study to answer those complex questions of race and class and how they are precisely related to the achievement of students in northwestern Louisiana. The researcher’s aim was to investigate the relationship between instructional leadership practices and student achievement. By not including the socioeconomic status of students in the design, the notion of an indirect relationship of principals’ instructional leadership practices and student achievement in northwestern Louisiana schools was reaffirmed. An indirect relationship of principal instructional leadership practices and student achievement is also present in the empirical literature (Dumay et al, 2013; Seashore et al., 2010; Waters et al, 2003). The present study supports these findings and may assist future researchers in their design of investigations regarding instructional leadership practices and student achievement.

Another factor affecting the findings from this study was the survey distribution method. Each superintendent from the selected districts gave consent for his or her schools to be included in this research. Their directive to the principals was that the
decision was theirs as to whether or not to allow the teachers on their campus to participate. Therefore, the teachers who responded to the survey represented only those principals who had decided to allow their faculty to participate. The principal was the conduit to deliver the survey to the teachers. This factor may have had a major impact on the responses collected and the overall quality of the data.

The survey distribution method employed also gave the principals the opportunity to view the survey (by clicking on the survey link) before deciding whether or not to allow the participation of teachers. Not every principal who received the request to participate chose to forward the link to the teachers on his or her staff. Despite the research purpose being clearly defined and explained to the principals, it can be assumed that some principals, for a myriad of possible reasons, chose not to participate by forwarding the link to teachers.

The response rate, 198 of 1,773 possible teachers, represented an 11.16% teacher response rate. The researcher believes that the response rate would have been higher if the teachers had been emailed directly instead of receiving the survey link through their principal. In a similarly designed study examining principal leadership practices and teacher perceptions of morale and initiative, Reardon (2013) sent a direct email link to a survey hosted online by Survey Monkey to over 500 teachers. The teachers received the survey link directly from the researcher. When the online survey was closed, the researcher had collected 171 responses, which represented a teacher response rate over 34% (Reardon, 2013).

The survey distribution method the researcher used in this study is typical of modern teacher perception studies. Both superintendents in this study expressed
reluctance to provide teacher email address en masse. Not being able to distribute the
survey directly to teachers became a limitation to the study. In consideration of the
research design, the researcher deemed the methods employed in this study as the best fit
for collection of data on the two variables. The 40 schools represented in the possible
sample of 73 registered an above 50% rate of return. However, if individual teachers
could have been directly corresponded with for the purpose of participating in this
research, the number of total responses may have been greater, and the findings may have
been affected. This factor needs to be addressed by future researchers due to the
automation of surveys and data collection as well as the technological focus and impact
in schools. As more schools and school districts move away from the “pencil and paper”
era to that of the “personal computer,” researchers will continue to be challenged in their
survey design and distribution methods in order to get authentic and accurate sample
distributions.

The final factor affecting the findings of this research are the consideration of
mediating variables that may or may not have concealed the direct relationship between
principals’ instructional leadership practices and student achievement. Waters et al.,
(2003) examined the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement
and found a small/average affect size between the two variables. They attributed that
affect to a host of possible mediating variables. Those variables include, but are not
limited to; school climate, teaching culture, teacher motivation, and leadership style of
the principal (i.e., shared and collaborative, or direct or visionary.)

The literature is replete with examples of the effect of school climate and other
teacher characteristics that affect student achievement. Hallinger (2005) asserts that
school climate is an important factor for investigations of instructional leadership practices. His research suggested that principals affect and are affected by the school climate. Viewing instructional leadership as a model of mutual influence has ignited inquiry into school climate as a mediating variable between principal leadership and student achievement (Hallinger, 2005).

Another mediating factor presented by the literature is student SES. Hoy’s (2012) study of mediating variables to student achievement found three mediating factors that highly influenced student achievement: the collective efficacy of the teacher, the collective trust in parents and students, and the academic focus of the school. Hoy found that these three mediating variables were just as, if not more, important than student SES in predicting student achievement.

The present study did not examine school culture in its attempt to find relationships between instructional leadership practices and student achievement. Consideration of mediating variables strengthens the argument made from these findings that principals’ instructional leadership practices have an indirect relationship with student achievement.

The findings of this study also suggest that the principal alone may not be responsible for building-level achievement. In that frame, school leadership should be viewed as a collaborative effort involving the principal, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders. When principals and teachers work collaboratively to achieve student achievement gains, more can be accomplished than by just placing this responsibility on the lead administrator of the school. Dumay, Boonen, & Van Damme, (2013) examined the indirect influences of principal leadership on students’ achievement. They found the
impact of principal leadership on students' achievement growth is mediated by teacher collaboration and collective efficacy. Supovitz, Sirinides and May (2010) found that principals' effect on student learning was a result of those principals' indirect influence on teachers' practices through fostering collaboration around instruction.

**Implications for Practice**

Despite the statistically nonsignificant findings of this study in regards to correlation, several implications for practice arise from an examination of the teacher response data. Regardless of SPS letter grade, gender of the principal, or school district, principals were rated lowest in the instructional leadership practices of *Protecting Instructional Time, Maintaining High Visibility, and Providing Incentives for Teachers*. This finding is interesting in light of the *Compass* (Louisiana Department of Education, 2014) evaluation tool for school leaders and the future training of school principals in Louisiana.

The collective voices of the teacher respondents may be interpreted as indicating that their principals do not allow enough time for the teachers to effectively do their jobs (*Protecting Instructional Time*), that principals are rarely seen by students or teachers on the campus (*Maintaining High Visibility*), and that principals do not celebrate or reward teachers for creativity, collaboration or efficacy (*Providing Incentives for Teachers*). A better understanding of these voices can be gained through the empirical literature. In respect to *Protecting Instructional Time*, Hallinger & Murphy (1986) found that effective principals established school-wide policies to limit the amount of interruptions during instructional time. The teacher respondents in this study indicated through their low ratings that their principals allowed non-instructional activities (e.g., passing out papers,
listening to speakers and guests, handling administrative duties for their classes, etc.) to dominate the time allotted for classroom instruction. Ensuring that teachers have the maximum amount of time to teach is a challenge not only reserved for the principals of this study. Smith (2000) found that in the public schools of Chicago, actual classroom instructional time amounted to only 40% - 60% of district goals.

A highly visible principal will have more opportunities to interact with teachers and students (Hallinger, 2013b). If a principal is not highly visible on his or her campus, several factors could be involved. The principal may have the desire to be more visible, but due to his or her own job duties and managerial responsibilities, it may be impossible to do so. Having enough time during the school day to “be visible” on the campus is a dilemma facing most principals today. The principals in this study may have had the desire to be more visible, but may not have been able to find enough time in the school day. Hallinger and Murphy (2013) found that time was a distinct barrier for principals in terms of being visible on the campus and displaying instructional leadership practices.

That Providing Incentives for Teachers was one of the lowest rated subscales for the principals in this study presents interesting implications. The reason for the low ratings could be a) lack of praise and recognition of teachers both in public and private, or b) an unwillingness to foster and support teachers to continue their education. More research is needed in this area to specifically identify how principals can more effectively incentivize teaching. The research is unclear on which incentives are most effective to enhance student learning; however, financial increases and awards may not be the clear answer. Fryer (2012) in his studies of New York City and Houston public schools, found
that despite financial incentives and increases to teacher pay, student achievement remained relatively flat.

Table 5.1 shows the three instructional leadership practices (and examples) that principals in this study displayed the least. These practices should be reinforced in all training and professional development programs for principals, particularly principals of the two districts included in this study.
Table 5.1

*Specific Instructional Practices of Principals Rated Lowest by Teacher Respondents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Leadership Practices</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining High Visibility</td>
<td>1. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Incentives for Teachers</td>
<td>1. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Acknowledge teachers’ exceptional performance by writing memos for their personal files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting Instructional Time</td>
<td>1. Limit interruptions of instructional time by intercom announcements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Ensure that tardy or truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of all the findings discussed within this chapter, perhaps the most interesting was that principals of schools that had School Performance Score letter grades of D & F were rated higher on each of the 10 instructional leadership practice subscales when compared to principals of schools with SPS letter grades of A, B or C. This raises two questions for the practice to consider: a) are principals from lower performing schools working harder (consistently exhibiting more instructional leadership practices) than principals from higher performing schools? and b) how can the effect of instructional leadership practices be measured in schools where teacher perceptions of those practices are high, but student achievement is low? These questions, in light of the findings from this study, present several implications for the practice of education, particularly for the principalship in Louisiana.

Specific implications for the practice arising from the findings of this study are:

1. The researcher recommends that Louisiana Department of Education officials, state legislators, local school board members, and other policy makers reexamine current policy to make sure that expectations of principals' instructional leadership practices are aligned with what is measured by Compass, and that the underlying constructs and philosophies of instructional leadership are effectively communicated to both principals and teachers.

2. Colleges of education and other principal training programs highlight the necessity of effective relationships between principals and teachers. The lowest-rated practices in this study can be used as a gauge to strengthen training and professional development programs to ensure that those
instructional leadership practices involving *Protecting Instructional Time, Maintaining High Visibility and Providing Incentives for Teachers* are reinforced to new and existing principals.

3. The researcher recommends the development of an instrument aligned with the instructional leadership practices that the Compass evaluation system was designed to measure. This instrument would allow principals to capture continuous, real-time data throughout the school year on their performance of these leadership practices. Further, this instrument would allow the introduction of teacher perception data as an influencer of principal behavior. The Compass evaluation system only provides for supervisors to observe the instructional leadership practices of the principal. Because supervisors are not building-level based and are not in tune with the school culture or the climate of teaching at the particular school, this researcher questions the relevance and efficacy of having a district-level supervisor rate the instructional leadership practices of building-level principals.

4. Ineffective principals can sometimes lead effective schools. The inverse of this statement is also true. The researcher advocates suspending the current School Performance Score calculation from being solely based on student achievement evidenced by LEAP/iLEAP scores. A school is a living, changing organism, and there seems to be little benefit to labeling a principal and a school with a measure that is based in some cases (i.e., elementary schools) entirely on students’ test scores. Unfortunately for
Louisiana principals, Compass does not consider mediating variables to student achievement, nor does it include the input of teachers via perception data.

**Relationship of Findings to the Empirical Literature**

The findings of this study are aligned with other education research that asserts the effects of principal leadership on student achievement may operate through other, mediating variables. In a national study of United States teachers, Seashore, Dretzke and Wahlstrom (2010) conducted several stepwise regression analyses to address the relationship of principal instructional leadership and student achievement. They found that instructional leadership was indirectly related to student achievement.

Dumay et al. (2013) conducted a study to further elucidate the indirect influences of principal leadership on student achievement. They found the impact of principal leadership on students’ achievement growth is mediated by teacher collaboration and collective efficacy.

Waters et al. (2003) investigated the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement. They found a small/average affect size between the two variables. Their findings also suggested a differential impact of school leadership on student achievement. Just as principals can have a positive effect on student achievement, their findings showed that the principal could also have a marginal, or worse, a negative effect on student achievement (Waters et al., 2003).

Hallinger (2005) found that the most influential avenue of direct and indirect effects of instructional leadership on student achievement was through the principal’s ability to shape and define the school’s mission. Of particular interest here, the teacher
respondents in this study rated principals highest on the instructional leadership practices involving *Communicating School Goals*. Hallinger further concluded from his research that instructional leadership should be viewed as a model of *mutual influence* whereas principal leadership is influenced by the ever-changing culture of the school. This stance has propelled several researchers to investigate school climate as another mediating variable between principal leadership and student achievement (Hallinger, 2005).

Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins (2008) through their research on the American principalship found that principals affect teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. Here, again, the effect of principal leadership on student achievement was found to exist through an indirect relationship.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The present study adds to the body of research that helps educators conceptualize instructional leadership as distinct practices that take place on the school-building level. In considering this perceptual study of teachers and the instructional leadership practices of their principals in northwestern Louisiana elementary and middle schools, the researcher recommends the following ideas for further study:

1. With school turnaround ability being an expected component of the Louisiana principalship, one area of research on instructional leadership practices of principals could focus on those schools that have seen a marked increase in School Performance Scores. This research could point to those specific instructional practices that principals must utilize to lead successful turn around efforts.
2. As earlier cited research supports, studies of instructional leadership at the school-building level could benefit from qualitative and mixed methods approaches. Perception data collected have overwhelmingly been quantitatively assessed, and a more open stance by researchers may reveal nuances that quantitative analysis alone may not discover.

3. Extensive demographic data could be explored in conjunction with teacher perception data of principals' instructional leadership practices. These data could include teacher attributes such as level of motivation, teacher turnover, gender, age, race, educational background, and underlying educational philosophies.

4. Studies where mediating variables such as school climate, teacher morale, per-pupil spending and other descriptors (particularly teacher attributions) could be examined to determine if those differences lead to a variance in teacher perception data.

5. Because Value-added Measures (VAM) are becoming the underlying philosophy of teacher evaluation in Louisiana and across the nation, the principal's role (or lack there of) in teacher evaluation could be explored as a possible factor influencing the body of research involving teacher perceptions and student achievement. Because VAMs are changing the methods in which teachers are evaluated, the interpersonal relationships between teachers and principals are also being changed. The researcher supports and recommends future inquiries into these new relationships and their overall effect on student achievement.
6. With Louisiana leading the nation in the number of new charter schools per capita, a specific investigation into the instructional leadership practices of charter and traditional public school principals is appropriate and necessary for future research.

The researcher strongly recommends further investigation into the effects of principals' instructional leadership practices on student achievement in an effort to identify effective methods to train, develop and evaluate building-level principals. This study was designed to examine the relationship between instructional leadership practices and student achievement as measured by the PIMRS and the School Performance Scores of northwestern Louisiana schools. Although this study did not find a statistically significant relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement, the investigation into these and other related variables must continue to improve achievement and overall education outcomes for Louisiana students.

The introduction of the Common Core State Standards into the statewide K-12 curriculum has been over politicized. The media reporting of Louisiana's public schools and student performance remains contentious. As the principalship evolves in Louisiana to produce more academically prepared students for life after high school, so must the way educators approach the school improvement process. Principal preparation programs should aspire to produce leaders who are equipped to apply instructional leadership practices in the effort to improve the achievement, and ultimately, the lives of Louisiana's public school students.
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APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

RATING SCALE
PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

RATING SCALE

TEACHER FORM

Published by:

Dr. Philip Hallinger

199/43 Sukhumvit Soi 8
Bangkok, 10110 Thailand
www.philiphallinger.com
Hallinger@gmail.com

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Teacher Form 2.1
THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE

PART I: Please provide the following information about yourself:

(A) School Name: ________________________________

(B) Years, at the end of this school year, that you have worked with the current principal:
   __ 1 ___ 5-9 ___ more than 15
   __ 2-4 ___ 10-15

(C) Years experience as a teacher at the end of this school year:
   __ 1 ___ 5-9 ___ more than 15
   __ 2-4 ___ 10-15

(D) Gender of your principal: ___ Male ___ Female

PART II: This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of principal leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your observations of the principal's leadership over the past school year.

Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that best fits the specific job behavior or practice of this principal during the past school year. For the response to each statement:

5 represents Almost Always
4 represents Frequently
3 represents Sometimes
2 represents Seldom
1 represents Almost Never

In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgment in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question.

Thank you.
To what extent does your principal . . . ?

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<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS

1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them
3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development
4. Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals
5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school

II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS

6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)

III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION

11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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**V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Use tests and other performance measures to assess progress toward school goals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ALMOST NEVER</td>
<td>ALMOST ALWAYS</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Inform students of school's academic progress</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VI. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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**VI. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME**

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Teacher Form 2.1
38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files
   ALMOST NEVER ALMOST ALWAYS
   1  2  3  4  5
39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition
   1  2  3  4  5
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school
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**IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

41. Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals
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42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during inservice training
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43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities
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44. Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction
   1  2  3  4  5
45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities
   1  2  3  4  5

**X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING**

46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter
   1  2  3  4  5
47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship
   1  2  3  4  5
48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work
   1  2  3  4  5
49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions
   1  2  3  4  5
50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class
   1  2  3  4  5

Teacher Form 2.1
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Dr. Philip Hallinger, author of the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* (PIMRS), received his doctorate in Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University. He has worked as a teacher, administrator, and professor and as the director of several leadership development centers. He has been a consultant to education and healthcare organizations throughout the United States, Canada, Asia, and Australia.

The *PIMRS* was developed with the cooperation of the Milpitas (California) Unified School District, Richard P. Mesa, Superintendent. As a research instrument, it meets professional standards of reliability and validity and has been used in over 200 studies of principal leadership in the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia.

The scale is also used by school districts for evaluation and professional development purposes. It surpasses legal standards for use as a personnel evaluation instrument and has been recommended by researchers interested in professional development and district improvement (see, for example, Edwin Bridges, *Managing the Incompetent Teacher*, ERIC, 1984). Articles on the development and use of the *PIMRS* have appeared in *The Elementary School Journal*, *Administrators Notebook*, *NASSP Bulletin*, and *Educational Leadership*.

The *PIMRS* is copyrighted and may not be reproduced without the written permission of the author. Additional information on the development of the *PIMRS* and the rights to its use may be obtained from the publisher (see cover page).
SUPERINTENDENT PARTICIPATION REQUEST EMAIL

Dear (Superintendent’s Name),

My name is Michael Hicks and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education, Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership at Louisiana Tech University. The purpose of this letter is to request your support for your district's participation in my dissertation research study.

This spring, I will begin collecting data according to the research design of my dissertation study, tentatively titled: *Instructional Leadership Practices of Louisiana Elementary and Middle School Principals*. The purpose of my study is to investigate the relationship between instructional leadership practices and student achievement as measured by the LEAP/iLEAP.

I am specifically requesting your consent and approval to contact the principal and teachers of the following schools in your district:

The requested data that will be collected will originate from teacher-completed surveys. Teachers who agree to participate will complete a short online survey that assesses their perceptions of instructional leadership behaviors.

Please be assured that confidentiality will be maintained in this study. All information will remain completely confidential and will be coded only by myself in order to ensure anonymity. The information will only be accessed through a coded system that will encrypt all data matching or identifying any specific school or school district.

Any school district employee who gives consent to participate in this study cannot and will not be individually identified with their survey responses. Their data will be studied in an aggregate form only and use of the data will be limited to this specific research study.

I sincerely hope that you will consider allowing the teachers within your district to participate in this study. I believe the information from this investigation could inform future training and professional development programs for school leaders across the state.

Please respond with a letter on district letterhead if you will grant consent for your district to be represented in this study. The letter, bearing your original signature, may be returned to me via email to mikehicks20@gmail.com. I am requesting your response by April 5, 2014.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me directly at (318) 820-4661. I am also including the contact information of my Major Professor, Dr. Pauline Leonard.
Thank you in advance for your help and consideration,

Michael Hicks
Doctoral Candidate
Louisiana Tech University

**Major Professor**
Pauline Leonard, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Chair
James R. Mays Endowed Professor
Louisiana Tech University
Woodard Hall 203
(318) 257-4609
Fax: (318) 257-2960
pleonard@latech.edu
Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership - a community of researchers and practitioners transforming educational experiences for a better world.
You are invited to participate in this research study which is about instructional leadership practices in Louisiana schools.

TITLE OF PROJECT: Instructional leadership practices of elementary and middle school principals.

PURPOSE OF STUDY/PROJECT: To determine the relationship, if any, between principal's instructional leadership practices and student achievement.

PROCEDURE: Approximately 300 Teachers from 3 northern Louisiana school districts will voluntarily complete a survey assessing perceptions of their principal's instructional leadership practices. Data will then be analyzed to determine the relationship among those leadership practices and student achievement as measured by the LEAP/ILEAP.

INSTRUMENTS: The 50 item Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) developed by Dr. Philip Hellinger will be used to assess teacher perceptions of principals' instructional leadership practices. Additionally, a brief self-report instrument developed by the researcher will be used to collect demographic information. All collected information will be held confidential and will only be viewed by the researcher.

RISKS/ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS: The participant understands that Louisiana Tech University is not able to offer financial compensation nor to absorb the costs of medical treatment should you be injured as a result of participating in this research.

The following disclosure applies to all participants using online survey tools: This server may collect information and your IP address indirectly and automatically via "cookies".

EXTRA CREDIT: If extra credit is offered to students participating in research, an alternative extra credit that requires a similar investment of time and energy will also be offered to those students who do not choose to volunteer as research subjects.

BENEFITS/COMPENSATION: None

I attest that I have read and understood the following description of the study, "Instructional leadership practices of elementary and middle school principals", and its purposes and methods. I understand that my participation in this research is strictly voluntary and my participation or refusal to participate in this study will not affect my relationship with Louisiana Tech University or my grades in any way. Further, I understand that I may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any questions without penalty. Upon completion of the study, I understand that the results will be freely available to me upon request. I understand that the results of my survey will be confidential, accessible only to the principal investigators, myself, or a legally appointed representative. I have not been requested to waive nor do I waive any of my rights related to participating in this study.

CONTACT INFORMATION: The principal experimenters listed below may be reached to answer questions about the research, subjects' rights, or related matters.

Michael Hicica (318) 820-4601
Dr. Pauline Leonard (318) 257-4609

Members of the Human Use Committee of Louisiana Tech University may also be contacted if a problem cannot be discussed with the experimenters:

Dr. Stan Napper (257-3056)
Dr. Mary M. Livingston (257-2292 or 257-5066)

1. Click "Yes" if you agree to participate:
   - Yes
   - No
This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of principal leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your observations of the principal's leadership over the past school year.

Read each statement carefully. Then click the response that fits the job behavior or practice of the principal during the past school year.

In some cases, the responses may seem awkward; use your judgement in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please provide only one response per question. Thank you.

PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION

1. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS
To what extent does your principal...?

1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals
2. Frame the school’s goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them
3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development
4. Use data on student performance when developing the school’s academic goals
5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school

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<tr>
<th>Almost</th>
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2. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS
To what extent does your principal...?

6. Communicate the school’s mission effectively to members of the school community
7. Discuss the school’s academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings
8. Refer to the school’s academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers
9. Ensure that the school’s academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)
10. Refer to the school’s goals in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)

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1. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION
To what extent does your principal...?

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<tr>
<td>11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction</td>
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<td>13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)</td>
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<td>14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)</td>
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<td>15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)</td>
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2. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM
To what extent does your principal...?

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<tr>
<td>16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials</td>
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### 1. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS

**To what extent does your principal...?**

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<td>21.</td>
<td>Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Use tests and other performance measures to assess progress toward school goals</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)</td>
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<td>Inform students of school's academic progress</td>
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### 2. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please Provide the following information about yourself:

1. **What is the name of your School?**

2. **What grade are the majority of your students in?**
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5
   - [ ] 6
   - [ ] 7
   - [ ] 8
   - [x] 9
   - Other (please specify)

3. **How many years have you worked with the current Principal?**
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5
   - [x] 6
   - [ ] 7
   - [ ] 8
   - Other (please specify)

4. **Does your Principal have an “open door” policy?**
   - [ ] Yes
   - [x] No
   - Other (please specify)

5. **What is the gender of your Principal?**
   - [ ] Female
   - [ ] Male

6. **What is your level of education?**
   - [ ] Bachelor’s Degree
   - [ ] Master’s Degree
   - [ ] Specialist Degree
   - [ ] Doctorate Degree
   - Other (please specify)
APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL PARTICIPATION REQUEST EMAIL
PRINCIPAL PARTICIPATION REQUEST EMAIL

Dear (Principal’s Name),

My name is Michael Hicks and I am a doctoral candidate at Louisiana Tech University. Your faculty has been invited to share their educational experiences in a brief survey. This survey is part of a research study examining the relationship between instructional leadership practices and student outcomes. Information from this investigation could inform the future training and professional development needs of school leaders across our state. It takes less than ten minutes to complete the survey.

I am requesting that you forward the link below to every member of your faculty.

Please click the following link to participate in the study:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LAteachers_survey

The survey is anonymous and confidential. This research is approved by the Louisiana Tech University Institutional Review Board-Human Use Committee (ID # 1195). The Parish School Board Approval Letter is attached.

If you like, you can delete all the above text in black (including this sentence) and forward the text below in blue to your faculty and staff. Thank you very much for your help and consideration.

Dear Teachers,

Below is a link to a research survey that will help provide information regarding instructional leadership practices in Louisiana schools. The survey is confidential and has been approved by our Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer. The survey takes less than ten minutes to complete. More information is provided once you begin the survey.

Please click the following link to participate in the study:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LAteachers_survey

Thank you
APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER
TO: Mr. Michael Hicks and Dr. Pauline Leonard
FROM: Dr. Stan Napper, Vice President Research & Development
SUBJECT: HUMAN USE COMMITTEE REVIEW
DATE: April 16, 2014

In order to facilitate your project, an EXPEDITED REVIEW has been done for your proposed study entitled:

"Instructional Leadership Practices of Elementary and Middle School Principals"

HUC 1195

The proposed study's revised procedures were found to provide reasonable and adequate safeguards against possible risks involving human subjects. The information to be collected may be personal in nature or implication. Therefore, diligent care needs to be taken to protect the privacy of the participants and to assure that the data are kept confidential. Informed consent is a critical part of the research process. The subjects must be informed that their participation is voluntary. It is important that consent materials be presented in a language understandable to every participant. If you have participants in your study whose first language is not English, be sure that informed consent materials are adequately explained or translated. Since your reviewed project appears to do no damage to the participants, the Human Use Committee grants approval of the involvement of human subjects as outlined.

Projects should be renewed annually. This approval was finalized on April 16, 2014 and this project will need to receive a continuation review by the IRB if the project, including data analysis, continues beyond April 16, 2015. Any discrepancies in procedure or changes that have been made including approved changes should be noted in the review application. Projects involving NIH funds require annual education training to be documented. For more information regarding this, contact the Office of University Research.

You are requested to maintain written records of your procedures, data collected, and subjects involved. These records will need to be available upon request during the conduct of the study and retained by the university for three years after the conclusion of the study. If changes occur in recruiting of subjects, informed consent process or in your research protocol, or if unanticipated problems should arise it is the Researchers responsibility to notify the Office of Research or IRB in writing. The project should be discontinued until modifications can be reviewed and approved.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Mary Livingston at 257-2292 or 257-5066.
APPENDIX F

PERMISSION LETTER TO USE THE INSTRUMENT
January 3, 2014

Dear: Michael Hicks

As copyright holder and publisher, you have my permission as publisher to use the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) in your research study. In using the scale, you may make unlimited copies of any of the three forms of the PIMRS.

Please note the following conditions of use:

1. This authorization extends only to the use of the PIMRS for research purposes, not for general school district use of the instrument for evaluation or staff development purposes.

2. This is a single-use purchase for the author’s graduate research, thereby requiring purchase of additional rights for use in any future research.

3. The user agrees to send a soft copy (pdf) of the completed study to the publisher upon completion of the research.

4. The user agrees to send a soft copy of the data set and coding instructions to the publisher upon completion of the research in order to enable further instrument development.

5. The user has permission to make minor adaptations to scale as necessary for the research.

6. If the instrument is translated, the user will supply a copy of the translated version.

Please be advised that a separate permission to publish letter, usually required by universities, will be sent after the publisher receives a soft copy of the completed study.

Sincerely,

Professor Philip Hallinger

www.philiphallinger.com