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How five successful middle school principals in North Carolina define vision and how they perceive themselves as implementers and keepers of vision

Stillerman, Katherine Poerschke, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1991

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HOW FIVE SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN NORTH CAROLINA DEFINE VISION AND HOW THEY PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS IMPLEMENTERS AND KEEPERS OF VISION

by

Katherine Poerschke Stillerman

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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1991

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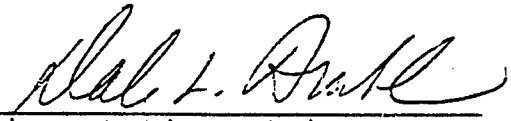

Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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5/9/91
Date of Acceptance by Committee

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Date of Final Oral Examination

STILLERMAN, KATHERINE POERSCHKE, Ed.D. How Five Successful Middle School Principals in North Carolina Define Vision and How They Perceive Themselves as Implementers and Keepers of Vision. (1991) Directed by Dr. Dale Brubaker. 183 pp.

The purposes of the research were to discover how five successful middle school principals in North Carolina define vision and how they perceive that they communicate and implement vision. The intended outcome of the study was increased understanding of how middle school principals function as visionary leaders.

Five principals, nominated by a panel of middle school experts as being among the most successful middle grades practitioners in the state, participated in the study. A set of guiding questions was used to interview each principal. In addition, site visits were conducted for the purpose of observation and informal interview of teachers, counselors, assistant principals, and students. Written documents, such as teacher and student handbooks, school improvement plans, and memos from the principals, were examined. The final data was reported as narratives or portraits of the principals and their visionary leadership.

The research indicated that successful middle school principals are visionary leaders. It further revealed that vision is a recursive process, shaped by the principal's own set of values, the culture of the school, current consensus on effective middle school practices, and district expectations. Principals communicate their visions through

what they pay attention to and what they reinforce. They implement their visions primarily as instructional leaders. Through their emphasis on instructional leadership, principals become involved in the core activities which support the core values of schooling. Principals gain a shared vision by encouraging shared decision making and by empowering teachers as leaders in the change process. However, the content and scope of their visions are limited by commonly held assumptions or "regularities" which remain essentially unchallenged and which prohibit local initiative in restructuring.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to express appreciation to the dissertation committee: James Runkel, Dale Brubaker, David Strahan, and Roy Forbes. Their thoughtful and critical review of the research challenged the writer to work to potential.

The writer is especially grateful to family: Bill, Todd, John, Robert and Harry. Without their support and encouragement, it is doubtful that this dissertation would have been completed.

PERSONAL PREFACE

Numerous decisions are made in the course of researching and writing a dissertation, especially in the case of a qualitative study in which the investigator is the primary research instrument. The investigator is faced with making countless choices before, during and after the collection of data, all of which shape the outcome of the research. The dissertation contains the story of how the graduate student creates and shapes the research toward its final outcome. It does not reveal to the reader the multiple ways in which the research impacts upon and shapes the professional growth of the researcher. As a doctoral student, I found that the mutual shaping that takes place between researcher and research was one of the most powerful things that happened during the course of my doctoral studies. For that reason, I have included a personal preface for the purpose of providing the reader with several backstage illustrations of this mutual shaping process, which Reinharz (1979) referred to as the integration of person, problem and method.

Prior to conducting my first interview in the field, I had set a purpose for the inquiry into visionary leadership, formulated a set of guiding questions to be used in the interviews, and field-tested the questions with a retired

middle school principal. In addition, I had reviewed the literature on visionary leadership and on middle grades organization, and had outlined a research design based upon a qualitative methodology. In terms of a graduate student's "check-off list," I perceived that chapters 1-3 were virtually written.

What surprised me was that with each stage of the research, new insights were gained which made it necessary to revise the literature section and the design of the study to reflect the newly gained knowledge. The most dramatic example of this happened when I had completed Chapter 4, which contained the portraits of the principals and their leadership. After reading the draft of the chapter, a member of the dissertation committee remarked that I was riding on the "arc of optimism" and suggested that the portraits were artificial in that they portrayed only the successes of the principals.

This observation forced me to re-examine the initial purpose of the study and to determine if, indeed, I needed to include additional data in the portraits to make them balanced. After lengthy discussion with the committee and extensive review of the raw data, I decided that to balance the portraits would be to veer from the original intent of the study, which was to "document successes in leadership" rather than to catalog failures and weaknesses. It had been

my intention that the inquiry should depart from what I considered to be the tendency of educational researchers to search out the inadequacies and failures of the schools and to document the many ways in which those schools have failed to fulfill public expectation. From my 20 years experience as a public school practitioner, I concurred with Lightfoot (1983) when she wrote that "expectations hang on, impossible in their idealism, and distort efforts to improve schools" (p. 10). I was determined for my study to avoid the negativism of previous writers and, chose instead to focus on questions that examine what is working in the schools and how that might be shared and replicated.

In holding with the original intent of the study, however, I was still faced with the issue of not having provided an adequate critique of the principals and their leadership, e.g., the extent to which the principals' visions have brought about fundamental change in their respective schools. The portraits dealt primarily with surface issues of change -- e.g., how principals do what they do to move their organizations toward their goals. They did not touch upon the content of the principals' visions -- i.e., the extent to which principals' visions bring about restructuring in their respective schools. The portraits answered the "what?" question but not the "So what?" question in regard to principals' visions.

In order to address the "so what?" question and to provide the needed critique, I found it necessary to revise the literature review to include a section on vision and change, which cites Sarason (1982), Tye (1990), and Deal (1990) on deep structure and the regularities of schooling. I then revised Chapter 4 to include a section entitled "The Extent to Which Principals' Visions Challenge the Regularities of Schooling." It is my opinion that these revisions greatly strengthened Chapter 4 as well as the outcome of the research.

This feature of qualitative research, which allows for ongoing revisions which account for new insights to be incorporated into the research design at various points in the process, is one that I found to be both threatening and serendipitous. On the one hand, I felt the need to remain in control of the research -- to have it move in a linear, sequential fashion so that I could know how much was completed and how much was left to do. It was unsettling to have finished four chapters, to be moving toward what I believed to be closure, and to be faced with the problem of major revisions.

On the other hand, as I reviewed the raw data and considered what action to take, I became convinced that the field notes accurately represented the principals' perceptions of how they create and implement vision. I

discovered that the theories which had emerged from the study, were, indeed grounded in the data. This added to my confidence as a researcher and afforded me a real sense of ownership in the research. The experience enabled me to look more critically at the limitations of the research, and as I have already stated, to make revisions that enhanced and strengthened the final product. There were other instances where new insights required revision, but this was the most significant.

One of the scary, and at the same time, exhilarating things about qualitative research is the intense amount of energy and involvement required of the researcher during the data collecting stage. The human as instrument is actually honed right there in the research setting. Of course, one goes into the field with a plan, a purpose and a focus. Nevertheless, the research setting is highly unpredictable and it is replete with sensory stimuli which demand the constant attention of the investigator. Even in a controlled situation, such as a one-on-one interview conducted with the use of guiding questions, the research setting presents the researcher with an incredible number of on-the-spot problems to solve and decisions to be made, many of which cannot be anticipated beforehand. These include: deciding where to put the recording device so that it will pick up the subject's responses; determining the degree of

rapport that has been established between the informant and the investigator to make certain that an adequate level of trust exists; making certain that the informant understands the nature and purpose of the interview so that he/she is in a position to cooperate with the investigator; deciding when to probe deeper for a response from the informant and when to move on to another subject; deciding how to pace the questions so that all of the needed information can be obtained. Simultaneously, the researcher is faced with attending to the nonverbal responses and the unobtrusive measures that can be picked up in the setting. For the neophyte investigator, there is also a good deal of "talk-inside-the-head" going on pertaining to the data collecting process. I found myself constantly asking questions like "How am I doing?" and "What do I do now?" and "Did he/she really understand my questions?"

In the initial stage of the interviews, a major problem for me was deciding to put my personal reservations and insecurities aside and to aggressively pursue the information for which I had come. In doing this, I made the conscious decision to ignore the feeling that I might be intruding into the principal's busy schedule or that I might be keeping him/her from attending to important business. The insecurity on my part resulted from the fact that I neither possessed the credentials of an established

researcher nor did I share the common ground with the informants of having been a principal myself. I found, however, that with each successive interview under my belt, I gained confidence in my ability as an investigator. As a result, the issue of establishing credibility became less of a problem.

The issue of trust remained a problem throughout the research, and it was a major factor in deciding what to include in the final narratives or portraits of the principals. Participants were initially uncomfortable with the notion that the focus of the study would be the principal rather than the school. They were anxious about what I might "find" or "not find." As a result, I would open the interview with the following explanation:

> As a teacher of 20 years, I already know what doesn't work in the schools. What I'm looking for are examples of leadership that are working. You have the reputation of being a successful middle school principal and I'd like to hear about some of the ways that you have experienced success. I'd also like to talk to some of the key people who have worked with you in implementing your goals and your vision for this school.

After hearing these words, principals talked freely with me about their leadership and, in most cases, granted me the run of the school. This enabled me to view the backstage behavior of principal and staff and to collect some very rich anecdotal data. However, in deciding what to

include in the portraits, I was bound by my promise to collect examples of successes rather than weaknesses and failures. In order to preserve the integrity of the relationship between investigator and informant, I sacrificed richness of narrative.

The question that I must answer in terms of my own development as a qualitative investigator is "How could I design subsequent research so as to preserve both the integrity of the relationship between investigator and informant and the richness of the data?" Admittedly, investigators like Lightfoot and Sarason and Lipsitz, each of whom I have quoted extensively throughout the pages of the dissertation, have achieved this goal. Each of these investigators has used qualitative methodology to produce portraits which are multi-dimensional. They are lavish in their praise of their subjects' strengths. At the same time, they do not ignore the backstage behavior and the limitations of their subjects' accomplishments. These researchers have achieved a high degree of success in integrating person, problem, and method. Their writings provide examples of how the human-as-instrument can be honed to produce highly reliable and accurate data which is used to provide vivid descriptions of what is working and successful in the schools. As a result of conducting my own research, I have come to appreciate the level of excellence

represented by the works of these researchers, and I am inspired to develop to the highest level my own skills of naturalistic inquiry.

In writing this personal preface, I have merely touched upon the mutual shaping process which takes place between the researcher and the research during the course of a qualitative study. It would require a dissertation-within-a-dissertation to describe this process adequately. What I have attempted to do is to supply the reader with a few backstage examples of that process. In doing so, it is my hope that the reader will understand why I have come to the conclusion that the integration of person, problem and method is a powerful process which brings about growth and change in the life of the student, and, why I consider qualitative research to be the most significant thing in which I participated during the course of my doctoral studies.

Kathy Stillerman
June, 1991

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Visionary leadership has traditionally been perceived as the domain of chief executive officers of major organizations, top government officials, inspired religious leaders, state governors, leaders of social movements and the like. The term has been used to describe a leader's overarching goal for a system, a country, a religious group, or a movement. In the field of education as well, visionary leadership has traditionally been the domain of top level administrators, such as state superintendents of education or superintendents of local districts, in describing educational goals for an entire state or overall expectations for schooling in a particular district. The term has not traditionally extended down the ranks to middle managers, such as principals of local schools.

Over the past decade, however, the concept of vision has been broadened in the literature to include all levels of leadership. This broadening of definition has positive implications for the principalship regarding the principal's role in effecting lasting school reform in his/her respective school.

Building on the broadened definition of visionary leadership, the current study examines the role of the

middle school principal and seeks insight into how effective middle school principals act as visionary leaders as they construct vision, communicate vision, and implement vision in their respective schools. The assumption that effective principals are visionary principals is supported in the findings of several principal studies which will be reviewed in Chapter 2 of the dissertation.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A recurring theme in current organizational literature is that of restructuring institutions for adapting to fundamental changes which have taken place in the greater society (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; McCall, 1988). An equally compelling and related theme is that of visionary leadership as pivotal to organizational success in a time of ferment (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; McCall, 1988). The necessity for organizations to adapt to changing trends and the need for emergent leadership to guide and point the way through the change process, is documented in educational research as well as in the general literature (Asick, 1984).

The current educational reform movement calls for the restructuring of schools to meet the educational needs of the twenty-first century (e.g., A Nation at Risk, 1983, Sizer, Coalition of Essential Schools, 1985; Turning Points, the report of the Carnegie Council, 1989) and recognizes the

leadership dynamic as critical to a successful restructuring process (McCall, 1988; Asick, 1984). Research on effective schools has identified variables related to the school's central mission of improved instruction and increased learning. A consistent finding has been that a key factor in organizational success is the principal's involvement in the core activities of the school through effective instructional leadership (Purkey and Smith, 1982).

When viewed within the context of the broader theme of organizational change demanding visionary leadership, the findings of the effective schools research suggest that effective principals perform as visionary principals. That is, effective principals, functioning as instructional leaders, guide the core activities which promote the central mission of the school (i.e., improved instruction and increased learning); thus, they shape their organizations toward their understanding or vision for improved instruction and increased learning.

It appears that what applies in the general literature is true about schools as well: If schools as organizations are to restructure to meet the needs of society, visionary principals are needed to lead in the change process.

The notion of principal as visionary leader is one which needs further exploration and definition because it is not universally accepted. An image which persists in the literature is one of principal as middle manager, member of

the school bureaucracy, who is responsible for the smooth running and maintenance of the school over which he/she has been put in charge. This view has not lent itself to the notion of principal as visionary leader; rather, it has reinforced the image of principal as keeper of the status quo (Bredeson, 1985).

More recently, organizational theorists have challenged the bureaucratic model of management as an effective means of providing leadership for restructuring institutions and for bringing about permanent change. They have concluded that top down, chain of command management is virtually useless in bringing about grass roots change. Alternative models which involve the pushing down of power and decision making to local organizational units, have been explored. Thus, local units, such as schools, have become the focus of studies in organizational effectiveness. Concurrently, the focus on leadership study has shifted from examining only leadership at the top of an organization to looking at how leadership is shared and how leaders interact with their constituents. In this interactive model, the middle manager, or in the case of this study, the principal, is looked to to develop a vision which fits with the overall expectations of the district, but which uniquely meets the needs of the clients being served (Lezotte, 1989). Models of management which encourage interactive leadership and shared power also encourage the notion of principal as

visionary leader. This study advances the notion of principal as visionary leader and encourages principals to think of themselves in that way.

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The purposes of the study are to discover how five successful middle school principals in North Carolina define vision and how they perceive that they communicate and implement vision. The intended outcome of the study is increased understanding of how middle school principals function as visionary leaders.

Research Questions

1. What do successful middle school principals say are their visions?
2. How do successful middle school principals create their visions?
3. What factors do successful middle school principals say shape their visions?
4. What do successful middle school principals do to communicate their visions?
5. What do successful middle school principals do to implement their visions?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current research builds upon prior qualitative studies which have sought primarily through interview, observation, and examination of documentary evidence, to enter the world of the principal for the purpose of gaining insight into what it means to be an effective or successful

school leader (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; Lightfoot, 1983; Lipsitz, 1984; Bredeson, 1875; Sashkin, 1988). Recognizing that multiple perceptions of reality exist among the various participants in any given setting (in this case, the school), the researchers of these studies used data collected to construct case studies or written portraits of each subject, which reflect the various perceptions encountered. The current study relies heavily on the findings of Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) who concluded that what separated the seven effective principals interviewed in their study from the principals' peers was a commitment on the part of the effective principals to an educational ideal, a vision which they held for the organization.

Whereas Blumberg and Greenfield's principals came from all three levels of schooling (elementary, middle, high), the current study explores the notion of visionary leadership exclusively within a middle grades setting. It seeks to provide examples of how effective or successful middle school principals act as visionary leaders by supporting the core activities which support the core values of the school to bring about improved instruction and increased learning for pre-adolescents in their respective schools.

The study sits squarely in the camp of those in which the researcher frames the issue of school reform by looking

at what is working and what is healthy in educational practice: "The inquiry begins by examining what works, identifying good schools, asking what is right here, and whether it is replicable, transportable to other environs" (Lightfoot, 1983, p. 10).

The study is significant for three major reasons:

(1) It adds to the body of research on how effective or successful principals function in their role as school leaders.

(2) It collects specific data on middle school leadership, which will help practitioners to determine the extent to which previous studies can be generalized to middle school practice.

(3) It supports the notion of empowering leaders at all levels of schooling as a means of effecting grass roots change in restructuring education in the United States. More specifically, it encourages principals to think of themselves as visionary leaders rather than keepers of the status quo.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study of what middle school principals do to realize their visions presents two major problems: one is related to defining the key concept of vision; the other relates to how information about vision can be accessed.

Vision is a fuzzy concept which takes on a variety of meanings in the literature, ranging from spiritual, esoteric definitions which equate vision with inspiration, insight, and prophetic leadership, to more mundane and concrete definitions which equate vision with goal setting and long

term planning. The researcher was aware from the outset that she was exploring a concept that has been loosely construed and broadly defined. The choice of a research methodology which would tolerate ambiguity in definition became critical. Thus, a qualitative methodology was chosen because it would allow the researcher, through prolonged engagement in the research setting and through the thick description of the data, to hone a particular definition of vision within the research setting.

Equally problematic was the task of observing leaders in the process of communicating and implementing vision. The principals who were studied as examples of visionary leadership possess different strengths and weaknesses, exhibit effective or successful leadership in varying degrees and with varying consistency. Those who are verbal and articulate appeared at the outset to be stronger leaders than those whose strengths lie in other areas -- e.g., those who are strong facilitators or resource providers. The leaders and organizations under study are imperfect and changing. The notion of finding some static model of visionary leadership had to be abandoned; and, instead, the researcher looked for slices of life, snapshots of visionary leadership in process.

There was risk inherent in undertaking a study such as this one. The researcher was like an explorer going into the field without detailed maps of the territory. The

potential for discovery and greater understanding existed. At the same time, the expedition was fraught with unexpected turns which might have bogged down or gotten lost in ambiguity. Nevertheless, the territory of visionary leadership is a compelling territory; and, although the researcher went into the field without a detailed map, she did not depart empty handed. She was equipped with the knowledge of current research on visionary leadership and with a methodology appropriate to the inquiry.

DEFINITIONS

Vision - A principal's image or picture or what a particular middle school can or should be based on the history or culture of the particular school and stemming from the core values held by members of the culture of that school. Vision of middle school principals is necessarily shaped by consensus on the goals for middle level education (i.e., developmental responsiveness and academic achievement) and by the vision and goals of the district.

Core Values - The most basic beliefs/reasons for the existence of the organization. In the case of middle level schools, core values would include or be related to developmental responsiveness to clients, instructional improvement, and increased student learning.

Core Activities - Actions and activities which support the core values, and thus, implement vision. Instruction is a core activity in any school. When principals act to facilitate instruction, they are engaging in core activities.

Effective Principal - In order to implement vision, the (Visionary principal) effective principal becomes integrally involved in the core activities which promote the core values of the school. The management role is not perceived by the effective principal as an added duty; rather, management becomes the tool by which the effective principal develops the talents of employees and other stakeholders in the core activities which promote the vision.

Successful Principal - Principal who has been nominated by a panel of middle school experts because he/she is perceived by at least two experts to be among the most effective middle school principals in the state.

Instructional Leadership - The principal's involvement in the core activity of instruction by acting as a resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence (Smith and Andrews, 1988).

ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY

The remainder of the study is organized into four chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature and includes three sections: (1) A Context for the View of Principal as Visionary Leader; (2) Principals as Visionary Leaders; (3) Vision and Middle Level Education.

Chapter 3 outlines the design and explains the methodology used in the research. Chapter 4 includes case studies or portraits of the five principals who participated in the study. Chapter 5 includes a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I. A Context for the View of Principal as Visionary Leader

Writing and research on the principal per se, and more specifically that literature related to the principal and his/her vision, fits like a piece of a puzzle into the greater body of literature on organizations and change. In order to gain insight from the literature relating to the principal and his/her vision, it is necessary to understand something about how organizational theorists and contemporary thinkers portray the greater society in which both principal and school exist.

General organizational literature supports the notion of a society in flux and recognizes the need for a new breed of leadership to meet the challenges which face organizations as a result of this change. John Naisbitt (1982), one of the most widely quoted chroniclers of the past decade, outlined ten new directions in which society is heading. The ten trends which Naisbitt predicts will shape the future are: change from industrial to information society; change from forced technology to high tech/high touch; change from a national economy to a world economy; change from short term to long term; change from

centralization to decentralization; change from institutional help to self help; change from representative democracy to participative democracy; change from hierarchies to networking; change from North to South; change from either/or to multiple options.

Naisbitt concluded that these trends represent a paradigm shift, or change in the predominant world view. Presently, we are living in what Naisbitt called a "time of parenthesis" in which he said, "We have neither left behind the centralized, industrialized, or economically self-contained America of the past; nor, have we embraced the future" (p. 279). Naisbitt ended his best selling book, Megatrends with a positive and invigorating note:

> But in this time of parenthesis, we have extraordinary leverage and influence -- individually, professionally, and institutionally -- If we can only get a clear sense, a clear conception, a clear vision of the road ahead! My God, what a fantastic time to be alive! (p. 283).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) summarized the leadership environment in a changing society under three major contexts: commitment to the work force, or the lack of it; complexity; and, credibility, or the tendency toward public scrutiny of leaders (pp. 11-12). They described leadership in the midst of this "apathy, escalating change, and uncertainty," like "maneuvering over ever faster and faster

undirected ball bearings" (p. 13). These writers concurred with Naisbitt's assessment of current times:

> We are approaching a major turning point in history -- what Carl Jaspers referred to as an "axial point," where some new height of vision is sought, where some fundamental redefinitions are required, where our table of values will have to be reviewed (p. 13).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) also affirmed the need for visionary leadership:

> This book was written in the belief that leadership is the pivotal force behind successful organizations, and that to create vital and viable organizations, leadership is necessary to help organizations develop a new vision of what they can be, then mobilize the organizational change toward the new vision (pp. 2-3).

Peters and Waterman (1983) researched 43 large companies. They found that leadership is a major "dimension" in success among those top performing corporations which are meeting the challenge of a changing society.

In researching organizational response to change in major corporations, Peters and Austin (1985) devoted their introductory chapter to what they described as "a brewing revolution in American Management -- a back to basics movement to instill pride in one's organization and enthusiasm for one's work" (xvii). According to these authors, the need for reform in organizational management stemmed from the "battering" that American business took in

the seventies, "as a result of OPEC, the Japanese, social and political unrest, changing concerns as represented by EPA, OSHA, EEOC, and other federal agencies, and an emerging work force that were substantially different from those in the past" (p. xvi). This came on the heels of a twenty-five year post war boom that fostered what Peters and Austin called the "American Management Mystique" that touted American business management as the "primary asset that America could export to the world" (p. xvi).

Hayes and Abernathy's "Managing Our Way to Decline," has been cited as a cornerstone of the corporate revolution. Two additional works which stimulated public discourse on the failure of large bureaucratic structures like the federal government where Halberstam's The Brightest and Best, which examined the management of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and Moynihan's Maximum Feasible Understanding, an analysis of the failures of the Great Society.

Other works explored Naisbitt's megatrends and their implications for management of American organizations. These included Peters and Waterman's In Search of Excellence, Ouchi's Theory Z, Paschale and Athos' The Art of Japanese Management, and Moss and Kanter's The Change Masters.

As a result of public discourse on organizational change and leadership, a body of literature has emerged which focuses on the issue of leadership development. This

literature, which emphasizes a "new leadership" (Bennis and Nanus, 1985) for a new paradigm, is distinctive in several respects:

(1) It is based on research which focuses upon organizational health, rather than upon the traditional social science approach that attempted to "uncover malignancies and search for the cures" (Lightfoot, 1983, p. 10). An underlying assumption of these newer studies is that, although qualities like "goodness" and "excellence" are difficult to define, they are recognizable in concrete situations, i.e., People can recognize good leadership and excellent organizations when they see them in operation. As Lightfoot (1983) put it:

> The inquiry begins with identifying good schools (organizations), asking what's right here, and whether it is replicable, transportable to other environs (p. 10).

This type of research has the potential for yielding vivid descriptions or portraits of the organizations and people who inhabit them -- "material from which to work, road maps, texts of culture . . ." (Lightfoot, 1983, p. 9).

Using methods similar to those described by Lightfoot, Peters and Waterman (1982), Peters and Austin (1985), Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Schein (1986) researched top performing organizations and their executives. Lightfoot (1983) observed "good" high schools and Lipsitz (1984)

observed "successful" middle schools. Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) and Sashkin and Fulmer (1987) studied "effective" principals.

(2) It assumes that leaders are made and not born (Peters and Austin, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Gardner, 1988; Hersey and Blanchard, 1988; Rogus, 1990; Herman, 1990). Bennis and Nanus (1985) wrote:

> The truth is that major capacities and competencies of leadership can be learned, and we are all educable, at least if the basic desire to learn is there and we do not suffer from serious learning disorders. Furthermore, whatever natural endowments we bring to the role of leadership, they can be enhanced; nurture is far more important than nature in who becomes a successful leader (p. 222).

Even more specific to the topic of leadership vision, in the February issue of NASSP Journal, the editor asserted:

> Leaders aren't all born with it (vision). Acquiring it comes, however, if we are aware of it and nourish its development. Anyone in management who aspires to leadership soon learns to anticipate what's going to happen. Those caught unaware a few times are apt to spend a few moments figuring out what's likely to happen next time. At first, it may be a short-term vision, later it also becomes long-term -- and that's when one is well on the road to becoming a better leader (p. v).

(3) It is concerned with the sharing of power, with decentralization of power; at the same time, it recognizes the importance of the leader's active involvement as the lynch pin for enabling the organization to reach its goals for success. Peters and Austin (1985) described this

concern as a paradox, a "tough/soft stance that leaders must take regarding their power." They wrote about successful organizations thusly:

> These are no excuses environments where radical decentralization frees people to make anything happen, where training is provided, where extraordinary results are then routinely expected because the barriers to them have been cleared away. There is a certain militancy in the way values are protected and people are empowered to take possession of their own achievements.
>
> . . . The best bosses -- in school, hospital, factory -- are neither exclusively tough nor exclusively tender. They are both: tough on the values and tender on the support of the people who would dare to take a risk and try something new in support of those values (p. xviii).

(4) It does not view leadership as the exclusive domain of chief executive officers. Instead, it promotes the notion that leadership roles abound in every organization and that organizational success is dependent on these multiple roles (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Peters and Austin, 1985; Hersey and Blanchard, 1988; Bennis and Nanus, 1985). Hersey and Blanchard (1988) defined leadership as the "process of influencing the activities of an individual or group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation" (p. 86). In any situation in which someone is trying to influence the behavior of another individual or group, leadership is occurring. Thus, parents, teachers, friends, colleagues, etc., can act as leaders at any given time.

Peters and Austin (1985), in outlining some "building blocks of excellence" wrote: "nor is our focus limited to the chairman of the giant company; we include here managers at all levels . . . Our examples penetrate deeper to capture what we call the smell of an innovation-oriented company" (p. xix). And, Bennis and Nanus (1989) emphasized that "our present crisis calls for leadership at every level of society in all organizations that compose it" (p 228). This view broadens the definition of leadership and increases the potential for increased leadership roles up and down any given organization.

Summary: This body of literature endorses leadership which seeks change "that reflects the community of interests of both leaders and followers; which frees up and pools the collective energies in pursuit of a common goal" (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p. 218). Burns referred to this as "transformative leadership," a term which Bennis and Nanus expanded upon and used to summarize the epitome of effective leadership for a new paradigm:

> Transformative leadership is causative -- it can create and invent organizations that empower employees and satisfy their needs. Transformative leadership is morally purposeful and elevating -- it can deploy the talents of employees, choose purposes and visions that are based on key values of the work force and create the social architecture that supports them. Transformative leadership can move followers to higher degrees of consciousness, such as liberty, freedom, justice, and self-actualization (pp. 217-218).

II. PRINCIPALS AS VISIONARY LEADERS

The present day middle school principal leads his/her school in a societal context which is perceived as one in which change is the norm and in which the need for visionary leadership is publicly recognized. Studies on organizational leadership have been conducted with chief executive officers of highly productive and innovative corporations in the private, profit-making sector (Peters and Waterman, 1983; Peters and Austin, 1985, Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Schein, 1986). As these studies have attempted to describe the essence of outstanding leadership, the metaphor of visionary leader has emerged.

With the recent attention drawn to public educational institutions and their shortcomings (e.g., The Report of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, The National Assessment of Educational Progress Reports on Testing, 1989), researchers from outside the field of education, and understandably from within the field, have attempted to adapt the findings of these general studies to educational leadership. Peters and Austin (1985), Bennis and Nanus (1985), McCall (1988), Bredeson (1989), Ovard (1990), Rogus (1990), and Herman (1990) concurred that the metaphor of visionary leadership is descriptive of the principal's role as well as the role of CEO.

The general notion that organizations need visionary leaders in a time of change has influenced perceptions about the principal's role by expanding public expectation of the role beyond that of "maintaining the organization" into "leading" the organization. Internal factors have also interacted over time to change perceptions of the principal's role in the direction of increased leadership responsibility and, thus, toward a newer definition of leadership as encompassed in Bennis and Nanus' "transformative" leader. These factors will be discussed under the headings Growth of the Public School Movement, Effective Schools Research, and The Rise of Site-Based Management.

Growth of the Public School Movement

As the public school movement in the United States has grown in size and complexity, the role of the principal has expanded. During the early stages (1647-1850), schools with more than one teacher designated a head teacher -- also called "headmaster, provost, rector, preceptor, principal or principal person" (Brubaker and Simon, 1986). Teaching remained the principal's primary role; however, the more urban the schools, the more administrative duties the principal teacher performed.

Between the years of 1850 and 1920, the responsibilities of the principal increased, so that the

principal-teacher role gave way to that of "Directing Manager" (Pierce, 1934, p. 212). Not only did the principal's role shift from that of teacher to manager, the increased duties were perceived as "increasing the prestige of their position" (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980, p. 11).

It was also during this period that the supervising role of the principal was established. Schools were continuing to grow and additional teachers had to be hired. Many of these teachers came to the classroom poorly prepared. Local committees, which had heretofore taken the responsibility for overseeing instructional matters, found this task increasingly complex. Thus, they delegated the responsibility of supervision of teachers to the principals (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980, p. 13).

In addition to the supervisory role, principals also took on increased responsibility for school-community relations during this period. Pierce (1934, p. 217) described the establishment of the first Mothers' clubs in 1894, which met at the schools to learn about various phases of the work of the schools. The principal was responsible for meeting with these interested parents.

Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) asserted that by the turn of the century, the critical and enduring features of the principalship -- instruction, supervision, management, and community relations -- were established (p. 12).

Brubaker and Simon (1986) characterized the role of the principal from 1920 to 1970 as that of "Professional and Scientific Manager." This was a time of professionalizing the principalship, as evidenced in the formation in 1920 of a national organization of elementary school principals and their affiliation with the National Education Association; the effort of departments of education to develop programs for the training of principals; the appearance of numerous journal articles on the principalship; and systematic study of the principalship which focused on the need for principals to assume a greater role in controlling the instructional program and to spend less time in routine "housekeeping duties" (p. 11).

During this time, the schools as institutions were influenced heavily by the Scientific Management Movement in industry in which Henry Fayol set forth the essentials of management by objectives. In education, the Tyler Rationale (1949) was education's answer to management by objectives in the schools. The steps to follow: (1) select objectives and behavioralize them, (2) select activities, (3) organize activities and evaluate (p. 11).

A bureaucratic structure of organization was purported to be the ideal vehicle for implementing control, efficiency and progress that management by objectives was thought to ensure. It was during this period that schools took on the same bureaucratic structure adopted by their organizational

counterparts in business and industry. By the 1970's, the role of the principal as administrator, accountable for the governance of the school, was firmly entrenched. The scientific movement had put in place a bureaucratic structure in which the principal performed as middle manager, with authority flowing from central office down to the local units. Over the past decade, emphasis has been placed on the need for principals to focus more of their attention on instructional leadership (Smith and Andrews, 1989). The expectation is that principals will possess effective management skills. At the same time, the heart of any school is its instructional program. Therefore, in order to be an effective leader, the principal must be able to manage the instructional processes of the school as effectively as he/she attends to other administrative duties. This dimension of the principal's role will be discussed more extensively in the section on Effective Schools Research.

To summarize, the growth of the public school movement has led to the expansion and strengthening of the role of the principal in terms of his/her duties -- e.g., instruction, supervision, community relations, management -- and to the professionalization of that role. The strengthening of the role has brought about a greater likelihood of the principal's functioning as visionary leader.

Effective Schools Research

A second internal factor which has impacted upon the role of the principal as visionary leader is the Effective Schools Research. This body of literature, which began as an effort to find and study schools in which the children of the poor were at least as well prepared in basic skills as the children of the middle class (Edmonds, 1979), has spawned an entire movement to promote equity and achievement within the schools. The movement has also produced a body of research which focuses upon improved instruction for increased learning. Early studies by Brookover and Lezotte (1979), Edmonds (1979), and Rutter (1979) identified several characteristics which separated effective from less effective schools: safe and orderly environment, a clear and focused school mission, a climate of high expectations, the opportunity to learn with a high percentage of student time engaged in well-planned intellectual activities; the frequent monitoring of student progress; and good home-school relations.

A significant point of agreement in the literature, especially as it relates to the current study, is that strong, instructional leadership on the part of the principal is one of the essential ingredients of effective schools. Brookover and Lezotte (1979) viewed principals of effective schools as aggressive instructional leaders and

evaluators of basic achievement. Edmonds (1982) called instructional leadership the "bonding agent" for effective teaching and learning. Purkey and Smith's (1982) synthesis of research on effective schools indicated that strong instructional leadership on the part of the principal or other staff members is a characteristic of effective schools.

Smith and Andrews (1980) defined instructional leadership as the ability of the principal, as perceived by teachers, to function effectively in four areas: as resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence. Examples of ways in which principals function in the fours areas are:

(1) Resource Provider -- Provides released time for staff to learn to work as teams; Uses staff ideas as a resource; Taps business and political leaders for school support.

(2) Instructional resource -- Models learning; Inspires teachers with knowledge of curriculum; Pushes teachers to expand into new ways of teaching for improving instruction; Spends time observing teachers in classrooms.

(3) Communicator -- Shares decision making through use of senate; Accountability is prized and expected; Regularly gives staff members feedback regarding their performance.

(4) Visible Presence -- Hall walker; Always seems to be where the action is taking place; Everybody seems to know what he stands for (pp. 86-87).

Principals who assume the role of instructional leader in their schools are, in essence, acting as visionary leaders. Principals functioning as instructional leaders guide the core activities which promote the central mission of the school (i.e., improved instruction and increased learning). Accordingly, they shape their organizations toward their understanding or vision for improved instruction and increased learning. As stated earlier, the heart of the school is its instructional program. If the principal is to be an effective leader, he/she must be capable of managing the instructional processes of the school as well as he/she attends to other administrative duties.

The effective schools research is virtually responsible for the current notion that instructional leadership is pivotal to effective schools. The research also promotes the notion that strong general leadership by the principal is a key ingredient in effective schools. Assick (1984) concluded that without effective leadership there is no effective school. Andrews and Sodin (1987) in Sashkin (1988) found that students achieve more in schools where principals are seen as strong leaders.

Site-Based Management

School-based or site-based management is "a program or philosophy adopted by schools or school districts to improve education by increasing the autonomy of the school staff to make site decisions" (White, 1989, p. 1). White estimated that over 100 school districts across the country have experimented with it. In California, over 60 districts operate under shared decision making (Clune and White, 1988). Also, Florida, Minnesota and New York are currently initiating it. In North Carolina, the School Improvement and Accountability Act, which was passed in the summer of 1989, has become the legislative vehicle for implementing site-based management in the state.

Site-based management is not new. White traces the movement to the decentralization efforts of the sixties and seventies in New York and Detroit. However, the earlier movement was credited with preserving the status quo (Fantini and Gittell, 1973) in that it simply transferred power from one form of bureaucracy to another. The current effort, which combines the sharing of powers between central office and site units, makes changes in the traditional structures of authority (White, 1989, p. 2). In one sense, it delegates more responsibility to the principal. By recognizing the importance of the local unit in the decision-making process, it pushes authority down to the

principal and his/her staff. In another sense, it calls on the principal to share his/her power by increasing the authority of teachers and other professionals. The concept of site-based management is highly compatible with the type of leadership that Bennis and Nanus described as "transformative."

It has been argued that site-based management will reduce the authority of the principal over his/her staff -- that there may, in fact, be no reason to have an administrator when decisions are made by teams of teachers. If viewed in the bureaucratic sense of chain of command, positional power, this could be true. Under site-based management, however, it is no longer appropriate for principals to use bureaucratic management techniques; nor, will those top down techniques be used on them.

Site-based management requires new management techniques, such as consensus building and skills in gaining shared vision. It also requires the principal to view himself/herself in a different light. Shared decision making relieves the principal of the need to control all of the functions of the school -- to wear all of the hats simultaneously. It allows for integration of roles -- e.g., supervisor, manager, public relations person, instructor -- in such a way that the principal brings all of those roles to bear on one focus -- promotion of the core activities which support the core values of the organization. The

effective principal, under site-based management, is a strong principal, not because he/she controls people and programs but because, symbolically, the success of the school rests on his/her shoulders.

In summary, three internal factors converge to strengthen the role of the principal: the growth and complexity of public schooling demand strong leadership at the building level; effective schools literature reveals the importance of the principal's leadership in the core activity of instruction to student achievement; and, site-based management brings the local school site center stage in terms of decision making for improved instruction and serves as a tool to the principal who seeks to lead his/her school according to a new paradigm.

As will be pointed out in a later section, there is frequently a gap between expectation and reality. Many principals report that they are consumed by administrative duties, even though they believe in the notion of instructional leadership; many principals report that their leadership is constrained by unrealistic expectations from central office or by conditions at the local level (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980). Whatever the current reality may be for the modern day principal, there is a strong conceptual base in the literature for the emergence of a principal-leader who fits the description of Bennis and Nanus' transformative leader. The modern day principal, like

his/her counterpart in business or industry, is called upon by contemporary thinkers and organizational theorists to provide his/her school with fresh leadership for a new paradigm.

Vision: Definition

Current literature on organizational theory and on leadership supports a definition of vision as the leader's image or picture of what the organization can be or should be. The literature also supports the notion that vision is an essential ingredient of leadership (Bennis, 1985).

In interviewing seven effective principals, Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) noted that each had "a definite idea of what they wanted their school to be like . . . a vision and a commitment to it." The authors concluded that it was "this personal commitment to a particular educational or organizational ideal that distinguished them from their peers" (p. 205).

Bennis and Nanus (1985) described vision as the leader's "mental image of the future state of the organization . . . which articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than now exists" (p. 89). In their study of leaders, the authors found that organizational vision was closely tied to the personal vision of the leader -- that leaders have a "clear

idea of what they want to do professionally and personally and the strength to persist in the face of setbacks, even failure."

Bredeson (1988) defined vision as the principal's ability to "holistically view the present, to reinterpret the mission of the school to all of its constituents and to use imagination and perceptual skills to think beyond accepted notions of what is practical and what is of immediate application in present situations to speculative ideas and to, preferably, possible futures" (p. 47).

In their study of organizational excellence, which includes a chapter on "Good High Schools," Peters and Austin (1985) described vision as "the leader's concise statement/picture of where the company and its people are heading and why they should be proud of it" (p. 334).

Sashkin (1988), drawing from the work which Edgar Schien has done on organizational culture and leadership, identified two sets of leadership activities -- creating bureaucratic linkages and creating cultural linkages -- and asserted that these activities must take place in the context of vision, which they defined as "some broader notion of the nature of school" (p. 241).

In their interviews with CEO's of outstanding companies, Peters and Austin (1985) found that the substance of the vision was not as important as the fact that the leader possessed vision. The seven principals in Blumberg

and Greenfield's (1980) study had different visions and differed in the degree to which they could reflect upon their visions, articulate them, and theorize about them. Nevertheless, it was evident in the interviews conducted with these participants, that each was committed to a job-related goal that went beyond the status quo.

Brubaker (1989), a professor on the education administration faculty at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, participated in a "Principal-Professor Exchange program" in which he filled the role of principal for several weeks each in six schools in North Carolina and Ohio. Concerning vision, he wrote:

> My conclusion with regard to vision was that it may be part of a neat and tidy conceptual model in a professor's course on the principalship, but in the real world of schools, it is simply lived by the effective principal (p. 49).

Vision as a Process

Although terminology differs among various writers, there is evidence in the studies described above that visionary leadership involves three basic processes: Leaders must first construct (Bennis and Nanus, 1985) or concoct (Peters and Austin, 1985) vision; leaders must then articulate (Bennis, 1983) or transmit (Schien, 1986) or communicate the vision; leaders must, finally, implement (Bennis and Nanus, 1985) or embed (Schien, 1986) vision into

the organization. The process is not linear or sequential but recursive and interactive; however, for the sake of clarity, each process will be discussed in isolation.

Sashkin (1988) observed that effective school leaders must "be able to conceive a vision, a cultural ideal for the school. They must be able to generate school-wide support for this vision by involving others in articulating a philosophy that summarizes the vision and by creating policies and programs that turn the vision into action" (p. 248).

Herman (1990) asserted that leaders construct a vision of what "should be" by developing detailed road maps. These maps are constructed through strategic planning. The long-range plan becomes the "what should be vision." Herman outlined the steps in strategic planning: reaching consensus on the beliefs that underpin the culture of the school, gathering internal scanning data such as test scores and school climate measures, gathering external scanning data, such as demographics, political, economic and attitudinal factors, and assessing Critical Factors or those factors absolutely necessary to achieve a productive and caring school. This data becomes the "what is" condition of the school and is used to form the "what should be" vision. After comparing the "what is" to the "what should be" conditions of the school, a mission statement is constructed to guide the principal and other planners to take additional

steps: analyze strengths and weaknesses, establish goals to be achieved, establish objectives. It is then the principal's responsibility to set forth an action plan that will cause the goals to be reached.

Lipsitz (1985) found that successful middle schools had principals as leaders who "articulate their vision and have the energy to work toward it, objective by objective and year by year. They are not worn out, nor have they retreated into ironic detachment or managerial defensiveness . . . The principals make these schools coherent, binding philosophy to goals, goals to programs, and programs to practices" (p. 175). Peters and Austin (1985) reported that their CEO's communicated their visions through "attention, symbol, and drama" (p. 248).

Rogus (1990) asserted that the way for principals to communicate their visions is by developing a vision statement, fostering faculty ownership of the vision, communicating the vision to concerned constituents, and developing organizational trust in the vision and providing for on-going reinforcement of its major emphasis.

Schein (1986) said that four vehicles for articulating and reinforcing vision are: (1) the organization's design and structure, (2) organizational systems and procedures, (3) the design of physical space, facades, buildings, (4) stories, legends, myths, and parables about important

events and people, and (5) formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds and charters.

Blumberg and Greenfield's (1980) principals communicated their visions through the way that they spend their time during the day. They refused to get consumed by maintenance activities and second order priorities. They chose to involve themselves in activities which would foster the realization of their vision for the school. They completed paperwork before or after hours; or, they delegated it to someone else, or else it didn't get done. They purposely found ways to free themselves during the school day to be involved in goal-related activities.

Schein (1986) identified five primary mechanisms for embedding vision: (1) what leaders pay attention to, measure, and control, (2) leader reactions to critical incidents and organizational crises, (3) deliberate role modeling, teaching, coaching by leaders, (4) criteria for allocation of rewards and status, and (5) criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement, and ex-communication (p. 255).

Principals in Sashkin and Fulmer's (1987) study were described as "charismatic" in that they were able to "mobilize the members of the organization to carry out their vision and make it real" (p. 248).

Interaction of Vision, Values, and Culture

General studies of leadership (Peters and Austin, 1983) as well as more specific studies of the principalship (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980) indicate that a leader's vision is rooted in his/her personal values; and, success is related to his/her ability to transmit and embed those values into the culture of the organization. Bennis and Nanus (1988) used the classic example of Ray Kroc's success with McDonald's restaurant. Kroc envisioned a fast food chain which would produce quality, service, cleanliness, and a dollar's worth of food for every dollar spent. Kroc made the teaching of those values an integral part of the training program for all of his employees. Through the importance he attached to the core values, he shaped the way the work was done in his organization so well that he was able to franchise the package and sell it all over the world.

Sashkin (1988) described the visionary principal as one who "defines the shared values that support the critical functions of the school organization." He listed these as: (1) adapting to the environment, (2) achieving goals, and (3) coordinating or integrating the various activities that take place in the organization. Sashkin then identified the shared values behind the critical functions:

(1) Adapting -- The school must believe that it controls the environment and ultimate destiny.

(2) Achieving goals -- Central values should be "doing and achieving" and "being in becoming."

(3) Internal Coordination -- Schools are complex systems which should not be controlled by rules, policies, and procedures; rather, they must be controlled by mutual adjustment.

Sashkin (1988, p. 245) further suggested broad values that support all of these critical functions: "All people are perfectible" and "What is real is what everyone agrees is real," (social reality).

These writers imply a close relationship between the values of the leader and the leader's knowledge of the organization, e.g. its mission and purpose. Whereas Schein (1986) and Sashkin (1988) used the term "culture" to describe the unique way in which values, norms, and history have come together to make the organization what it is, Bennis and Nanus (1988) and McCall (1989) used the term "social architecture" of the organization. The principal as culture leader or social architect "communicates to teachers, staff, pupils and parents a vision that includes a set of values that are the most important determiners of the direction that a school will take" (McCall, 1989, p.18). This means that the principal must not only have a strong set of values, but must also have a thorough understanding

of the organization which he/she leads. Implicit in such a view is the notion that successful principals will continue to come from among the ranks of teachers and counselors and other personnel who know the curriculum and have operated within the organizational structure of the schools which they will lead.

Regarding the influence or power of leaders to embed their values into the culture of the organization, two strands of thought emerge. Writers such as Peters and Waterman (1982), Peters and Austin (1983), Sarason (1971), and Bennis and Nanus (1988) emphasized the extent to which leaders influence their organizations and shape culture. They described their leaders as energetic, persistent, proactive, and committed to an ideal that they are willing to work for, even if it means personal sacrifice. These leaders perceive themselves as capable of working around the constraints that impede progress of their goals. They do not perceive themselves as victimized by the system and its constraints. A second group of writers, represented by Schein (1986), Sashkin (1988), and Bredeson (1985) emphasized the extent to which organizational culture shapes the leader. In his study of organizations in the private sector, Schein found that in the early stages, it is possible for the leader to shape the culture. However, as the organization ages, it becomes more difficult because the culture becomes "frozen." At that point, the culture

influences the leader more than the leader influences the culture.

Bredeson (1985) examined the daily routines of five principals, who were selected from five districts in a large mid-western state. Unlike Sashkin's charismatic principals, Peters and Austin's outstanding CEO's, and Blumberg and Greenfield's effective principals, who were chosen for their exemplary leadership, the principals in Bredeson's study were described as "typical in the sense that their roles differed little from the principals' roles described in most textbooks on school administration" (p. 32). Using data which he collected from shadowing the principals for several days, Bredeson categorized the tasks which he recorded into activities related to maintenance, survival, or vision. He found that 89% of the principals' total number of daily activities could be categorized as maintenance activities -- those intended to keep the school doors open and the process going" (p. 39). Only 5.5% of the activities could be classified as activities relating to vision (p. 38). Bredeson noted that "despite a very clear difference in their administrative images of leadership style and action, the principals performed similar tasks, had similar daily routines and differed little from the other."

Bredeson concluded that the role of the principal has become "culturally standardized" around the maintenance

metaphor and that principals tend to busy themselves with maintenance activities because that is what is valued in the culture.

> It is often easier to assume tedious tasks in the cafeteria, parking lot, or at athletic events because what one does and who one is as principal is quite apparent, quite recognizable, and expected by most constituents than to engage in long-range planning, the assessment of educational needs, or massive curricular change. The latter simply do not provide immediate results or gratification, and they may not be equally valued (p. 46).

He maintained that principals will have to help in "redefining the nature of the role and its attendant responsibilities." What is needed is a redistribution of role emphasis among the metaphorical themes of survival, maintenance, and vision. Principals can do this by examining their daily routines and by reordering their schedules so that they spend more time envisioning and interpreting the role of the school for educational stakeholders in the community. It is interesting that Blumberg and Greenfield's principals did just that.

Vision and the Problem of Change*

Seymour Sarason (1982) noted that educational practice in the schools is governed by certain underlying beliefs or assumptions which he called "regularities." Examples of regularities include the following assumptions: that students should be in school from 8:00 to 3:00, five days a week, for 180 days a year; that students should be in graded classrooms; that math or any other subject should be taught in 50 minute periods on a daily basis throughout the student's entire schooling; and, that the top down, hierarchical nature of bureaucracy is always appropriate for management of local units by central office.

According to Sarason, these aspects of schooling are taken for granted; they are the "givens" in educational practice. Sarason hypothesized that until the regularities of schooling are identified and challenged, significant restructuring in the schools cannot occur. Complex programs and innovations continue to be introduced -- e.g., new math,

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It was not the researcher's intent to deal with the issue of deep structure or regularities at the time that the study was designed and the research questions formulated. The question of regularities did not appear to be a central issue in the study of principals and their communication and implementation of vision. In retrospect, however, it is evident that the deep structure of schooling has influenced the kinds of visions that the particular principals have concocted and the manner in which each vision can be communicated and implemented.

cooperative learning, site-based management; but, as long as the regularities remain unexamined, "the more things change the more they stay the same."

Sarason (1982), as well as other writers, has highlighted the importance of looking at the regularities or "deep structure" (Tye, 1987) of schooling to determine how the basic assumptions act to prohibit desired change.

Deal (1990) argued that current efforts to improve public schools have been ineffective because they have focused upon first order changes (Cuban, 1984) which correct "visible structural flaws such as teacher evaluation and reward systems, unclear goals, or decision-making authority, especially around instructional issues" (p. 9). In focusing on these first order changes, reformers have overlooked "more durable and stable cultural values and mind-sets behind and beneath these everyday behaviors. These deeper patterns provide meaning and continuity. They are also the source of many frustrations and problems" (p. 9).

Deal (1990) proposed that deep structure and practices cannot be "reformed;" they must rather be "transformed." Transforming an organization entails altering its fundamental character or ability:

> Schools will become fundamentally different only when we quit correcting surface deficiencies and recognize that transformation involves a collective renegotiation

> of historically anchored myths, metaphors and meanings . . .

Deal implied that transformation involves a spiritual dimension -- that in Harvey Cox's (1969) words, "We must learn again to dream and dance" (p. 19).

III. VISION AND MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION

As has been previously noted, one of the requisites of visionary leadership is that the leader have a thorough understanding of the unique features of the organization which he/she leads. For the middle school principal, a growing body of research is available to inform him/her of how best to serve the needs of the client through school structure, instructional method, curricular goals, and staff development. Though the middle school movement is relatively young, there is strong consensus among its leaders about what an exemplary middle school should look like when it is functioning to meet the needs of its clients. A brief history of the middle school movement and its major tenets follows.

The Middle School Movement

Although the middle school movement did not begin until the early 1960's, it had its roots in the first half of the century, when the concept of a middle level of schooling constructed to meet the transitional needs of early

adolescents began. Junior high schools were established to meet these needs. By the middle of the century, it became evident that these schools were inadequate. During the period of 1960-1980, middle schools began to emerge for the purpose of correcting the deficiencies of the junior high school (George, 1988, p. 2).

One of the salient features of the middle school during this period was its rapid growth. George (1988) estimated that from 1965-1980, the number of middle schools increased from five hundred to five thousand (p. 2). Middle school reorganization offered a convenient way to integrate grades five through eight in the early seventies. Later in the seventies, when pupil enrollment began to drop, middle school reorganization allowed for the consolidation of elementary schools by moving fifth grade to middle schools, and it helped to boost high school enrollment by moving the ninth grade into high school plants.

George viewed the early phase of middle school development as important, not only because of the growth of middle level institutions, but also because: (1) "It is one of the few initiatives in the area of public schooling actually developed and championed by educators themselves." According to George, most of the lasting major changes in education result from outside pressures. (2) It is one of the few "humanistic innovations brought on since the Progressive Movement." (3) It has made educators and the

public aware of the significance of early adolescence as a life passage to the extent that "the focus on this period of life will continue to sharpen and intensify even if the movement dies out." (4) General guidelines for program planners and developers were established during this time.

One of the weaknesses of the early phase of the movement cited by George was the tendency of writers to over-react to the rigidity of the junior high program. In stressing the need for flexibility, they often sanctioned any program which focused on the characteristics of the learner, to the end that the question "what is the middle school -- really?" was not answered.

As the movement gained strength, the need for universities and state departments to coordinate training programs and certification plans became apparent. State and regional education associations were initiated, culminating in the founding of the National Middle School Association in 1975.

The second phase of the middle school movement (1980-2000), has been characterized thus far by: (1) an increasing number of reorganized schools, (2) program consensus based upon observation of exemplary middle schools which have been in existence for 15 years, (3) evaluation components which measure affective and cognitive growth, (4) broader community acceptance and professional stability and continuity.

Farmer (1990) characterized the past five years of the middle school movement as a period in which middle level education has come "center stage" (p. 10). She cited seven sources which have "fueled the urgency for action on behalf of ten to fourteen year olds":

(1) Successful Schools for Young Adolescents (1985), Joan Lipsitz's work in which the effective schools research is integrated with the research on the developmental needs of adolescents. Lipsitz located examples of successful middle schools in operation and brought those schools into national attention.

(2) Evidence for Middle Schools (1985), in which Paul George and Lynn Oldnaker documented a distinct difference between middle schools and their elementary and secondary counterparts. In addition, they concluded that when appropriate middle school programs were implemented, results were "dramatically positive in terms of student behavior, school learning climate, faculty morale, and staff development."

(3) Caught in the Middle (1987), the California Department of Education's report which stressed the need to go beyond using middle grades as a "wild card for solving facilities and enrollment problems," makes recommendations for addressing the academic and social needs of students in the middle.

(4) Survey of State Policies and Programs for Middle Grades (1988) and Making the Middle Grades Work (1988), published by the Children's Defense Fund, reported that numerous states were not doing enough in addressing the needs for better programs and policies and suggested a framework for looking at issues such as scheduling, curriculum and instruction and discipline.

(5) Curriculum Update, "Middle Schools Better Match with Early Adolescent Needs" (1988), ASCD's nationwide survey which examined the features which William Alexander and Paul George asserted are essential in exemplary middle schools (guidance services, transition/articulation, block scheduling, interdisciplinary teams, appropriate teaching strategies, exploratory offerings, and core curriculum).

(6) Schools in the Middle: Status and Progress (1989), a major report by William Alexander and Ken McEwin which provides benchmark data on the status of the middle school, supporting the conclusions of the ASCD study.

(7) Turning Points (1989), the report of the Carnegie Council, which details eight recommendations for "Schools in the Middle" and calls for nationwide attention to develop and strengthen middle school programs.

Farmer (1990) documented a state-wide trend toward growing awareness of the middle grades by citing the following: North Carolina's early establishment of middle level certification; the increase in the number of 6-8

schools established in the state over the past ten years; recruitment of "real" middle school experts at the colleges and universities; the pressure for comprehensive planning brought about by the basic education programs; the role of the Department of Public Instruction in providing a middle grades consultant and the regional centers in playing a growing role in assessing middle school needs; the formation of the state's first Middle Grades Task Force initiated by State Superintendent Bob Etheridge; the role of local school districts in creating advocacy in central office by adding a middle grades coordinator, director, supervisor or assistant principal to central office structure; and, the outreach efforts of resource people in the state who are becoming experts in the middle school movement, effort of the North Carolina School Board Association, and the response of the North Carolina League of Middle Level Schools.

Based on the work of Alexander and McEwin (1989), George (1985), and on the recommendations resulting from the Carnegie report (1989), a successful middle grades program would include:

(1) Grades 6-8
(2) An interdisciplinary organization with a flexibly scheduled day
(3) Curriculum provisions for such broad goals and curriculum domains as personal development, continued learning skills, and basic knowledge areas
(4) Varied and effective instructional methodology for the age group under consideration

(5) Continued articulation and orientation for students, parents and teachers.

In summary, the middle school movement has undergone a honing and refining since its inception. As a result, there is broad consensus about what middle schools should be like based on research and experience. Principals who expect to lead schools in the middle will use this body of knowledge as a framework for constructing their visions.

Summary

The present day middle school principal leads his/her school in a societal context which is portrayed in the literature as one in which change is the norm and in which the need for a new breed of leadership is publicly recognized. In general studies describing the essence of leadership in organizations which are already effectively responding to the need for change, the metaphor of visionary leadership has emerged. As educational researchers have looked at effective schools and their leadership, they have also found the metaphor of visionary leadership to be descriptive of principals. The literature on organizational change not only confirms the notion that effective principals are visionary principals, it also provides a rationale for the development of visionary leadership among principals.

An emerging body of literature which focuses upon leadership development for changing times is based upon research which: (1) looks at organizational health rather than organizational deficiencies, (2) assumes that leaders are made and not born, (3) is concerned with the sharing of power, and at the same time, recognizes the importance of the leader's involvement as the lynch pin for reaching the goals of success, and (4) extends visionary leadership beyond the domain of the chief executive officer, recognizing that leadership roles abound throughout the organization.

Three factors internal to education have placed the principal in a position to assume the role of visionary leader: (1) The growth of the public school movement and the organizational complexity which has resulted, has led to the expansion, strengthening, and professionalization of the principal's role. The principal is now recognized as the manager of the school. (2) The Effective Schools Research, through its emphasis on the principal as instructional leader, links the management function to the core activity of instruction which supports one of the core values of schooling. The notion that the visionary principal is integrally involved in promoting the core values of the school is consistent with the view in general organizational literature that leaders manage vision by shaping the work that is done in their organizations through the importance

that they attach to the organization's core values. (3) School-based or site-based management brings the local school site and its principal center stage in terms of decision making for improved instruction. It also serves as a tool for the principal who is seeking an alternative to bureaucratic management.

The literature on visionary leadership supports a definition of vision as the leader's image or picture of what the organization can or should be. In addition, this literature advances the notion that vision is an essential ingredient of leadership.

There is evidence in the literature that visionary leadership involves the processes of constructing vision, communicating or transmitting vision, and implementing vision. Case studies indicate that principals manage the processes through their use of time, where they put their energy, and by what they pay attention to, reward or penalize, and promote. Closely linked to the principal's ability to manage the processes of vision, is the principal's ability to define the core values of the organization and to transmit and embed those values into the culture of the organization. Case studies reveal that effective principals, acting as instructional leaders, become involved in the core activity of instruction and, thus, communicate the value of improved instruction toward the goal of increased learning.

One of the components of managing the processes of vision and promoting the core values of the organization is the leader's knowledge of the unique features of the organization. The middle school principal finds a body of literature in which strong consensus on the goals for middle level education exists. The literature almost universally accepts the following features as essential to a successful middle grades program: (1) grades 6-8 configuration, (2) interdisciplinary organization, (3) flexible blocks of time scheduling, (4) curriculum provisions for personal development, continued learning skills, and basic knowledge areas, (5) varied and effective instructional methodology for the age group under consideration, and (5) continued articulation and orientation for students, parents, and teachers.

The effective middle school principal shapes his/her vision for the organization in accordance with the core values of the school, district expectations, and the goals for middle level education. This is done in the greater context of societal change which demands a new breed of leadership for piloting organizations through the change process.

CHAPTER III: OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study is qualitative in nature in that the intended outcome is greater understanding of how successful principals function as visionary leaders, rather than the testing of hypotheses about the relationship between selected variables.

The Sample. Five middle school experts, each of whom has served as president of the North Carolina League of Middle Schools, were asked to nominate five principals in North Carolina who, in their estimation are among the most successful Middle School practitioners in the State. No set of criteria was suggested as a benchmark for "successful" leadership. It was the researcher's assumption that, given their knowledge of middle level education and their numerous contacts with middle school principals across the state, these experts would have little difficulty with the nominations. Four of the five experts responded with a list within thirty days. One of the experts responded to a follow-up call by submitting the list over the telephone.

From the list of 17 names submitted, two of the principals received three nominations. Both of these principals were asked to participate in the study. One consented. The other had recently assumed a high school

principalship and was unavailable. Four of the principals received two nominations. These principals were contacted and each consented to participate.

The decision to draw the sample from among exemplary principals as opposed to a random sample or one which was balanced demographically, was a deliberate one. It was felt that greater insight could be gained from interviewing and observing leadership at its best. At the same time, the intention was not to depict the participants as absolute standards of success.

The Instrument. The primary instrument used in the study was the researcher's insight. The researcher gathered data through interviews, observation, and examination of documentary evidence.

A series of interviews was conducted with the participating principals in which a set of guiding questions was used. The questions were field tested prior to the study. As a result of insight gained from the field test about the wording and sequence of the questions, the format was revised (Table 1).

In the initial interview, the researcher used the questions as a format. Subsequent interviews were held to conduct member checks on data previously collected and to clarify or fill in information not obtained from the initial interview. The interview process was terminated when it

ceased to be productive -- that is, when the information became redundant (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The means of recording data was note taking. Interviews were recorded and transposed at a later date. Interviews were conducted during site visits to the principals' respective schools. The researcher also collected additional data from key respondents, such as teachers, parents and students through informal interview and observation. As a means of triangulating data, the researcher examined documentary evidence of the principals' leadership in memos, school handbooks, meeting agendas, and other written communiques.

Data was collected and refined in accordance with the procedures for qualitative research outlined in Lincoln and Guba (1985). All original transcripts and documents have been coded and preserved by the researcher to provide documentation of the rigor of the study and the extent to which the conclusions drawn proceed from the data collected. The reader of the final narrative will be in a position to judge the reliability of the study and its generalizability to his/her particular situation.

METHODOLOGY

The current study fits within a world view or paradigm which can be described as "naturalistic," "ethnographic," or "phenomenological." In a naturalistic study, qualitative

TABLE 1

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What would a typical day be for you, if there is such a thing as a typical day?

2. As principal, what do you consider your most important role/roles to be?
   What do you do to fulfill this role?

3. Could you tell me a little bit about your goals for _____ Middle School?
   How did you decide on those goals?
   For the most part, does your faculty "buy into" these goals?

4. What would you say is your vision for _____ Middle School?
   How did you decide on your vision?
   How do you communicate your vision to your faculty?
   What do you do to implement your vision in the school?

5. What impact has Senate Bill 2 had on your school?
   Do you believe that site-based or shared decision making will weaken the position of the principal?
   To what extent was shared decision making practiced at your school before Senate Bill 2?

methodology is considered the most appropriate means of dealing with the research questions and gaining insight from the research to be conducted. Following is a definition of the naturalistic paradigm, a description of the characteristics of naturalistic inquiry, and an explanation of how qualitative methodology fits into the naturalistic paradigm.

NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

Reese (1980) defined a paradigm as a "systematic set of basic or metaphysical beliefs that either give us some judgment abut the nature of reality, or a reason why we must be content with knowing something less than the nature of reality, along with a method for taking hold of whatever can be known" (p. 352). Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 37) identified five axioms or conceptual building blocks of the paradigm which is referred to as "naturalistic":

(1) The nature of reality -- Realities are multiple, constructed and holistic.

(2) The nature of knower to known (Inquirer to object of inquiry) -- Knower and known interact to influence one another. They are inseparable.

(3) The possibility of generalization -- Only time and context-bound working hypotheses are possible.

(4) The possibility of causal linkage -- All entities are in a state of mutual, simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.

(5) The role of values -- All inquiries are value-bound.

In an attempt to illustrate how naturalistic inquiry is put to practice, Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined twelve characteristics or elements which flow from the five axioms and which guide the researcher who is undertaking a naturalistic study. These characteristics are cited below, along with an explanation of how the current study conforms to those characteristics, and can thus, be considered a naturalistic or qualitative study.

The Natural Setting. Naturalistic inquiry is conducted in the setting or context for which the study is proposed. This is so because the "phenomena of a study, whatever it may be -- physical, chemical, biological, social, psychological --take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 189). In the current study, five principals were interviewed at the sites of their respective schools. The school was the basic unit of study because it is the context in which the principal leads. Of primary interest to the researcher was the question of how each principal interacted within the school to create vision and how the particular school context shaped each principal's vision. The researcher was also interested in how district policy and state legislative decisions, specifically the School

Improvement and Accountability Act, interacted with each principal's vision.

Human as Instrument. The naturalist recognizes multiple realities within a given context, and thus, relies on herself and her insight as the only instrument with the potential for detecting and making sense out of the various perceptions as they are encountered in the research setting. The human-as-instrument is honed within the research setting to achieve high levels of validity or trustworthiness through "prolonged engagement" with the research subjects and through "persistent observation" in the research setting (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 301). In some studies, teams of researchers go into the field to gather data, so that there is more than one instrument. In the current study, the writer was the sole collector of data.

Utility of Tacit Knowledge. Tacit knowledge is knowledge which is gained from experience with objects and events, as opposed to propositional knowledge which is based on observation of objects and events. It is not possible to describe everything one knows in language; some things have to be experienced to be understood. Tacit knowledge is accepted as a part of naturalistic inquiry, especially at the beginning of the study. It is important to note, however, that in the process of the research, tacit knowledge must become propositional or shared knowledge. What begins as a hunch or a tentative hypothesis based on

the experience of the researcher with the subject, becomes more explicit as the study unfolds. The naturalist demands sharability at the end but not at the beginning of the study.

The current study began with the researcher's hunch that the principal's vision both shapes and is shaped by the culture of the individual school. Through prolonged engagement in the research setting and persistent observation, the researcher hoped to verify the hunch and to understand in more specific terms if/how successful principals shape schools with their vision and if/how schools shape the vision that the principal creates.

Qualitative Methods. Quantitative data can be, and often is, utilized by the researcher engaged in naturalistic inquiry. However, "the human-as-instrument gravitates toward methods which are natural extensions of human activity: looking, listening, speaking, reading; therefore, the human will tend toward interviewing, observing, mining available documents and records, and unobtrusive measures" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 199). Qualitative data can be classified into two categories (Lincoln and Guba, 1985): (1) data which requires that another human be present as a source (e.g., principal interviews) and (2) data which does not require the presence of another human as source (e.g., examination of documentary evidence). The current research includes both categories of data. A more detailed account

of issues of reliability and validity will be treated in the last section of this chapter.

Purposive Sampling. Naturalistic sampling is different from conventional sampling in that "its purpose is to maximize information, not facilitate generalization. Its procedures are strikingly different, too, and depend on the particular ebb and flow of information as the study is carried out rather than a priori considerations. The criterion invoked to determine when to stop sampling is informational redundancy, not a statistical confidence level" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 202).

In the current study, no attempt was made at random selection of samples; rather, as the researcher read other qualitative studies and developed tentative hypotheses, she focused on the units that seemed most relevant, in this case effective or successful principals. The process of refining and focusing the sample would take place during the study if the researcher were beginning at "square one"; however, the current research is based on hypotheses explored in other studies (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980). Thus, the refining and selection of samples took place at the beginning of the study.

Inductive Data Analysis. Inductive data analysis is the naturalist's way of making sense out of the field data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 202). In the current study, the

sources of the data were interviews, observations, and documents.

In a naturalistic study, the data is not defined in advance by some theory as is the case in conventional studies; rather, the variables, as well as the theory are expected to emerge from the inquiry. Field data is analyzed inductively, meaning that "raw units of information are organized under larger categories of information in order to define local working hypotheses or questions that can be followed up." The researcher first "unitizes" or codes raw data, a unit being a piece of information that stands alone -- "that is interpretable in the absence of any additional information" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 203). She then sorts unitized data into categories based on "look alike" characteristics. As categories begin to accumulate, the researcher writes propositional statements or rules that will allow the exclusion or inclusion of further data. The process is a recursive one and is always emendable throughout the data collection period. Initially the coding and categorizing process is based on a tacit understanding of how the parts fit together; as the study unfolds, the statements become propositional.

As noted previously, naturalistic inquiry does not always begin from "square one" but can be based on hypotheses tested in prior research. The current study is a case in point. Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) concluded

that vision was the leadership variable which distinguished the seven effective principals interviewed in their study from those principals' peers. From this conclusion, the deduction was made that effective principals are visionary principals. Using that deduction as a focus for the current study, the researcher went into the field with a set of questions concerning visionary leadership, seeking to gain insight into the unique ways in which five effective middle school principals in North Carolina construct vision and implement vision in their respective schools. Data was then collected and analyzed inductively by the process described above.

Grounded Theory. Grounded theory is theory which emerges from the data. It fits with the naturalistic paradigm which recognizes multiple realities and insists on transferability based on understanding of local context. Glaser and Strauss (1967) who are credited with having coined the term defined grounded theory as one that will "fit" the situation being researched and "work" when put to use. "By 'fit' we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study; by 'work' we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behavior under study" (p. 261).

The current study is based on the proposition that effective principals are visionary principals; however, the

theories which were constructed about the ways in which effective principals' visions shape and are shaped by their schools, emerged from the data collected in the research setting.

Emergent Design. Because it is impossible to predict the multiple realities that will be encountered in the research setting; because the interaction between inquirer and phenomenon is largely unpredictable; because the inquirer cannot know ahead of time the "patterns of mutual simultaneous shapings" that will take place; and because values of the various participants in the setting (including the researcher's own) interact in unpredictable ways to influence the outcome, the design is allowed to flow or emerge as the inquiry progresses (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 41).

Negotiated Outcomes. The term "negotiated outcomes" refers to the practice of taking both facts and interpretations back to the respondents who acted as sources for that information. This is consistent with the axiom that "the outcome of naturalistic inquiry is reconstruction of the multiple constructions that various respondents have made" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 212). The inquirer's reconstruction is, thus, taken back to the context for verification.

In the current research, member checks were conducted following each interview. As data was refined and put into

narrative form, it was submitted to the principals and other respondents for their review. In cases where consensus on meaning was not held, differences in interpretation were noted.

The Case Report. The case report is considered the most effective mode of reporting a naturalistic study. Lincoln and Guba (1981) defined it as "a snapshot of reality," a "slice of life," or "an episode" (pp. 370-371). Lightfoot (1983) described it as a written "portrait." The case reports of the principals in the current study were inspired by Blumberg and Greenfield's (1980) metaphor of "pictures standing in a gallery -- not a comparative study but a collage of the forms that (visionary) leadership can take and still be effective." Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed three purposes for using the case study reporting mode: (1) It provides for thick descriptions, for a rich portrayal of a situation which the case study is seeking to convey; (2) It provides a way to communicate the multiple realities which exist within the setting, the interaction between the inquirer and respondents, the values of both researcher and context, and the mutual shapings that occur; (3) It provides the reader with the "vicarious experience of being transported to the research setting." It is most likely to appear "grounded, holistic, and lifelike" (p. 214).

Idiographic Interpretation and Tentative Application. These elements are introduced briefly in this section. However, they relate to issues of reliability and validity which will be discussed more fully in the closing section of the chapter. The naturalist tends to interpret data from the study idiographically, that is "in terms of the particulars of the case," rather than "nomothetially, in terms of some lawlike generalizations" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This is partially because he/she believes that meaning is context bound and partially because he/she believes that the whole is greater than its parts. Understanding for the naturalist is holistic; however, the naturalist believes that "even the aggregate of all knowledge about all parts cannot yield total knowledge. Total immersion in a context is required to legitimate the claim that even partial understanding has been achieved; and, that understanding can apply only to that context from which it was derived" (p. 216).

Findings that are held to be generalizable in one setting may not necessarily be applied to other settings. The mutual shapings that take place in one setting may not be the same in a similar setting; values may differ from one setting to another; and, the interactions between the investigator and the respondents vary from one setting to another. Therefore, transferability is not established once

and for all but must be assessed each time the research setting is compared to a similar setting.

ISSUES OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In conventional studies, trustworthiness is established through internal validity, external validity, and reliability. In a naturalistic study, the issue of trustworthiness is equally crucial; however, the criteria are somewhat different.

Credibility (Internal validity). In a naturalistic study, the researcher is obligated to show that he/she has represented the multiple constructions of reality in such a way that they are credible to those constructs of reality. This can be accomplished through prolonged engagement, or "spending sufficient time in the research setting to learn the culture and to check for misinformation that can creep into the data as a result of being unfamiliar to the setting" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Secondly, the naturalist ensures credibility through persistent observation, which allows the researcher to identify relevant problems and issues and bring depth to the research. A third method of ensuring credibility is through triangulation, or the use of multiple sources to verify data.

Applicability (External validity). The naturalist does not claim that his/her study is generalizable to other contexts based solely on the given study. Transferability

requires knowledge of both the studied context as well as the context being compared. Thus, it is the researcher's obligation to provide a thick description of the studied context. It is the person seeking to make the transfer who must make the judgment based on his/her knowledge of the receiving context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 217).

Dependability (Reliability). In a naturalistic inquiry, the researcher attempts to demonstrate that the results obtained from the study make sense and are consistent and dependable. Three methods of obtaining dependability which were used in the current study were: (1) Investigator's position, in which the investigator explains the assumptions behind the study, the basis for selecting the informants and a description of them, and the social context from which the data was collected; (2) Triangulation, in which multiple methods of data collection are used; (3) Audit trail, in which the investigator describes in detail how data was collected, how categories were derived, and how all decisions were made (Merriam, 1988, p. 172).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

OVERVIEW

The data collected from interviewing the five successful middle school principals who participated in the study, as well as the data collected from observations and interviews during the site visits, was used to construct case studies or "portraits" of each principal and his/her leadership. The use of portraiture enabled the researcher to represent holistically the various perceptions of reality related to the principals' leadership which were encountered in the research setting.

The research revealed that the process by which a principal concocts, communicates, and implements vision is not a static one; rather, it is interactive and iterative. The portraits became the medium which enabled the researcher to describe visionary leadership in such a way as to "depict motion and stopped time, history and anticipated future" (Lightfoot, 1983, p. 6).

The use of portraiture enabled the researcher to capture the essence of each principal's vision in action: to describe how successful principals work to create, communicate, and implement vision within the context of a particular school culture and particular district expectations and regulations.

The portraits are formal in that they do not take the reader backstage to view the everyday off-the-record behavior of the principals interviewed. In that sense, they are not balanced and may appear one dimensional in their portrayal of the participants. Two factors influenced the writer's decision to exclude extensive backstage data: one was the trust factor between the researcher and the principals; the other was the purpose of the research, which was to document successes in leadership rather than to look for weaknesses or failures.

The chapter is organized into three sections. In the first section, the individual portraits of the principals are presented. In the second section, entitled "Portraits: Several Generalizations," common features of the principals' leadership are discussed. The final section, "Vision: Looking below the Surface," examines the extent to which the principals in the study have challenged with their visions the "regularities" (Sarason, 1982) of schooling.

DINA BRADDY, SHELBY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dina Braddy aims for Shelby Middle School to be the best in the state of North Carolina. Not only that, she wants everyone to know that it is the best. Her vision stems from a strong set of professional values, the cornerstone of which is the belief that the ultimate goal of any organization should be to become the best it can be.

> I really think that that should be every principal's mission or vision. You should strive to be the best and have everyone know that you're the best. And, you know, that sounds kind of elementary, but it's a fact (Braddy interview, 7/12/90).

When asked to define what she means by "best," she replied, "I would look at it as student success. I think we're only as good as our students and we're only as good as we're perceived to be." For Braddy, there are two criteria for measuring student success. One is the public perception, which is influenced by standardized test scores:

> I hate to keep looking at test scores, but the media does, and as long as your test scores continue to rise, that means you're gaining more in student success (Braddy interview, 7/12/90, p. 7).

The other is professional evaluation, in which teachers and administrators set goals for students and then monitor those goals to determine if they are being met. At Shelby Middle School, Braddy insists that teachers be involved in defining

student success and in setting goals for student achievement:

> I did not set the goals. We did this through the management team. We sat down, and first of all we had a school system mission statement. Then we said, "All right, if this is the mission statement of our system, what do we want for Shelby Middle School?" And we decided we wanted to be student centered. So, every single goal that we made tried to center around the student (Braddy interview, 7/12/90, p. 7).

Other considerations were accreditation requirements and the issue of student success system wide. Braddy's vision extends beyond Shelby Middle School as a discrete unit to include its relationship to the system as well. For example, she views the problem of writing competency at the high school level as one that needs to be addressed in middle grades. As a result, the school improvement team has written into its school improvement plan strategies for improving writing.

Dina Braddy's vision for excellent schooling at Shelby Middle School centers around student success. The process of defining, promoting, and measuring student success both externally, to the community, and internally, within the professional community of the school, is what her principalship is all about.

Communicating and Implementing Vision

Braddy communicates and implements her vision primarily through her role as instructional leader:

> You have to know what's going on in your school. You have to know the strengths of the teachers and capitalize on them. You have to know your curriculum, help your teachers implement it, oversee it and make sure it's being implemented correctly . . . Being able to go in there (the classroom) and know what to look for and know how you can help someone . . . I think this is an instructional leader (Braddy interview, 7/12/90, p. 2).

For Braddy, instructional leadership also involves being available to and visible to teachers:

> I try to be there by 7:30 max because I think there are two times in the day when teachers are really able to communicate with the principal -- one is before school and one is after school, and I think most of them are more enthusiastic in the morning. I think it's important to be there early. Arrive on time. Be visible (Braddy interview, 7/12/90).

In observing Braddy in action, it is evident that her morning ritual is important to the teachers as well. They appear to be energized by her greetings and personal comments as she moves systematically among them, seeking them out in the hallways, dashing in and out of classrooms, stopping briefly at outside duty stations. She moves rapidly in order to cover the broad expanse of territory that the sprawling three story building with two annexes

encompasses. She pauses briefly to hug or touch the teacher to whom she speaks, always maintaining direct eye contact.

Braddy is lavish with her praise: "I want you to meet the most wonderful math teacher in the state of North Carolina. Kids love his Algebra classes and they'd do anything for him" or "This lady is the best media specialist you'll ever meet." One has the sense that this morning ritual serves to "stoke the fires" and get the day started right. Braddy is high on her faculty and she doesn't mind telling them so. This is not only reflected in her informal contacts with teachers but in the memos and messages which she sends to them. For example, on the hand-out sheet reporting the results of the California Achievement Test, she had written across the page "Job well done!" And in her letter to teachers prior to their return in the fall, she affirmed them as "hardworking" and "deserving of a summer break" (Letter to staff, Summer 1990, p. 1).

Braddy not only believes in getting each day off to a good start, she believes in getting the year off to a good start as well. At first faculty meetings she models effective management of materials, spells out expectations, and articulates goals and objectives for the year. Her extensive agenda includes time to focus on California Achievement Test results. She praises the teachers for a job well done, pointing out that the school's scores are well above those of the region and the state. Also on the

agenda is a discussion of school goals for the coming year. For Braddy, faculty meetings are an appropriate forum for articulating and promoting her vision.

Being an effective instructional leader is a top priority for Braddy, so much so that she has delegated most of the management details to her two assistant principals. These include: general supervision, observation (formative evaluation only), discipline, detention hall, maintenance of facilities, custodial supervision, buses and transportation, athletic director, lockers, academic recognition, covering classes for professional reasons, free and reduced lunch, cafeteria scheduling and monitoring, substitute teachers, books, positive reinforcement, and scheduling and registration of new students. (Braddy faculty memo, August 1990). Braddy allows the assistant principals flexibility in deciding how the duties will be divided up:

> At the beginning of the year, I sit down with my assistant principals, and this year, it's going to be interesting because we're getting a new assistant principal. And, we will sit down together, the three of us as a team, and I like them to tell me what they would like to do. I have one assistant who likes the nuts and bolts of the thing. You know, he takes care of the cafeteria and he takes care of the buses and he takes care of the custodians . . . the other one, well, the one we did have, he preferred looking at the curriculum and doing these kinds of things, and the scheduling and whatever. So you let them kind of determine what they like to do. I would prefer to go into the classes, so I like to leave the management -- the nitty gritty things to the assistants, because that's a training ground for them, it's a proving ground for them, but it also takes a lot of those little things off me and allows me to do the things

> that are a little more important. I think there's a difference between a leader and a manager. I let them manage and me lead. And not that I'm that wonderful a leader, but I just think leaders have to have the time to lead (Braddy interview, 7/12/90, p. 3).

Duties are listed and copies are handed out to teachers at the first faculty meeting.

Implementing vision through her role as instructional leader also involves the refining of a middle grades program which was put in place three years ago at Shelby Middle School. Braddy is well-versed in middle school literature. Having researched the middle school concept as a part of her sixth year degree, she was integrally involved in writing the middle school plan for Shelby City Schools. She works consistently to preserve what has been accomplished and to push on to higher levels of excellence. During a follow-up interview, she laughed when talking about a request that several teachers made to reinstate the ringing of bells to signal class change:

> We finally got rid of the bells in the school and then this year some of the teachers asked to have them put back in. I wouldn't consider it. I just said, "No, that's not middle school. We're just simply not going to go backwards!" (Braddy interview, 7/12/90, p. 2).

With interdisciplinary teaming and flexible scheduling in place, Shelby Middle School has added a daily advisory program, called People Reaching Intelligent Decisions Effectively (PRIDE). The program revolves around the

school's mission statement to "provide the atmosphere, environment, and encouragement that will enable all students to progress and to attain a measurable degree of success."

As a part of the middle school plan, academic teams are grouped together in the same area of the building, academic teachers have a team planning time, and are given a team conference room in which to meet. Braddy encourages team planning and decision making and she reinforces the notion of team leadership by meeting with team leaders, usually in lieu of faculty meetings. At a team meeting attended by the researcher, she encouraged team leaders to work with their members to handle their own tardy problems among themselves before referring them to guidance or the assistant principal.

In talking with individual teachers and with teams, and in observing teams during planning, it became evident to the researcher that teaming is alive and well at Shelby Middle School. Every teacher interviewed mentioned teaming and flexible scheduling as major strengths of the current middle school program. One teacher asserted that working in a team enables teachers to reach a variety of kids -- those from advantaged as well as disadvantaged backgrounds. This sentiment was echoed throughout the day in various team interviews and observations.

When talking about school success, teachers also made frequent reference to Effective Teaching and Effective

Schools correlates, such as time on task, high student expectation, and school climate. One seventh grade teacher considers the emphasis given to time on task as a major strength of the school. "We just don't give up on students. We keep hammering away, exposing them to the material."

Braddy explained that one of the school system's goals is to implement the correlates of the Effective School. This has been going on for several years and it began prior to Senate Bill 2. The school system has now incorporated the correlates into the system's school improvement plan. At Shelby Middle School, the School Team for Effective Management (STEM), which monitors the school improvement plan, has organized sub-committees to address each of the correlates. Each faculty member sits on one of the committees. Parents, students and community members also are included on these committees.

Braddy continues to use the effective schools philosophy to motivate teachers toward effective instruction and increased student learning. One of her strategies is to set up an Effective Schools room equipped with effective schools literature and posters. Teachers can only go in if they will discuss effective schooling. "You can't go in there unless you talk the talk," she says.

Next to instructional leadership, Braddy considers the role of public relations representative as most crucial to the realization of her vision for excellent schooling:

> When I became principal, I asked the associate superintendent "Exactly what are my areas?" And he said, "The best way to describe what you need to be able to do is to go up on the top floor of your school and look as far as you can see. That's your community. That's your responsibility" (Braddy interview, 7/12/90, pp. 3-4).

The superintendent's statement was more literal than figurative. Shelby Middle School is the only middle school in the system, and it draws students from the surrounding community to its campus. The school is located in the center of town.

> Literally what he was saying was true. You have to be available to that community. I have to make speeches; I have to attend this meeting and that meeting. I think public relations is probably one of the most important functions of the effective principal. You have to please your community -- you don't have to cater to them, but you must please them and let them know, "I am a leader. I can handle this school." Especially as a woman, it's extremely important that you be visible, that you know what's going on, and that you are a good public relations person. And you certainly do say things that are only positive about your school (Braddy interview, 7/12/90, p. 4).

Aside from her willingness to be involved as a representative of the school to the community at large, Braddy sends a clear message of competence and leadership through the written material that goes out to parents. An example of this can be found in the student handbook, which clearly addresses the school mission, philosophy, goals, and spells out rules and expectations of the school. Professionally, Braddy represents her school as a member of

the State Superintendent's Task Force on Middle Grades Education.

Consensus among teachers interviewed was that the school enjoys a high level of community support. Evidence of that support came in the passage of a local bond issue which is currently financing total renovation of Shelby Middle School. The community also sponsors programs, such as ACTIVE, which targets 15-20 at-risk sixth graders and provides sponsors who follow their progress over a three year period.

Teachers report that personnel from local industry make themselves available as resource people and often invite the students to take field trips to local plants to observe the manufacturing process. The researcher sat in on a team planning session for "Egg Week," an interdisciplinary unit which includes a science lesson led by a guest speaker from a local hatchery.

Cleveland County Challenge is a community-initiated, long-range planning task force, which has education as its number one goal. This group is in the process of considering such areas as positive schooling, parenting, vocations, and community involvement.

Gaining A Shared Vision Through Site-Based Management

According to two veteran teachers, the Shelby City School System has always encouraged teacher input in

decision making related to instruction. One of these faculty members, a sixth grade language arts teacher, recalls that ten years ago, she was given the flexibility to work with science and math teachers to implement several interdisciplinary units. This took place during the junior high school years when the school was highly departmentalized. Another sixth grade teacher explained that prior to Senate Bill 2, the school had an Effective Schools committee. The difference in that and the current STEM committee is that the former dealt with formulating the school's mission and with setting broad goals; whereas, the latter actually deals with every day management issues, such as discipline and scheduling (Site visit, 10/16/90, p. 9).

Braddy herself, has encouraged teacher input all along, but she welcomes the School Improvement and Accountability Act as a way to put structure and teeth into school-based decision making. Regarding the empowerment of teachers to become involved in site-based management, Braddy said, "I thought I would be the one who would have a hard time letting go of the authority. As a matter of fact, I was so interested in the issue of the principal's role in promoting site-based management, I did my doctoral research on it. Ironically, I found that it was not I who had the problem letting go. Rather, it was the teachers who had the most difficulty in taking the responsibility." Braddy added that a part of the problem lay in the teachers' reluctance to

accept the school improvement team chairman as leader. "It was not a personal thing," Braddy explained. "It is just that they still think of the principal as the one who should make the decisions" (Braddy interview, 7/12/90, p. 5).

Braddy has discovered that daily implementation is the most difficult aspect of site-based management. Nevertheless, she continues to view teacher decision making as crucial to a shared vision of excellent schooling which focuses on student success. Under her leadership, Shelby Middle School has put in place a STEM committee composed of faculty and staff representatives, which manages seven sub-committees, each focusing on a correlate of effective schooling. Each teacher is assigned to at least one of the committees, ensuring broad faculty representation in the decision-making process. Braddy is committed to STEM and its committees' being the decision-making body of the school.

VISION: TEACHER PERCEPTION

At present, teacher talk about success and goal attainment -- at least among those interviewed -- focuses upon the positive impact of teaming and flexible scheduling, both components of the middle school program. As mentioned previously, the consensus among teachers interviewed was that Shelby Middle School's strength lies in its team relationships, flexible scheduling, and community support.

Teachers talked freely about their team successes. However, when asked about the mission of Shelby Middle School or their vision for the school, they were less articulate. In several cases, they were hard pressed to answer the question at all. Two teachers reached for the handbook to read the mission statement printed therein. "Mission" and "vision" were terms that they knew they should know but did not appear to link to the daily process of ensuring student success (Site visit, 10/16/90, p. 10). Braddy recognizes this fact and has made tentative plans for the development of a vision statement and its reinforcement throughout the school.

SUMMARY

Through her role as instructional leader and public relations representative, Dina Braddy is moving Shelby Middle School toward her vision of excellent schooling. Benchmarks toward the realization of that vision, which are noted by her and which can readily be observed include: teachers working together harmoniously in interdisciplinary teams, using flexible blocks of time scheduling to provide greater opportunity for student success; teachers committed to providing greater time on task, high student expectation, and positive classroom environments which welcome student involvement; student scores on standardized tests exceeding those of the region and state; the presence of STEM, which

provides a structure for school-based decision making; community willingness to come forward financially with the funds necessary to convert outdated facilities into a plant which will house the needs of an exemplary middle school program; and, community willingness to act as a resource to the school and to consider education as an integral part of planning for community growth.

One of Braddy's greatest challenges is to empower her staff to move beyond the realm of team decision making more fully into the arena of school-based decision making. She recognizes that for this to happen, her faculty will need to become comfortable with terms like "school mission" and "school vision" and that they will need to be able to link those terms to what they do daily in the classroom. Just as she has led them through an effective schools movement and a middle school movement, she will lead them through what she considers to be an essential movement toward school based decision making. And that's why, under Dina Braddy's leadership, Shelby Middle School may just become one of the best middle schools in North Carolina!

WAYNE BOZEMAN, WESTERN ALAMANCE MIDDLE SCHOOL

At Western Middle School, Wayne Bozeman has inherited a legacy of excellent schooling from founding principal Wilma Parrish. As a young science teacher, Bozeman was hand-picked by Parrish to assume the role of assistant principal; and, he was the logical choice to take over the duties of principal when she retired ten years later.

However, Bozeman is quick to define his own leadership and to assert his own vision:

> I do not want this community nor staff to forget Mrs. Parrish because she is a trusted member of this family. But my job is not to replace Mrs. Parrish. My job is to continue to improve the school (Bozeman interview, 7/19/90, p. 4).

Bozeman does endorse and promote many of the values that Parrish instilled in the early years -- values that include hard work, a high level of professionalism among staff, a commitment to promote positive student self image, and the resolve to deal candidly and openly, and always in the best interest of the children, with faculty, staff, and central office personnel. His two-fold vision -- "continued professional growth and interest" and "making every child feel good about him/herself" -- is rooted in those values.

In talking with Bozeman and in observing him as he works with his staff and students, one quickly discovers two pieces of his thinking which are pivotal to an understanding

of how he moves his school toward the realization of his vision: (1) Bozeman thinks of the school as an extended family and (2) He thinks of himself as a team player.

School as Family

The metaphor of school as family comes up frequently in Bozeman's speech and is reiterated in talking with teachers and students, and in the general ambience of the school:

> . . . That's what our faculty is -- family. We socialize together, we play volleyball together at night, we go out to eat after ball games, we attend extra-curricular activities together. We're a family. We fuss, we fight, we bicker, we bitch, we do it all. But, it's a family atmosphere and we try to keep it open (Bozeman interview, 7/19/90, p. 4).

The family atmosphere was evident in a planning meeting of the management team which was attended by the researcher during summer of 1990. The session began with humorous banter about the unusually large turnover in staff and "Who caused it?" One of the teachers kidded that it was probably Bozeman's leadership, at which point the group had a good laugh and got on to more serious business.

Farther down the agenda, a team leader brought up the question of the effectiveness of In School Suspension (ISS). Bozeman responded by suggesting that each house select a representative and "Go talk to Sam about it. He'll help you work it out." Sam is the ISS teacher (Management team meeting, 7/19/90, p. 6).

Still later in the meeting, Bozeman was explaining his plan to use the science labs every period of the day "for the first time." He was quickly corrected by a teacher who said that "last year was the only year that hadn't happened." Bozeman took the correction good-naturedly. "You see how my management team keeps me straight on things," he joked (Management team meeting, 7/19/90, p. 6).

The metaphor of school as family is reflected in Bozeman's appreciation for and willingness to employ the talents of aging professionals. He considers it somewhat of a "coup" to have hired as a member of a seventh grade academic team a retired superintendent from a nearby school system. And, he is pleased that Wilma Parrish, in her retirement, has agreed to coordinate the school's crisis program for students coming from the Elon College Homes for Children.

The family metaphor is reiterated in the homey and inviting atmosphere that pervades the school. Visitors are free to wander in and out of the grade level "houses" to observe and ask questions. Students are friendly and responsive to questions from outsiders. Teachers and staff members are helpful and hospitable. Even in the principal's office, when the researcher entered for a follow-up interview, she found an 8th grade student eating his lunch at Mr. Bozeman's desk. Mr. Bozeman was draped over an easy chair "having a little chat with my good ole buddy." Never

mind that the purpose of the student's visit was disciplinary; the principal's response to the boy was to treat him like family (Site visit, 10/5/90, p. 7).

Bozeman's manner is always informal, unassuming, and his remarks spiked with humor. He explained, with tongue in cheek, that the most important thing he does in the morning is "to see that the coffee gets made." The underlying intent of his disarming statements is not to belittle himself or his role as principal; rather, it is to let the outsider know that highly professional, self-motivated people are running the school. It is a part of his view that "good administrators surround themselves with good people to make themselves look good" (Bozeman interview, 7/19/90, p. 3).

Team Player

Bozeman is an avid promoter of teaming among teachers and administrators as well. He provides a model of effective teaming in his relationship with his assistant principal, Lynn Briggs:

> Ours is a shared administration. Miss Briggs, our assistant principal does not handle the three B's -- buses, books, and butts. We share everything. My charge is: "We're a team. When something comes up, you handle it. Just let me know how it happened." She doesn't have to worry about how I would handle it or the repercussions of me becoming upset. So, it's a shared responsibility here, the same as with our teams (Bozeman interview, 7/19/90, p. 3).

Lynn Briggs, assistant principal, attests to the fact that Bozeman practices what he preaches about teaming and about keeping an open, family atmosphere. She came to Western Middle School two years ago when Bozeman became principal, having spent 8 years at Graham Middle School. Briggs is strong in curriculum, having taught math, science, physical education, sixth grade reading, and computers. She also takes pride in the "Outstanding Coach" award that she displays on her office wall. Briggs values the "No-Holds-Barred" style of openness and honesty with which Bozeman leads. She describes Bozeman as a leader who "gives endlessly of his time and energy to the school;" at the same time, "he has high expectations for teachers and students and he checks up on what they do" (Briggs interview, 10/5/90, p. 7).

What Briggs says about Bozeman's checking to see if his high expectations are being met, is supported by other staff members. One sixth grade teacher considers "the ability to work together" one of their greatest strengths at Western. She added that team planning time is never abused. "Wayne makes sure of that" (Site visit, 10/5/90, p. 7).

In observing Bozeman in action, one finds him to be highly visible throughout the school. In the course of two hours, the researcher saw him in the office, conducting an evaluation, conducting a group discussion with students,

handling a discipline problem, and talking in the cafeteria with a group of visiting principals.

The combination of his "folksy" manner and his high visibility are keys to his effective leadership. His frequent visits and comings and goings pose no threat to teachers and students; at the same time, his laid back manner is not interpreted by them as apathy. They know what he expects; his presence indicates his strong interest in daily instruction. He has tremendous confidence in his staff, a significant portion of whom are charter faculty members. He leads by allowing them to do what they do best -- teach middle grades children. But he does not leave them alone. He is always present to facilitate the process. Bozeman appears to understand the fine line between being in charge and being in control.

Bozeman encourages teaming among teachers by providing team planning time that is rigidly adhered to. Monday through Thursday, teachers are expected to remain in their houses, where they are provided with team planning rooms. Team time is treated as class time -- no interruptions for phone calls, no infringement on planning time. Bozeman has allowed some flexibility in the schedule by declaring Friday a "free day." During a team meeting observed by the researcher, Bozeman broke in over the intercom:

> "Mrs. Ozdurmaz, Will you get your grade book and come to the office?"

"During team planning?" the team leader responded.

"But this is Friday. It's a free day."

"Well, we're meeting anyway."

"Oh, excuse me! Y'all are just so conscientious. Okay, Mrs. O. Just come after team planning" (Site visit, 10/5/90, p. 7).

Promoting "Professional Growth and Interest"

In promoting his vision for continued professional growth and interest, Bozeman functions as a facilitator and a resource provider. He is proud of the fact that Western Middle School offers numerous in-service activities for its faculty, that Western Middle School's faculty members attend a variety of conferences, and that 12-15 faculty members regularly attend the North Carolina League of Middle Schools Conference. At the time of the initial interview, he was making arrangements for Kathy Callahan Hunt, a middle school expert of national renown, to come to Alamance County to guide the staff through the initial planning stages for a daily advisory program which they will implement next year.

Bozeman speaks often of his commitment to support the staff by providing them with multiple opportunities for growth. He takes personally the responsibility for making that happen. His faculty appears to share his concern over the need to stay abreast and to push forward professionally. One veteran teacher explained that she doesn't want to see the staff become "apathetic." Another spoke of the need to

stay abreast of educational trends and guidelines, such as the changes mandated by the Basic Education Plan.

An issue relating to vision which Bozeman and several of his charter faculty members appear to be facing at this time revolves around the question "Once you've become an exemplary middle school, where do you go from there?" Western was established as a middle school thirteen years ago. Many of the problems relating to programming -- e.g., establishing flexible scheduling, interdisciplinary teaming -- have been satisfactorily resolved. As early as 1983, the school was written up in Joan Lipsitz's book, Successful Schools for Young Adolescents, as an exemplary middle school. Since that time, scores of educators have visited there and the Western faculty has shared its expertise across the state through staff development workshops and conference sessions. When questioned about how teams work together, faculty and staff consensus is that time has been a positive factor. An eighth grade teacher explained that teachers with common teaching styles seemed to gravitate to one another over time. "Some are structured in their approach, some are more spontaneous. Each house has developed its own expectations and rules." Although Bozeman and Briggs, as an administrative team, make final decisions about the composition of the teams, they have encouraged teacher input and have been sensitive to the issue of personality "fit" (Site visit, 10/5/90, p. 9).

Teachers are clearly comfortable with implementing the components of middle level schooling. Nevertheless, Bozeman does not want the school to "rest on its past accomplishment." He recounts that two years ago they had a stagnant period. "We were living on our laurels. So we rededicated and looked at new things and that's what I want to continue to do -- strive and move forward" (Bozeman interview, 7/19/90, p. 3).

One of the "new things" that Bozeman speaks of is site-based management. He views this movement as one that will "give teachers the ability to buy into and invest in decisions being made in the school." This fits right in with Bozeman's belief in shared responsibility for schooling. Already, teachers have input into the hiring of new faculty members by sitting in on interviews.

Bozeman views site-based management as a trend which will enhance his effectiveness as principal rather than undermine it:

> Some people want to run the school. Some people feel their power is eroded. It hurts them. I don't. I see it as shared responsibility. And, anything that my teachers can buy into is great (Bozeman interview, 7/19/90, p. 4).

His greatest challenge in this area may be to help teachers have as much confidence in their own decision-making ability as he already has in them.

"Making Every Child Feel Good About Him/Herself"

Bozeman stated up-front and early in the initial interview his vision that every child should feel good about him or herself. He puts this concern even above academics:

> Our overall philosophy is very simple; its not educational. We want everyone to feel good about him/herself. And if we do that, the grades will come . . . And I think we do a good job here. Our test scores are always the highest (above state and system-wide averages). Our parents seem to be satisfied, and our attendance rate is like 96% (Bozeman interview, 7/19/90, p. 3).

And how does Bozeman implement this vision? Primarily, by providing multiple ways for teachers to get to know their students. For one thing, every homeroom teacher is expected to make a positive contact with each student's parents in the first two weeks of school. In addition, a two hour block schedule, which includes homeroom, allows teachers to spend time with their students and get to know them well. Bozeman models a positive adult/student relationship by getting involved himself with students on an hourly, daily basis. For example, he regularly conducts feedback sessions in which he goes into classrooms, frees the teacher to "take a break or get away for a few minutes," and holds an open discussion with students. Next year, when Western implements a daily advisory program, Bozeman intends to have his own group.

Bozeman counts on teacher experience and expertise as additional means of enhancing student self-esteem. "Our teachers have been here long enough that they know how to pick up on things. They're middle school people. Our teachers are middle school certified, trained and we've been together for a long time. It's the tricks of the trade, I guess. We just know our kids and we know what to look for because we understand this age child. And that's a tribute to our staff, not to me" (Bozeman interview, 7/19/90, p. 13).

Assistant principal Lynn Briggs agrees with Bozeman's assessment of the teachers. She calls them "knowledgeable about curriculum and about kids." She also asserts that "Making kids feel good about themselves is what we do best. Kids want to come to school. We enjoy strong parent and community support" (Briggs interview, 10/5/90, p. 7).

During a series of informal interviews conducted with students who were having lunch in the cafeteria, the researcher discovered that Western Middle School is, indeed, a place where students like to be. The researcher pulled a chair up to a table of seven seventh grade boys:

"Hello. My name is Mrs. Stillerman. I'm from a middle school in Winston-Salem and I was wondering if I could join you for just a minute and ask you about your school."

"Sure." (Everyone nodded, indicating that it was okay.)

"Could you tell me some things that you really like about your school?"

"The activities."

"Nice teachers."

"It's easy to find your way around. The houses are painted in different colors."

"The principal is nice."

"The food is good."

"I like the subjects we take."

"The sports."

"You have interscholastic sports?"

"Yeah, football and basketball and baseball and soccer. And we have intramurals during the day" (Site visit, 10/5/90, pp. 9-10).

The researcher was impressed by the fact that these pre-adolescents were willing to have a strange adult join them. There was no snickering. No one exchanged glances as if to say, "What is this woman doing here?" The students were as comfortable with this intergenerational conversation as they might have been if they were talking to one another. Thinking that this may have been a sample which is not representative of the population, the researcher moved on to a table of eight seventh grade girls and repeated her introductory remarks. Once again, the students were warm and inviting. They spoke highly of their elective courses -- specifically career choices, choreography, art,

chorus, and drama. Like the boys, they mentioned sports -- soccer, volleyball, and cheerleading.

"There's so much to do around here," one girl said.

"Like what?" the researcher responded.

"Well, like sports and dances."

"You have dances? When do you have them?"

"Oh, about once a month."

"During the afternoon?"

"Oh, no. At night, from 7:00 to 10:00."

Another girl said that she likes the teachers and then qualified her statement by adding, "Well, most of them are friendly. Except when you're not doing what you're supposed to do."

"What happens when students break the rules or act out and refuse to behave themselves?"

"Well, they talk to them or send them to see Mr. Bozeman or Miss Briggs. And then, if that doesn't work, they have their parents come and stay for the whole day" (Site visit, 10/5/90, pp. 9-10).

It should be noted that during the thirty minute span that the researcher was in the cafeteria, only one adult appeared to be "on duty." Other adults moved in and out; however, there appeared to be little need for close supervision. The pleasant surroundings were like that of a K and W Cafeteria: planters filled with philodendron encircled the open area; the tables were of various sizes

and shapes to fit the eating areas. The noises were also similar to those in a K and W. The normal clinking of silverware, sliding of chairs under tables, and mixed sounds of the various conversations going on around the room could be heard.

One teacher explained that although the majority of students like school and feel good about themselves, there is a small group who are not being reached. These at-risk students represent a real challenge -- a challenge which must be met if the Western Middle School vision is to become a reality for every child. Bozeman and his teachers are finding that non-traditional methods of instruction in alternative settings may be the only answer. Currently, they are using $5,000 allotted to them by the system for a "Remediation Program" to put in place an after school program. Team members will refer students who may benefit from the program.

Another group of children who frequently fall through the cracks are those who come from the Elon College Children's Home. These students are served by the home because they have been abused or are on drugs. They remain there for 90 days, during which time they are assigned to Western Middle School or Western High School. Already, the school provides a "Crisis Room" which allows students to have a transition period before they go into a regular classroom. Students in the Crisis Room receive one-on-one

attention and counseling until they can catch up on their work and until they are emotionally able to function in a larger classroom setting. Nevertheless, teachers talk frequently about the need to provide additional supportive measures for these emotionally fragile children.

Summary

Wayne Bozeman's leadership at Western Middle School rests on his view of school as family and his perception of himself as a team player. As an instructional leader, he implements his vision of "continued professional growth" through his high visibility -- being there. He acts as a facilitator by providing his staff with time for planning, a space conducive to regular meetings, and by making new knowledge available to them in the form of workshops and in-service sessions. He motivates them through high expectation for performance which he monitors not only on a daily but an hourly basis.

Bozeman recognizes the potential for his staff to be lulled into complacency by their past accomplishments as an exemplary middle school. He views site-based management as a vehicle for moving teachers beyond the realm of team decision making for instruction into the arena of school decision making in all areas -- e.g., planning, budgeting, programming, staffing, and evaluation.

Bozeman promotes his vision of "Every child feeling good about him/herself" by providing multiple opportunities for teachers to know their students and he models this by being involved with students on an hourly/daily basis. The vision for positive student self-esteem is already reality for a large number of students at Western. However, Bozeman and his staff will not be satisfied until every student can be included in the vision. Thus, they are working to find new and non-traditional methods to bring even the most reluctant member into the family fold.

MARGARET BRAY, FERNDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL

At a time when public discourse is frequently reduced to "bottom lines" and "30 second sound bites," talking to Margaret Bray is a welcome departure. Bray is highly reflective about the educational process and her leadership at Ferndale Middle School. She offers no "quick fixes" or "easy answers" to the problems of management:

> I think that what I spend my time doing in a given day would not be more than half the key to being successful. There is a lot that a good principal has to do outside of school or on weekends or in the bath tub or somewhere. And, I'm not talking much about mechanical things or writing things down, necessarily, or putting them on a computer disk, necessarily, as what goes on in your head. There is virtually no time that I have found in a school day to think things through and figure things out and really do planning (Bray interview, 7/13/90, p. 1).

Neither does Bray feel that leadership is knowing all the ultimate answers. She stresses the processes of education -- the getting there -- as equally important to the product. Although she has a clear idea of what she wants for her school, the word "product" is not a part of her speech. Instead, she talks of "going beyond the major goal of academic achievement to help children become responsible in their behaviors and their decision making."

A former guidance counselor, Bray has developed the skill of good listening. Her values include "treating people like human beings, with dignity and fairness." Her

values and her past experiences are reflected in her leadership.

Clearly, academic achievement -- good grades and high test scores -- is a number one priority at Ferndale; but, equally important is the "being in becoming" aspect of schooling:

> Our school has so many, and this sounds like an excuse, and I don't even like to talk about this. We have so many kids who come in with strikes already against them -- socio-economic strikes, elementary preparation strikes -- that they come in severely below grade level. They leave here, in most of the disciplines, at or above grade level. We work like the devil to get them there, and we could even do a better job. See, we try and have the best of both worlds, and I think we can, in terms of making the kids feel comfortable, cared for, and meeting those human needs, those affective needs of the middle school child, and working very hard and with a strong focus on academic achievement; and, by academic achievement I am talking about test scores because that's our report card. So, we try at both things and we work at both things but it's hard and it's particularly hard because our kids are so poor -- they come without much of a value for education. I'm not talking about that 20 or so percent who want to come in and tell me what teacher the child should get. I'm talking about the bulk of our kids. So, if I had to say what our number one priority is, academic achievement (Bray interview, 7/13/90, p. 5).

Teachers confirm Bray's insistence that the teaching of basic skills is a priority dictated by the unique characteristics of the community which Ferndale serves. One eighth grade teacher who, before coming into the school system, had worked for United Way, quoted the statistic that "over 50% of the people in High Point over 25 are functionally illiterate."

> It's a real eye opener. We are talking about a community of minimum wage workers. They are material handlers. There are no skilled jobs in the city. We have no blue collar workers . . . We have management, which is almost exclusively at an executive level, and then the other two-thirds of the population is mill workers (Team Leader interview, 10/16/90, p. 14).

Teachers are proud of the effort that the school is making to reach out to the "large segment of parents who are really afraid of education." The Senate Bill 2 plan provides for some PTA meetings to be held in community centers in the high risk housing developments of the city. The school has an adopt-a-student program which targets high-risk students and provides them with added support (Site visit, 10/16/90, p. 14).

A Shared Vision

Bray's vision is, clearly, one that is shared among her faculty; and, she has worked hard to have that happen. When asked what methods she uses to communicate and implement vision, she replied:

> Talk it, talk it all day. Not preachy, not formal, but we talk academics. If somebody comes by, we talk about what they are doing in the class or some workshop they want to take or some workshop they'd like to do here. Now, that's an idealized thing I'm telling you. We don't do that all the time. But that's the sort of thing that gets you where you want to go (Bray interview, 7/13/90, p. 5).

Bray also recognizes that her role as principal carries with it a measure of authority that helps her in getting the job done:

> . . . What the principal talks about is what people think is important. I forget that. I forget that over and over. To me, I'm Margaret, and to those teachers, I'm Margaret, but I'm Margaret Bray the principal, and if I need a lesson about that all I have to do is use a certain weird formation or certain word that you don't hear every day and I overhear it fed back to me some time. I mean I will hear somebody who has unconsciously picked that up (Bray interview, 7/1/390, p. 5).

A concrete example of how Bray reinforces vision through what she pays attention to and what she considers to be important as principal, is in her use of the white bulletin board, which hangs on a central wall in the main office.

> Many times, I'll write some sort of notice on that little white bulletin board out there. We've all come to rely on that for communication, and more often than not, it's a personal notice rather than "We have a meeting at 3:30 in the upper media today." That information goes up there, too, but probably just as often, it's comments like "Congratulations to Norman Crotz who was chosen the Jiff Peanut Butter Teacher of the Year for WMAG," or something. We have birthdays out there, posted on the board during the regular school year. So, it's lots of little personal things that go up, as well as regular notices (Bray interview, 7/1/390, p. 1).

The first time that the researcher visited Ferndale when school was in session, she entered the office at 7:30 a.m. Teachers were gathered around the white bulletin

board and were reading the messages that Bray had already written. These included a "Welcome to Kathy Stillerman from Forsyth County Schools," names of those with birthdays, a list of duties, the PIC (the school steering committee) agenda, and announcement of teacher of the year. Cards and thank you notes were tacked onto the sides of the board for all to read. Throughout the day, as Bray introduced the researcher to various faculty members, a frequent reply was "Oh, yes. You're the one whose name was on the board this morning."

This simple vehicle for communication appears to be a highly effective way for Bray to give focus to what she considers to be core activities and events. The vehicle is simple and unsophisticated: the method and planning are not. As indicated previously, Bray spends a significant amount of time outside the school day reflecting upon the educational process at Ferndale and her leadership in that process. Staff members describe her as a "twenty-four hour person for the school" (Site visit, 10/16/90, p. 15). One has the sense that the warm, calm, personal, and inviting atmosphere that pervades the front office as the teachers arrive in the morning, did not simply happen. It was created by the principal, with the intention of setting a tone and a focus which would be reiterated throughout the building throughout the day.

In addition to using her positional authority as principal, Bray spreads her vision through her role as instructional leader:

> Another thing that I do is in the fall of every year, go around and meet with teams -- we're set up as a typical middle school in structure. So, I meet with each team at the planning period in the early fall, and we talk about last year's test scores and where the strengths lie and where the weaknesses are and the teams pick out two or three areas in which they want to focus. That was until this year. This year, with Senate Bill 2, it was a much more formalized process than that. But, for years, we've done that.

Site-Based Management

Bray's ability to get capable staff members to buy into her vision and then to promote that vision through the sharing of expertise, is also reflected in Ferndale's efforts to implement the provisions of Senate Bill 2. She has invested in two of her eighth grade teachers, Carol and Ruth, the responsibility for leading the faculty in the initial stages of Senate Bill 2 and in setting up a structure to monitor the school improvement plan. Carol is the current SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) chairman and Ruth is a past chairman of the Program Improvement Committee (PIC).

The interview with these teachers confirmed Bray's ability as a leader to implement her vision by targeting capable people and empowering them as leaders. It also added strength to the notion that Bray brings about change

in her school by becoming a part of the change process rather than by controlling it.

The researcher was struck with the ability of these two teachers to articulate the mission of their school and to outline their school's plan for continued improvement. As a result, she made the following observation to them:

> You seem to have to have a very good grasp of what's going on here. In comparison to the other schools I've visited, I find this a bit unusual. In the other schools, teachers are extremely knowledgeable about teaming and curriculum and kids, but they don't seem to be able to talk about site-based management with much depth. It's as if they are doing it, but they don't really reflect about it. What makes the difference? (Team Leaders interview, 10/16/90, p. 8).

Carol and Ruth both concurred that what made the difference was the diverse makeup of the faculty at Ferndale, the fact that the two of them had had previous work experiences outside the arena of public education, and the extremely high standards set by central office personnel in the hiring of teachers. Carol explained that she had been a captain in the Army and was accustomed to making decisions and being held accountable; and, Ruth, said that she had been a campaign director for United Way. Both Ruth and Carol have taught in states where teacher unions are strong and in which teachers are accustomed to playing a role in school-based decision making. Ruth said that she once worked in an elementary school with 21 teachers and no principal:

> It was just understood that our charge from the elementary supervisor was "you will make a plan that will work for this school. You will handle all the problems from cafeteria to busing." So, I was very familiar with site-based management and I think it works a lot better. And, when this began to come down the road, both of us got real excited about it . . . And Margaret said "Will the two of you be willing to work on this?" and we said "Yes," Because we both bring to this process, not only an education background but also another life in business and other areas where we have seen people have to make decisions in groups . . . (Team Leaders interview, 10/16/90, p. 8).

Regarding the makeup of the faculty, the teachers described the whole area as a "real melting pot" and the school as a "reflection of that." Mentally surveying the faculty, the teachers mentioned fellow teachers on their floor alone who have taught in Georgia, New Jersey, Maine, Maryland, New York state, Ohio, and Michigan.

> People bring the best of a lot of different things and I think we have really benefitted from that. There is a real commitment to education on the part of this staff. We don't have the percentage of people on this staff who are teaching here because they got caught teaching and can't get out. (Carol)

> I'm not saying 100%, but a higher percent of the staff is committed, because, frankly if they weren't, with the student body we have here, you couldn't survive (Team Leaders interview, 10/16/90, p. 13).

Strong faculty notwithstanding, Ruth and Carol have found that teachers have been reluctant to make decisions that bind the entire group:

> We have found that there are an awful lot of teachers here who, as you say, have marvelous

> ideas, enthusiastic, they will bend over backwards to do anything for you, but at the same time, they don't feel real comfortable jumping with both feet into a situation or say "I think we ought to do it this way," when a person who is higher up than them has maybe leaned the other way. Nobody tends to want to voice their opinion because they're afraid it's not appropriate (Team Leader interview, 10/16/90, p. 7).

Ruth and Carol give Bray great credit for being aware of this and of having dealt with it effectively over the past year.

> . . . I think one of the things we have going for us is that Margaret really does not seek to be the ultimate answer to anything, so that she is very willing to say "Here's a problem, we've got to handle it. Now I have a feeling about it." But she will not influence us ahead of time. She'll let us go and then, especially with me -- I tend to be much more radical than Ruth is. She will say "Have you thought of this?" and then I will say "No, I really haven't."
>
> She's really good about that. She's very good about being willing to let this faculty, and everyone on this faculty, take a major risk as long as we can show that it is going to be something that will be good for our kids. Now, if we don't get all the way or it doesn't work out, that's alright with Margaret. She'll give us enough leeway to step out there, and if it doesn't look like it's going right, she will say, "Maybe we need to refocus; we need to talk," whatever. She is a very positive leader (Team Leaders interview, 10/16/90, p. 9).

Ruth and Carol related two incidents in which Bray's willingness to be a part of the change process instead of controlling it was evident. In one instance, the steering

committee of SACS was making some decisions for the faculty that some of the committee felt uncomfortable with.

> Instead of coming to me or Carol, they were end-running us and going to Margaret. And, one day, we just had to talk to Margaret about this and we just sat down together and said, "We don't know if you're aware of this but these people are coming to you when they should be coming to us. Now what are we going to do?" And she has really done well at fending off that kind of thing. And the faculty is now much more willing to go to somebody other than the old ultimate. And, I think Margaret is really proud of people when they do that. She's very proud of what we're doing here (Team Leaders interview, 10/16/90, p. 9).

Carol added that another result of Margaret's efforts was that faculty members are beginning to accept the leadership of other faculty members. There appears to be less of a feeling that everything must come from the mouth of the principal to be valid.

> I gave a presentation yesterday with an idea and we used the site-based decision making process. I had the proposal, I presented it to PIC, PIC voted on it and then suggested that I go ahead and send it to the whole faculty, which I did; and, for the most part, I think it was well received.
>
> . . . Vicky James is another person who frequently comes up with a good idea and presents it, and Barbara Strange, and there are a number of people I've been enjoying over the past couple of years watching grow. And there was never any doubt that they could do it, but they have taken on a larger persona than they ever have before, and other people are paying attention to them. So, we don't have this flattened pyramid with one person and then the whole row of everybody else (Team Leaders interview, 10/16/90, pp. 8-9).

The researcher sat in on a PIC meeting and witnessed something of what Carol described. In the meeting, a member of the staff development committee presented a plan for using professional leave days. The committee heard the report, discussed it, and then instructed the chairman to go back to her committee and proceed with the plan.

Another instance related to Bray's non-directive leadership revolved around the issue of who should chair the PIC committee. Bray had traditionally been the chairman; however, when it was decided that PIC would become the body which would be the vehicle for site-based decision making, she asked that the issue of the chairmanship be taken back to the teams for discussion:

> Margaret said, "What do we want to do?" and the faculty spoke right up and said what I think was what a lot of people had in the back of their minds for a long time, and that was that it sure would be nice to have someone other than the principal chairing that. And, I think people are much more comfortable with the decisions that PIC makes because there is a faculty chair and we did vote school-wide (Team Leaders interview, 10/16/91, p. 9).

In assessing Ferndale's readiness to assume the responsibilities of site-based management, Carol and Ruth found that their school was farther along than they initially thought:

> Seven of us went for the UNCG Collegium on site-based decision making and it was interesting because we've said all along that Ferndale does things a little differently than others do. We realized that we did have already, because of Margaret's leadership, a lot of expertise in site-based management, decision making.

> Though we had never called it that, the PIC, for instance, as we worked out there this summer, we realized that rather than going through the process of having elections and all this stuff, that Ferndale already had a body, a governing body, that the faculty was very comfortable with, which was really a nice lead into the shared responsibility of site-based decision making. And so PIC was designated as the site-based decision making body (Team Leaders interview, 10/16/90, p. 10).

Bray explained in the initial interview that the High Point system had been talking about decision making at the school level long before Senate Bill 2. "Program Improvement Teams were already in place, and about 8 years ago there was a school renewal in which we were brainwashed with site-based management." Because of this background and the preparation that she has already done towards implementing shared decision making at Ferndale, Bray did not feel unprepared for the change that Senate Bill 2 will bring about. She was not certain, however, that "the bureaucracy at central office could turn it over to the schools." She noted that teachers are unsure of handling the responsibility imposed by site-based management. She predicted that some of the elements of site-based management will be adopted; however, she was skeptical that the School Improvement and Accountability Act would, in itself, bring about site-based management in North Carolina.

In talking to Bray in a follow-up interview, she confessed that her current role in leading the school through implementation of Senate Bill 2, had become "not to

push" but to help teachers keep things in perspective (Site visit, 10/16/90, p. 18).

Emerging Vision

Many of the early problems that newly formed middle schools face -- forming teams, setting up blocks of time scheduling, implementing a daily advisory program -- have been resolved in the 8 years that Ferndale has been a middle school. However, Bray would like to see her school "go deeper" to offer real interdisciplinary teaming. "We have established teaming," she said. "But I'm not always certain that we do such a good job of the interdisciplinary part." And, she added that the advisory program, though well established, is difficult to sustain at a meaningful level (Site visit, 10/16/90, p. 18).

An issue which is causing Bray to revise her vision for Ferndale relates to the system-wide problem of declining enrollment. If pupil enrollment figures continue to decrease, as predicted, the system plans to combine all three middle schools onto one giant campus across town. Bray sits on the system-wide committee that will implement this plan. She admits that the prospect of leading her faculty to merge with two other faculties is one that will consume considerable time and effort. However, Bray counts it an advantage that the consolidation would yield a more heterogeneous school -- one that would more accurately

reflect the various population groups represented in the greater High Point community. As noted earlier, the Ferndale student body is made up primarily of the two extremes of the socio-economic scale (Site visit, 10/16/90, p. 19).

Summary

Margaret Bray describes herself as a "self-starter" and "a bit of a maverick." Indeed, she does not fit the mold of the "typical principal." What makes her refreshingly different is her ability to be a part of the change process in her school, and at the same time, to act as a visionary leader.

Bray believes that if her vision of "going beyond the major goal of academic achievement to help children become responsible for their behaviors and their decision making" is to be realized, it must be a shared one. For her, implementing vision is a daily process which involves providing a warm, positive, personalized work environment for her staff, as well as finding the individual strengths of her faculty members and empowering them to become leaders among their peers.

Bray makes effective use of her positional authority as principal to communicate what she considers to be the core issues and activities of the school. As instructional leader, she acts as an initiator and enabler to her staff.

Her actions are rooted in a strong set of values which include "treating others like human beings, with dignity." As a former counselor, Bray developed the affective skills of good listening, personal counseling, and an understanding of group dynamics. Thus, as principal, she is comfortable with the process of group decision making and with accomplishing her goals in a non-directive, non-controlling manner.

As more and more demands are made on her faculty from external sources, and as more and more of her faculty members assume leadership roles in the change process at Ferndale, Bray views her role as that of helping teachers keep change in perspective -- of "not pushing." At the same time, Bray is reflecting on a time when she may, of necessity, have to include in her vision leading her faculty in the merging of three schools onto one campus.

OAKLEY MABE, GUILFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Oakley Mabe is principal of Guilford Elementary and Guilford Middle -- two schools housed on the same campus. Each school is operated separately. There are two faculties, two school improvement teams, two of everything. Mabe is responsible for a total of 150 personnel and a combined student body of 1,200. He has delegated responsibility to two assistant principals to manage the middle school and one assistant principal to manage the elementary school.

When it comes to doling out the funds, "I've preached and preached that this is two schools. But, in years past, we have gotten the lesser of what we should," he explains. (Mabe interview, 1/7/91, p. 2). This has been a bone of contention between Mabe and central administration ever since he took over as principal 6 years ago. And, it is only one of many instances where Mabe has played politics with his superiors to see that his school's needs are met. In the Guilford County System, Mabe has developed a reputation as a maverick. He is not ashamed of that reputation. In fact, he uses it as a means to gain the respect of his faculty. One teacher boasted that "Mr. Mabe will really go to bat for us to get us what we need. They've made rules at central office just to control him" (Site visit, 1/7/91, p. 12). A key to understanding Mabe's

leadership is in his relationship to central office. This will be discussed in a later section of the portrait.

Mabe said that it is not a typical situation in Guilford County to combine middle schools and elementary schools under one roof. "There was simply no place to put all of the elementary kids without creating a school of 1,300, and that's entirely too large for an elementary school. The board has on its docket to build two additional elementary schools, but that's a lot of politics and a long way down the road," he added (Mabe interview, 1/7/91, pp. 5-6).

In talking with Oakley Mabe about his leadership, three distinct images emerge. As previously mentioned, Mabe is a politician; he is also a "big picture man" and a strong resource provider.

Resource Provider

Mabe believes that if teachers are going to get the job done, they need both emotional and financial support from the principal. He is committed to providing both. This commitment is recognized and appreciated by the faculty as Mabe's strongest and most endearing quality.

By emotional support, Mabe means that teachers need a stable, supportive environment in which to operate:

> One of the things I think people need is somebody that's stable and either strong enough to lead or pick

> up some confidence in. That's the role I try to fill first -- the rock sitting in that chair that most people are not going to mess with too much and this will allow them to do their job. I try to instill trust in them. They trust me for what I do. They know how I will react. I try to be as close to the same every day, no matter how moody, whatever mood I'm in. Because they watch me all the time. I know this from other places. I know that when certain things are happening, I can send a strong message through this school (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 2).

In describing a typical day, Mabe explained that he sets aside time early in the day -- after the buses are in and the essential opening-of-school activities are done -- to be available to teachers.

> In about an hour, I come back and start dealing with the number of people that are here -- 150 people on the staff. They come in for questions, just touch base so that things can operate. If they can't get a yes or a no or some sort of something, then their day shuts down; so I try to leave my door open all the time so they can walk in and see me (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 1).

In addition to being available, Mabe supports teachers by treating them as professionals. Home economics teacher Nancy Baity appreciates the fact that Mabe gives her the freedom to leave school during planning period to buy provisions for her food unit. "The last principal gave me such a hard time about it that I decided never to ask again. Mr. Mabe lets me go whenever I need to and trusts me to get back when I am supposed to."

This professional courtesy extends to matters concerning money and supplies as well. Baity explained that

as long as she had taught she had always been allotted money for food.

> Well, as long as I've been teaching, it has been so skimpy that you stretch it as far as it will go and you still end up spending out of your pocket. Mr. Mabe believes if you need it to teach, you need it, and he'll get it if at all possible. So, I don't have a limit. But I'm not extravagant (Site visit, 1/8/91, p. 10).

Other teachers confirm Mabe's generosity as a resource provider. Teresa Allred, chorus teacher and member of the school improvement team, said that "Mabe never questions professionalism -- if you ask, he assumes you have a valid reason." Sherrill Ferrell, business teacher, points to a room full of IBM computers as tangible evidence of Mabe's support of the business program (Site visit, 1/8/91, pp. 9-10).

Where does the money come from to provide teachers with more-than adequate supplies and materials? Mabe explains that he receives strong community support, primarily in the form of PTA fund raisers. "We have, in the last three years grossed $170,000 on sales by the PTA. And, this is a measure for me. People who are unhappy with us don't spend their money on us." Mabe admits, however, that most of the money and support comes from the elementary parents. By middle school "we tend to lose it because there's not as much parental involvement. Kids don't do as much, parents don't do as much because they burn out" (Site visit, 1/8/91,

p. 5). Teachers are quick to comment on Mabe's abilities as a financial resource provider. "He's the king of making money," says one eighth grade teacher. "He knows how to make a school run: he keeps high teacher morale and has a good business mind," adds another teacher. But they also describe him as a leader who sometimes makes decisions arbitrarily and unilaterally, especially when he is determined to get a program underway. One such example was in the staffing of TOPS (Teaching Our Pupils Success). TOPS is a program which places at-risk students in small classes of 8-10 for one period per day. Students receive individualized help with assignments and are counselled on how to succeed in school. Nancy Baity teaches in the program for one period a day and, although she sees real merit in the program, she was unhappy that her participation in it was less than voluntary.

> I think the approach was wrong. He didn't tell me I was going to do it but I knew. I knew it last year. He did not tell me and the teachers were standing in a huddle talking about me and I think that was wrong and I resented that. And all he had to do was call me in last year and tell me. But he wanted it done and he had no apologies to me (Site visit, 1/8/91, p. 10).

Mabe admits that he can be brusque and that he sometimes skips the amenities. "One thing I'm not good at is writing a lot of thank you notes, but what I do is a lot of subtle things. One of the things I do is I do a lot of saying yes to teachers and their ideas. And, generally,

that costs money. They feel like they can come to me. If they need to hire someone to help put on a production, for example, I can say yes. But generally that takes a lot of money" (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 8).

Consensus among teachers is that Mabe's strength as a resource provider -- one who can say yes most of the time -- outweighs any restrictions or inconveniences that his idiosyncracies in leadership impose. Generally, the faculty is happy and morale is high. Whether teachers agree or disagree with his decisions, they are convinced that those decisions are made in the best interest of students at Guilford Middle School. "He makes you want to do what's best for the school -- not through intimidation but through the work ethic," commented an eighth grade teacher (Site visit, 1/8/91, p. 9).

Big Picture Man

In terms of goal setting and programming, Mabe talks of drawing the big picture for his faculty and then letting them fill in the details. An example of this can be found in the implementation of the TOPS program. TOPS was conceived by Mabe and John Van Hoose from UNC-Greensboro as a way to decrease the failure rate among students who score below the 25th percentile on the California Achievement Test (TOPS brochure, 1/8/91). According to Betsy Neese, one of the middle school guidance counselors, Mabe gathered

together a small group of key faculty members and posed for them the problem of at-risk students at Guilford Middle School. Afterwards, Neese recounts that he asked "Now what are you going to do about it?" In discussing a format for TOPS, each person had a "pet" component that he/she felt was essential -- e.g., guidance wanted an affective emphasis, one of the teachers wanted to emphasize remediation, another wanted a study skills component, and yet another wanted to assist students with homework assignments. In the end, each of the components was preserved. Neese gives Mabe great credit for his continued support of the program and for his willingness to encourage flexibility in implementing that program (Site visit, 1/8/91, p. 16).

In implementing the goals of Senate Bill 2 in his schools, Mabe used the "big picture" approach as well. He first laid out a framework for management and then let the teachers decide how to fill in the details. That framework was the seven correlates of the Effective School. Mabe explained that The Guilford County System used organizational funding from Senate Bill 2 to organize effective schools. Mabe himself spent nine days in Raleigh learning about effective schooling.

> We have a leadership team that was elected by the faculty. We talked about representation, in fact we spent a good six months working on job descriptions and who should represent whom and all that sort of thing. And then we held an election and they were elected to the positions. For the middle school, we have eleven

> and for elementary we have seven representatives, and they meet with me once a week. Or, they can meet without me. That's not important. I'm not the chairman. And they bring up all kinds of issues. Recently, we've been writing county goals . . ." (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 16).

Mabe explained that the leadership team deals with issues that affect everyone in the school. A member of the leadership team enumerated a few of the issues that have been dealt with in the past year.

> Teachers have control over the things that are important to their kids. We deal with goals and objectives, decisions about programming, questions concerning curriculum, honor roll, parent involvement. We meet every Monday from 3:15 - 5:00. Minutes are given to the entire faculty (Site visit, 1/8/91, p. 11).

Mabe added that "they (the leadership team) don't get into the money of the school. I control the disbursement of the money. In fact, that's the only single thing that I have complete control over. Now, I have no problem with the leadership team. They can manage things in the school. They are no threat to me. I have more power than I really need" (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 16).

When asked how the leadership team is dealing with their shared decision-making responsibilities, Mabe replied that, generally, they are doing well. However, he pointed out that "they still look to me for approval." Mabe conjectures that this is because the principal is the one who has traditionally made all of the decisions.

> The principal makes decisions and makes a large number of them. I don't think you can be a good principal and not learn how to make a lot of decisions and make good decisions (Mabe interview, 1/8/91).

Regarding shared decision making, Mabe also finds that the teachers have difficulty seeing the big picture. "They are still dealing with the classroom and what's good for them. 'I want planning period, I want this, that and the other,' instead of looking at the overall view of what will make this school better, what will make scores higher, keeping all the parents informed and happy, etc." (Mabe interview, 1/18/91, p. 15).

Teachers who were interviewed reported that even prior to Senate Bill 2, Mabe encouraged shared decision making.

> Mr. Mabe has always tried to get us involved. He has ever since he got here. He would state what needs to be done to the whole faculty. And then, he would say, "What do you want to do about it? We need somebody to be in charge," and up until the leadership team thing, and somebody would volunteer to do it. And we'd all start working on it and we'd all contribute (Site visit, 1/8/91, p. 12).

Politician

Mabe is a politician both in his relationship to central administration and with his faculty. He serves on several county and state-wide committees; and, he makes no bones about the influence that being on these committees gives him in getting things done for his school. He is a member of the county policy committee, serves as

Professional Services Director, and was involved in extensive in-service for an Effective Schools pilot program that his system undertook as a way to implement Senate Bill 2.

Mabe has been around the system long enough to have felt the political winds shift a number of times:

> I'm on the County Policy Committee. I'm one of the oldest members of that. I've been for years. In fact, I've been fired a couple or three times. They would literally abolish the position. It's a group that's local and will go into things in depth and sometimes the committee wanted other things to happen and the board wanted other things to happen and this committee would say, "It can't happen" and the board would dismiss the committee. And, then the next board would come in and revive the committee again (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 4).

He speaks of his relationship with central administration as a game which has to be carefully played in order to get things done for his school. For him, it is one of the things that makes being a principal exciting -- a compensation for all of the "bureaucratic, paper pushing" required of the principal. However, he added that his relationship with the present administration is the best it has been in years.

> It's very difficult to do what has to be done without being jerked around by the system, the state, the political winds that blow and to stand and do what you have got to do. There are all kinds of road blocks -- and not done intentionally, but because somebody else wants something else done. I have to get around the financial boundaries for us to do what we need to do, to get materials and so forth. There are all kinds of

> board policies, state regulations, a lot of things that are there, so you have to figure out a way to get around them without being stopped and still remain legal (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 4).

Mabe adds that "a lot of what I do is by experience and by connivance" (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 8).

Mabe considers the TOPS program mentioned earlier as his greatest accomplishment in "connivance and experience." When it was determined that the students participating in TOPS would be pulled out of the existing program for one period per day, Mabe was convinced that these students should not miss their electives. "These are the programs in which they excel -- band, shop, chorus, physical education. I wasn't going to make them miss that." Instead, Mabe pulled at-risk seventh and eighth graders out of social studies and sixth graders out of science. "And, they don't have to make up the work they miss. This would be defeating the point of the whole program" (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 14).

Mabe reasoned that since the students fell below the 25th percentile on the California Achievement Test (CAT), that they would not be able to experience success reading the text in social studies or science. And, how did he get around the state requirements for seventh and eighth grade social studies? "I just did it," he said. And then he explained that he kept a low profile with the program for a year until it got on its feet. In 1989, the program won a

Governor's Award for Excellence and the acclaim brought positive press to Guilford County. Mabe added, "I have tenure" (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 14).

Mabe's exploits with central office have become legendary around the school. The story of the birth of the TOPS program was repeated numerous times as the researcher circulated among the faculty. When the home economics teacher said, "They make special rules for Mr. Mabe," there was pride in her voice. Teachers view their principal as a champion of their local cause -- someone who will "go to the wall" for them. Mabe knows this and plays it to the hilt as a means of maintaining high teacher morale.

Mabe rarely calls faculty meetings unless he needs to deal with an issue that applies to everyone. In such a case, he orchestrates the meeting to accomplish whatever goal he has for calling everyone together. "If I go into a meeting and I want something done, generally I'm never out of control. If I'm acting angry, I'm acting, but I'm still in control" (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 8).

Another example of how Mabe plans his reactions to achieve a desired response from his staff can be seen in the following quotation:

> I do very little "blowing people away." I did have to go in recently -- some teachers had an assistant principal treed and they wouldn't let her out until she agreed to do what they wanted. I have people who, as a result of that blowing away are still very nervous

> around me. But it's in the past for me. I don't hold grudges (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 8).

Over the years, Mabe has learned what teachers will respond to. "Teachers want things to work well. They want security. They want support." For him, it is a trade off. Mabe attempts to provide those essentials. In return, he receives their respect and cooperation. That is the power base from which he operates.

> If they feel that I want something or that something isn't right, they're going to do everything they can do to correct it (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 8).

Vision

It is in talking to Mabe about his vision that one begins to understand the motivation behind his leadership:

> Anything I say along this line will sound too philosophical. The middle school kids here need to be well challenged in terms of what we expect of them. We can get a lot more, we can expect a lot more than we're getting if we create a general curiosity about how to learn and that sort of thing. If we were to do that, and give them some fundamentals, then we'd be alright (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 6).

Mabe is convinced that in order to challenge all of the students in his school, fundamental changes in traditional schooling will have to take place.

> We try to remove road blocks to learning and try to do something about self esteem. But one thing that is very difficult to change is that we are stuck too much in tradition in the schools. The needs of children

> have changed, or I guess the needs are the same but there are a lot more problems out there that we have to solve. We are stuck in the traditional instructional mode that is geared too much for the college bound -- that 40 to 50 percent of the kids who are capable in their own right (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 15).

He is not optimistic that the needed change will happen. "The present structure creates so many impediments to that that I don't know if we can change it." To illustrate his point, Mabe talks about a project he has underway which seeks to bring about basic change at the classroom level by enabling elementary teachers to "break out of the rut they are in in teaching." Dr. Sam Miller at UNC-G is a consultant for this project. In describing the project Mabe explains:

> Change is so slow. Teachers are quick to revert to old practices -- to pull out the old lesson plans, to go back to the files and textbooks and the old ways of doing things. Changes we have made are very fragile. Long-range change that lasts is going to be very difficult (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 15).

The problem is not the same in the middle school. "The view and the way that the teachers go about teaching is that students can do more things, thus be more creative. You can integrate more things together. Elementary is still in the skills, skills, skills, skills, and sixty different things a day and they are not well tied together. Teachers need the view that every child can learn if they can figure out a way to teach him."

The TOPS program has been Mabe's major effort to affect teacher attitudes and to experiment with change that requires moving outside of the "present structure." Teachers who have been involved with TOPS, even those who were initially coerced into participation, have changed their attitudes about at-risk students. As the program has gained success, Mabe's superiors have been willing to tolerate the rule bending of state mandated course requirements as a means of meeting student need. Nevertheless, progress has been slow and tedious. There are still those who do not buy in. As a result, Mabe predicts that the current wave of educational reform will bring about some modification, but "to fundamentally change, that won't happen quickly and we'll be in 1999, in agony over why education is failing" (Mabe interview, 1/8/91, p. 15).

Mabe's vision and the motivation behind it are child centered. This is evident, not only in talking with him, but in talking with his teachers. As mentioned earlier, teacher morale as well as teacher satisfaction are high. Their satisfaction derives not only from being treated professionally and having adequate resources; it derives from their feeling that everything is being done to benefit the children whom they teach as well. Consensus is that Mabe does what he does for the good of the kids at Guilford Elementary/Middle School. The politicking, the maneuvering, the delegating of responsibilities, the fund raising, the

sharing of decision making, and, in some instances the refusal to share the decision making, are all done to build a better school for the children who attend there.

Summary

Oakley Mabe leads his school toward a vision of improving education for all students primarily by providing teachers with the resources they need to get their jobs done. By saying yes to teacher requests for funding of various projects and programs, he gives tangible evidence to them that he trusts their judgment as professionals. His trust fuels teacher morale and a high degree of teacher satisfaction, which, in turn contribute to a positive school climate.

Mabe fosters shared decision making by painting the big picture for his teachers and then encouraging them to fill in the details. Examples of this are noted in the manner in which he established the TOPS program and in the way in which he led his teachers to implement Senate Bill 2. As principal of two schools which are housed on the same campus, he has little choice but to delegate responsibility for the management of the schools. This he does through his assistant principals and through the two school leadership teams.

One item he does not delegate is the budget. Mabe is perceived as generous with school funds. He takes pride in

the fact that he spends the money allotted and raised on the school and doesn't hold any over in reserve for the following year. Nevertheless, Mabe controls the purse strings and there is no discussion about that issue. It is somewhat surprising that teachers interviewed do not find that a problem.

Mabe is a clever politician who uses his maverick status with the school system to unite his faculty behind his goals for school improvement. His tenured position gives him staying power in the system. His membership on various state committees as well as his TOPS program, which won a Governor's Award for Excellence, has brought recognition to Guilford County Schools. This has afforded him a measure of respect in the eyes of the superintendent and the board of education.

Mabe is perceived as one whose vision is motivated by a genuine concern for the students who attend his schools. His focus on student need may be the key to his success in leadership.

Mabe is concerned that his vision for improving education for all students may not be achievable within the present structure of education. He fears that the tendency to teach to the 40-50 percent who are college bound and who would get it anyway, will not be easily overcome. Nevertheless, he is taking steps toward restructuring in his own schools. The TOPS program in the middle school and the

effort to bring about changes in instruction at the elementary level, are evidence of his initiative to restructure. On this front, teachers have been slow to change; however, Mabe has seen that when they become involved in successful programs to help at-risk students, attitudes begin to change.

ANN PARRISH, NORTH JOHNSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Inviting Setting

Ann Parrish is principal of North Johnston Middle School, which is located off I-95 in the tiny town of Micro, North Carolina. The school is new and could be a dictionary description of what William Purkey might have called an inviting middle grades facility. Three separate wings which house the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade levels, converge on an attractive waiting room that tries hard not to look institutional. Behind the waiting room is Parrish's office, a handsomely furnished room with a desk, several wing chairs and end tables with Parrish's pictures and memorabilia.

The principal is as hospitable as the school is inviting. She believes in first things first -- sharing a cup of coffee and then on to "what you need to find out." She settles down in the easy chair behind her desk, makes certain that the researcher is comfortable -- "You can just put your things down anywhere. Scoot up next to that table so you'll have something to write on" -- and asks the secretary to hold her calls. After only a few minutes with Parrish, one gets the sense of having known her all one's life.

Principal as Teacher and Learner

Not only was Parrish eager to assist the researcher in getting all of the information for which she came, she was also intensely interested in getting ideas and new perspectives about middle school from the researcher. She had many questions about the researcher's role as curriculum coordinator in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools and was anxious for several of her teachers who are graduate students to find out more about the position. She wanted to know about innovative instructional teaching techniques being used in middle schools in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County and asked the researcher to send any interdisciplinary units that would be helpful to her teachers. It became evident early on in the initial interview that this mutual willingness on Parrish's part to act as a resource to others and at the same time to rely upon others as a resource, is one of the keys to her successful leadership.

This was illustrated after the initial interview had ended, when Parrish invited several teachers into her office to meet the researcher. During the conversation one of them mentioned the TOPS program that the researcher had observed at Oakley Mabe's school in Guilford County. Parrish became so enthralled in hearing the details of the program, that she began planning with the teachers present how they could implement TOPS at North Johnston Middle School. The

teachers were equally engaged in the discussion which ensued for 15-20 minutes. This impromptu brainstorming session was carried out as if it were a regular occurrence. For that reason, the researcher decided not to impose her own agenda and chose, instead, to record the conversation as an illustration of Parrish's interaction with her faculty (Parrish interview, 1/8/91, p. 1).

Parrish has a great deal of rapport with her teachers, as was evidenced by the post interview meetings and also by what the teachers said about her individually. One sixth grade teacher with two years of experience spoke of Parrish as a person you can come to "when you need to blow off steam."

> Sometimes I just come in and say "Do you have ten minutes to talk?" And she always says "yes." If I'd been at any other school I'd have never made it through my first year (Site visit, 1/18/91, p. 10).

Parrish acknowledged to the teacher that she, too, has someone at central office with whom she can blow off steam. An eighth grade math teacher spoke of Parrish's willingness to trust the staff to make their own decisions: "Well, Mrs. Parrish is just so busy, you have to find her to ask her. So, you just make the decision and know she'll support you." Another teacher remarked, "She has lots of meetings -- they really do keep them too busy at central office" (Site visit, 1/18/91, p. 10).

Shared Decision Making

It is evident that teachers play a major role in decision making at North Johnston Middle School. Parrish reported that this happened long before Senate Bill 2.

> When I came on board three years ago, first thing we did was I had each team to select a team leader that would represent them at team meetings and would kind of coordinate activities on their hall or their house -- things like that. We have two from supporting teachers and we have an eighth grade, seventh grade, and sixth grade. They not only make decisions, they work as a mediator between the teachers and me. But teachers are welcome to come to me too. But on making decisions, how to spend money, what our priorities are, how we spend money this year based on next year. That gives us goals and that also helps us utilize money with where the school thinks they should go, based on where I think it should go too. So, that's what we consider on-site management. I try to back teachers if they make decisions. If they do not make good decisions, I try to deal with that one-on-one, not in groups (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 1).

Parrish reported that she has always promoted shared decision making in the schools where she has been. She feels that if she is "up-front with teachers and if they know where we're headed, and they have input, they will do a better job." She has learned through both research and experience that teachers work best when they have a voice in the things for which they will be held accountable. Parrish has no qualms about sharing with teachers information about school finances:

> We just take the budget and lay it out by line item and we talk about it. And, by doing that, it's not, it's real open and we spend most of our money quickly. As a

> matter of fact our finance officer just called and wanted to know if I knew I didn't have any money in state funds. And I said "Yes, I know that." But anyway, we spend our money quickly and we use it for that current year, and that's the way it's supposed to be, I think (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 2).

The researcher asked Parrish if teachers had been hesitant to take on the responsibility that shared decision making entails. Parrish replied that they had not. She added that their willingness to share in the decision-making process has a lot to do with leadership:

> Teachers don't want to spend the time to react and to make decisions unless the decisions are going somewhere . . . That to me is the most important. And unless it's against the law, I don't know how to say this, . . . unless it's moving funds or using funds for something that you can't do it, I say up-front, "This is the criteria, this is where I can go, and with those guidelines we will do it." Of course, that doesn't mean we're going to buy a new TV for the teacher's lounge. I mean, I have to use leadership. But they're not going to make that decision (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 5).

For Parrish, the shared decision making that Senate Bill 2 has sparked is no threat to the principal's position.

> It should enhance and strengthen it and it should make school instructional goals, should make them better or make them, I'd say higher, because when you will reach it you go higher. And I think that's what Senate Bill 2 is all about. And I think we already had it (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 4).

Parrish's statement that "we already had it (Senate Bill 2)" needs clarification. She was referring to the fact that Senate Bill 2 sets up required indicators, such as

attendance rate and test scores, that must be addressed by each school's representative body in terms of milestones and goals. Each school's improvement plan is developed under the direction of the school improvement team with the final document being approved by the faculty. At North Johnston Middle School, Parrish already had a school improvement team in place with her team leaders. In addition, she already required the team to develop a mission statement for the school which each teacher would use as a guideline to set personal goals. Additionally, she requires each teacher to outline the competencies that he/she will cover during a nine week period. When Senate Bill 2 came along, North Johnston Middle School already had the vehicle for implementing it. Parrish explained that, consequently, her school did not use a fraction of the hours of meeting time required by central office to complete their school improvement plan.

Instructional Leadership

Parrish considers her primary role to be that of instructional leader. A major focus for her is to promote instruction appropriate to the needs of the middle school child. She works with teachers in covering the basic competencies; but, she expects teachers to go beyond basics to higher level skills. She encourages cooperative learning as a means of working with students who are heterogeneously

grouped and she emphasizes interdisciplinary teaching to the extent of requiring each team to develop and implement at least one interdisciplinary unit.

One way that Parrish communicates to her teachers that instruction is a number one priority is to respect their teaching time with no interruptions.

> We have a daily paper, The Jaguar. Every morning it communicates what we're going to do that day. I try to make sure that no one takes instructional time and the sacredness of instructional time is kept. We do not use the intercom unless it's an emergency, unless I have to call a student from a room. We don't use it on all call. I try to respect them and their time and give them time to accomplish their goals (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 4).

Parrish promotes quality instruction among her teachers not by watching them too closely, but by setting up expectations and then giving teachers space to do what they need to do. She holds herself to the same high expectations.

> I make sure that they understand what we're trying to do. Being positive myself, being upbeat, being willing to work, making sure that I'll do my part, backing them up discipline wise. I try to be progressive, and by being myself, I think they will be too (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 6).

Parrish also expressed a willingness to model change by being a part of the change process herself.

> I think changing myself, and learning to give and take, has been the most important thing to me because I'm a real rigid person. I want everybody to do their job.

> I've had to learn that I don't go out and make sure that 90 minutes of planning is used, the first 45 minutes is used as a team. I have to give them the flexibility and the professionalism -- I mean, I have to let, I have to trust them. And then, if I don't see it happening, I have to meet with the group one-on-one. I don't attack the whole faculty (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 6).

In addition to respecting instructional time, giving teachers space, and being a part of the change process herself, Parrish relies on peer pressure to bring about change for improved instruction.

> I have found that probably the most traditional teacher in our school has done that (tried a new teaching technique) because her colleagues did that without me every saying "you need to do that" (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 6).

Parrish uses staff development to promote improved instruction among her staff. At times she conducts the sessions herself. Other times, she prefers to bring in someone else from whom to learn:

> I did some staff development on how to use the results of the California Achievement Tests. That's because I used to be test coordinator for the county. But as far as having someone come in on team building and team leadership, I called the Principal's Institute and would get someone who knew more about it and that the faculty and I could work together with (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 8).

Not only does Parrish provide staff development opportunities on-site, she also encourages teachers to

attend conferences, to bring back information, and to share it with other faculty members.

> We do a lot of staff development. We spend a lot of money -- picture money. We go to a lot of conferences (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 8).

One of Parrish's goals for her school is to become updated technologically. Much of the staff development money for last year was spent on attending a computer conference so that teachers could learn to use the tele-conferencing system that was installed in the school as a result of a six thousand dollar grant.

Vision

Parrish defines vision as "Something that you're always headed toward and if you get almost to it, you need to expound to go further. You never, in school, get to a position where you're comfortable." At North Johnston Middle School, Parrish's vision is "Being as updated as possible in teaching technology and teaching techniques;" and, to "make a 12-14 year old kid feel good about where he is and where he is going, as well as he can." This is a vision that her faculty appears to share (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 8).

Parrish and her teachers are well-grounded in middle school literature. Their talk about goals and vision

centers around the middle school philosophy of providing a developmentally responsive curriculum for pre-adolescents.

Hannah, an eighth grade science/math teacher, talked about the need to be student oriented, to strive to help each child be well-rounded, and to reach the whole child. And how can that goal be accomplished?

> By integrating subjects. This helps kids see the big picture. By having common planning, teachers can discuss the needs and accomplishments of kids. By planning across teams, we can keep a certain degree of continuity across the grade level (Site visit, 1/18/91, p. 10).

Pam, a seventh grade science teacher, talked about opening doors to rural kids. North Johnston Middle School is in a rural setting. Many of the children who come to school have never been out of the county. With only 18% minority students, the student body is a homogeneous one. Pam described an interdisciplinary unit which was implemented for the entire school.

> We took all of the kids to the art museum in Raleigh. Teachers coordinated it with the curriculum. Eighth graders went to the North Carolina section; seventh graders to the African and Egyptian exhibits. Language teachers correlated their literature studies with art. Beforehand, sixth graders had a presentation in their art classes (Site visit, 1/18/91, p. 9).

Kay, another math/science teacher, spoke of the need to "make middle school special so that middle school will be some of the kids' best memories."

> We don't have a prom but we do have a dance. Lots of kids couldn't afford to buy a dress. So we don't dress up. Lots of these kids are poor, but there is a lot of pride among the poor community people (Site visit, 1/18/91, p. 10).

Consensus among teachers was that motivation, absenteeism, and lack of study skills, are barriers to realizing the goals of student success. To meet the challenge, teachers are willing to put in time after hours to conduct workshops for parents and to work with students on basic skills. One of the most successful programs that has been implemented at North Johnston is a "parents night out" science workshop. Parents are encouraged to leave the kids at home, to come to school, and participate in science experiments conducted by the science teachers. In other sessions, parents are given pointers on how to help their kids study and improve their test taking skills.

The school also conducts an after school program for students prior to California Achievement Test time. In these sessions, students go over basic skills tested on the CAT.

In addition to providing after school programs, teacher teams make regular parent contacts to discuss their students' progress. All students get progress reports with a least one positive comment.

Johna, a sixth grade teacher, counts as one of the school's greatest strengths that faculty members are willing to act as resources to one another.

Teachers spoke of breaking down the barriers to student success by making learning fun. Many of the teachers are making an effort to cut back on lecture and, according to Parrish, that is pressuring some of the more traditional teachers to do the same.

Parrish and the teachers who were interviewed described the staff as energetic and highly involved. In terms of realizing their vision, they believe that they are on the right track. They just need to "continue what we're already doing, but keep it up" (Site visit, 1/18/91, p. 11).

Parrish appears to have passed on her eagerness to learn and grow to her faculty. Six of thirty-six teachers on the North Johnston faculty are currently enrolled in graduate degree programs. Teachers spoke of various workshops that they had attended and added that Parrish encourages them to bring back ideas to share with the faculty.

Summary

Ann Parrish leads her school toward a vision of meeting student needs and providing updated technology and teaching techniques by being a resource to her teachers and by relying on teachers to be a resource to her. Through this

mutual relationship, she empowers her staff to act professionally and enthusiastically toward meeting a set of shared goals.

Parrish models change by becoming a part of the change process. She holds no expectations for teachers that she does not hold for herself. Teachers are aware of this and respond positively to the fact that she holds high standards for growth for them as well as herself.

Teachers are highly involved in making decisions that affect their students and their teams. Although Parrish relies on her school leadership team to make major decisions, she invites faculty members to be involved, ask questions, and to give input to her and the team. Minutes of the leadership team meetings are circulated among the faculty after each meeting. Parrish operates in an open manner regarding all information about the school. This includes the budget, which she discusses line by line with the leadership team and with anyone else who cares to see it.

As an instructional leader, Parrish promotes improved instruction by arranging for teaching time to be preserved without interruption. She makes expectations clear and then allows teachers space and flexibility to accomplish their instructional goals. When expectations are not met, she deals with individuals and teams rather than the entire faculty. Parrish also relies on peer pressure to encourage

her more traditional teachers to experiment with innovative instructional techniques like cooperative learning. Although she stresses basic competencies by requiring each teacher to outline the objectives to be covered each nine weeks, she considers covering the competencies a minimum goal for instruction. Parrish requires teams to develop interdisciplinary units and insists that higher order skills be taught at every level. She also encourages teachers to combine overlapping curriculum, such as the sixth grade science and health units.

Staff development is a primary means for improving instruction at North Johnston Middle School. Parrish conducts and attends workshops and she encourages teachers to do the same. Principal as well as teachers value staff development and university study as a means of professional growth. This is evidenced by the high number of teachers who are currently in graduate school and by the fact that the leadership team has chosen to spend money from a major fund raiser on sending teachers to conferences.

Parrish and her staff are knowledgeable about middle school philosophy. Their talk about goals and vision stem from that philosophy. Essentially, their vision is to be a successful middle school -- one which is developmentally responsive to the students who are being served and one which provides an effective instructional program for pre-adolescents. Teachers and principal believe that they are

well on their way to accomplishing their vision. One teacher described the status of the school in the following terms:

> Our facilities are modern. Our teaching is innovative. Children want to come here. Fifty kids applied to come here from other districts. The school is safe. Parents think the discipline is too strict -- not for others -- but for their own children (Site visit, 1/18/91, p. 11).

THE PORTRAITS: SEVERAL GENERALIZATIONS

The portraits of the principals who participated in this study on leadership and vision, have been presented as "pictures standing in a gallery -- not a comparative study, but a collage of the forms that (visionary) leadership can take and still be effective" (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980). Indeed, each portrait can be viewed as a complete representation of effective leadership in a particular context. Nevertheless, some common features of leadership emerge as the portraits stand together. These will be discussed in the following section.

Vision: Common Threads

Each of the principals in the study created his/her vision from a strong set of personal values. Dina Braddy values excellence; her vision is for Shelby School to be the best middle school in North Carolina. She defines her vision in terms of student success. Wayne Bozeman promotes a vision for positive self image among students, which stems from his belief that academic achievement is integrally tied to how students feel about themselves. Margaret Bray values personal growth and autonomy; and, she strives to create a positive work environment for her teachers and to empower them as leaders, in order to enable them to meet student needs. Oakley Mabe links equity to excellence in education.

His vision is for improved instruction characterized by teachers holding high expectations for all of their students. Ann Parrish values continued personal growth and reciprocal learning. She promotes her vision of meeting student needs through updated technology and teaching techniques by providing strong instructional leadership and by encouraging shared decision making.

These principals work on an hourly, daily basis to gain a shared vision among their respective faculties. At Shelby Middle School, Braddy insists that her teachers take part in defining student success through setting a mission and goals for the school. She assesses progress through daily classroom visits and informal contacts with teachers. Bozeman continues to promote the Western Middle School tradition of "school as family" through his high visibility and constant presence. He encourages continued professional growth and development by exposing his faculty to new ideas and by involving them in the decision-making process of the school. Bray observes and conferences with teachers on a regular basis; and, she enlists the help of highly capable teachers in promoting her vision by providing them with expertise in their areas of interest. Mabe supports his teachers financially and emotionally, and he goes to the wall for them when administrative policies from central office stand in their way. In turn, he receives their full cooperation in working toward the goals that he outlines for

them. Parrish relies on shared decision making to get teachers involved in meeting the needs of their middle grades students. She sets high expectations for teachers in terms of professional growth and she holds herself to those same expectations.

The study revealed an appropriate "fit" between the goals and vision of the principal on the one hand, and the particular culture of the school and the readiness of the teachers to buy into the principal's goals and vision on the other. At Shelby Middle School, Dina Braddy is dealing with issues of middle school excellence and effective schooling, moving toward greater school-wide decision making. Wayne Bozeman is dealing with a seasoned faculty and an organization with a proven track record in middle school excellence. Thus, he is pushing the boundaries of his vision, leading his faculty to explore the question of "Where do we go from here?" Margaret Bray, satisfied with the progress her school has made in implementing middle school structuring and scheduling, is pushing her faculty to "go deeper" into interdisciplinary units. At the same time, she senses the frustration that many of her teachers feel as they attempt to implement Senate Bill 2. For that reason, she has made a deliberate effort to hold back -- not to push too hard. Oakley Mabe is also pleased with his faculty's middle school orientation. However, his schools are composed mainly of students whom he describes as "the

college bound -- the 40-50% who can do anyway." Mabe is convinced that the other 40-50% must be reached if his vision is to be realized. Ann Parrish's school is inviting, has a strong middle school program, and has implemented shared decision making. Because of the rural isolation of her school and the homogeneity of the student body, she and her teachers see the need for exposing themselves and their students to outside experiences and opportunities that will broaden horizons and allow them to be more connected nationally and globally.

Each of the principals recognizes the influence that his/her position affords. In talking about Senate Bill 2 and the likelihood of its success in promoting site-based management, Bozeman explained that "a principal is a very powerful person in a school and if they don't allow freedom, it's not going to happen." Braddy and Bray have both been forced to deal with teachers' perception that the principal has to make all of the decisions before they could get anywhere with site-based management. Bray spoke of using her positional power to reinforce what she views as important. She also recognized the need to have teachers not see her as the last word or ultimate authority. Mabe speaks of being able to "send a strong message through the school"; and, Parrish understands that because of positional authority, what she models and pays attention to as principal is noted by her faculty.

The principals in the study all used the role of instructional leader to communicate and implement vision. All of the principals spend significant blocks of time in observation and evaluation of teachers through the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument. However, it is interesting to note that each has his/her own unique style of instructional leadership. On the one hand, Braddy has invested in her assistant principals the managerial duties in order to free herself to be in the classroom. For her, having the "time to lead" is critical. Bozeman, on the other hand, believes in a "shared administration." He operates his administrative team much like he expects his teachers to operate their interdisciplinary teams. Bray uses a one-on-one approach to instructional leadership. She observes teachers in their classrooms and then uses conference time to assist them in setting instructional goals. Mabe acts primarily as a resource provider. He has also developed a reputation as a "curriculum person" (Mabe interview, 1/7/91) in the county. His expert status gives him credibility with the faculty. And, Parrish works closely with her staff to help them set personal goals that support the mission statement of the school.

Other Observations

Each of the principals has a unique personality and leadership style: Braddy is energetic and charismatic;

Bozeman is informal and laid back; Bray is deliberate and calm; Mabe is political and stable; and, Parrish is invitational and relational. However, each of the principals shares a view of the principalship as a job which extends beyond normal school hours and beyond the school walls. In describing her role as public relations representative, Braddy spoke of the need for her to be available to the community -- to speak and attend public functions as a representative of the school. Bozeman talked about attending sports events, playing volleyball, having a meal with faculty members after school hours. Bray said that some of her most important planning time -- what makes her successful -- takes place after school hours and away from school. Mabe's activities extend beyond the school day to include county and state-wide committee meetings and time for PTA fund raisers. Parrish is also highly involved in system-wide meetings, professional staff development such as the Principal's Institute, and community activities. Likewise, each of the principals was described by staff members as "a twenty-four hour person for the school," and "one who works endlessly for the school."

Each of the principals appeared to enjoy strong community support. Not only did the faculty in each of the schools talk positively about this support, but the fact that all of the schools are housed in well-planned, updated facilities speaks to the issue of community backing.

Each of the principals favored the increase of shared decision making at the local school level as a means of gaining a shared vision among faculty. In talking with them, however, it became evident that the notion of site-based decision making had not sprung from a vacuum; rather, it had been introduced at the district level, prior to the passage of Senate Bill 2. This suggests that vision is, indeed, a function of district expectation, as well as personal values and school culture.

In summary, the principals in the study were distinctly different in personality, leadership style, and in the visions which they held for their respective schools. Nevertheless, careful observation and interviewing revealed several commonalities among them. These included a vision which stems from personal values; a daily, hourly commitment to work for a shared vision; an appropriate fit between vision and the culture of the school; effective use of positional authority in goal attainment; and, a tendency to be on the cutting edge of system-wide and state initiatives such as Senate Bill 2. The principals also demonstrated a high level of job commitment, received a high level of community support, and operated in settings with well-defined district expectations.

VISION - LOOKING BELOW THE SURFACE

Extent to Which Principals' Visions Challenge the Regularities of Schooling

For the most part, the five principals hold visions which do little to challenge the regularities or deep structure of schooling (Sarason 1982). Oakley Mabe is a possible exception. In substituting TOPS class for seventh and eighth grade social studies, he clearly ignored state curriculum guidelines which prescribe three years of social studies in middle school. Nevertheless, TOPS has been Mabe's only triumph and he admits that progress was slow in that area. Bozeman and Parrish are experimenting with after-hours programs for students and parents, both of which are innovative but could hardly be considered a challenge to traditional assumptions about educational practice. Bray's faculty is taking small steps to extend the walls of Ferndale School into the community by holding PTA meetings in one of the high-risk neighborhoods in High Point. Braddy's school partnership with local industry is taking small steps toward utilizing community resources as a way to improve the quality of instruction. Generally speaking, however, the principals' visions are governed by the regularities of schooling about which Sarason wrote.

The commitment of the five principals to move their schools toward a shared vision has already been noted; however, the visions of these principals are clearly

circumscribed by the regularities of schooling. Perhaps Oakley Mabe stated the case most clearly when he said, "The present structure creates so many impediments that I don't know if we can change it. It (The current wave of reform) will bring about some changes but to fundamentally change, that won't happen, and we'll be in 1999, in agony over why education is failing."

Vision as a Top Down Initiative

In talking about Senate Bill 2 and the probability of that piece of legislation bringing about site-based management in North Carolina, Margaret Bray was not certain that the "bureaucracy at central office can really turn it over to the schools." On the other hand, Bray spoke of the central office initiative prior to Senate Bill 2 in which "We were brain washed with site-based management." Bray's statements are representative of comments made by other principals in the study. It appears that the regularity or assumption of a hierarchical relationship between central administration and local units both shaped and limited the principals' visions. Ironically, the same structure that enabled the principals to be on the cutting edge in regard to shared decision making at their respective schools is the same structure which ultimately will frustrate their visions to challenge the regularities of schooling so that significant restructuring can take place.

It should be noted that the principals in the study are upbeat and optimistic about their leadership. They do not act as "victims" of a system that they cannot change, nor do they waste time bemoaning their problems. They are fully engaged in promoting their goals and in gaining a shared vision among their faculties. Nevertheless, one has the sense that their visions are governed, on the one hand, by the culture and regularities at the local site and on the other by the regularity of bureaucratic central office management. Their visions to create effective middle schools and to implement shared decision making are a result of top down initiatives. In no instance in the study did the researcher find an example of vision that originated with an individual principal and spread upwards to the system. One can only speculate that principals who wish to initiate original visions will have to do so by moving to central office. In fact, the two principals who were nominated most frequently by the panel of experts consulted at the beginning of this study, have now assumed other positions.

The purpose of including this section on the regularities of schooling is not to negate the positive view of the principals which was conveyed in the portraits. To the contrary, as a result of interviewing and observing the five principals, the researcher developed a sense of admiration and respect for the role of principal that she

had not held prior to the research. The researcher's conclusion that successful, visionary principals make a difference in the quality of schooling remains unchallenged. The question that this section does pose and one that is difficult to escape is "How can the regularities of schooling be effectively challenged so that (1) the possibility of vision as a "bottom up" as well as "top down" initiative can become reality in each school district and (2) so that principals and their schools can be free to pursue visions of restructuring for dramatic rather than minimal results? Clearly, the principals in this study understand the process of communicating and implementing a shared vision in their schools. Presently, however, the content and scope of their visions are limited by the regularities or deep structure of schooling.

Vision and Likelihood of Transfer to Other Contexts

In looking at the assembled portraits which describe a variety of ways that successful principals communicate and implement their visions in their respective schools, three questions arise: (1) Would the principals be perceived as successful/visionary if they were transported to other schools? (2) Would the principals be perceived as successful/visionary in districts which were less supportive and less innovative than the ones described in the study?

and (3) How much of the principals' success is attributable to their own personal charisma/influence/personality?

As documented in Chapter 3, the literature supports the notion that vision is a function of district expectation, the principal's personal and professional values, and the particular school culture. The literature also supports the notion that leaders are made and not born. The five principals interviewed perceived their districts to be supportive and innovative. Nevertheless, these principals were on the cutting edge of change in their districts. One might assume that they would be leaders in change in any district to which they might be assigned. One might also speculate that, given the regularity of bureaucratic control that persists in the schools, principals would be severely limited in implementing visions to which central office might be resistant or unsupportive.

Each of the five principals has a proven track record in the area of middle school leadership. Mabe and Parrish were successful principals before being assigned to their current schools. Mabe was actually sent to Guilford Elementary/Middle to "straighten things out" (Mabe interview, 1/7/91, p. 10). Parrish left central office to assume leadership at North Johnston Middle because "they felt that she was the best person to fill the position" (Parrish interview, 1/18/91, p. 3). Bray, Bozeman, and Braddy were all assistant principals in the schools in which

they later became principals. Braddy and Bray had both been assistant principals in elementary schools prior to their appointment to middle school. Both were well respected in the system for their strong middle school orientation (Braddy interview, 7/12/90; site visit, 10/16/91). One might easily speculate that, having been successful in leadership positions held prior to their current positions, these principals would also create successes in whatever schools they were assigned in the future.

Of the five, Bozeman is the only one whose leadership skills were primarily nurtured in the school he currently leads. As mentioned earlier, Bozeman was hand picked by Wilma Parrish to become assistant principal at Western and then later to assume the principalship there. As a young and inexperienced science teacher, Bozeman was mentored by Parrish, who herself had been mentored by another principal from substitute teacher to teacher to principal. Parrish took Bozeman under her wing and taught him according to her very distinct middle school philosophy (Parrish interview, 1/25/90; Bozeman interview, 7/19/90). Everything at Western Middle School bears the mark of Wilma Parrish. Since she is only in her second year of retirement, and still very much a part of the community and the school, it is impossible to say how much of the school's vision is attributable to Parrish and how much to Bozeman. One can only assume that Bozeman, having had the advantage of Parrish's counsel,

would be capable of transferring the knowledge gained from his experiences with her to another setting. One thing is certain: that the culture of the school has played a pivotal role in shaping Bozeman's vision.

The extent to which the other four principals have shaped the cultures of their schools with their personal values and charisma is more evident. Margaret Bray's calming, non-directive leadership has made a difference in Ferndale Middle School for nine years. Over the past four years, Dina Braddy's determined, energetic presence has transformed Shelby Middle School into an effective middle grades institution. Oakley Mabe was the man of the hour, who "has a good business mind, knows how to make things run, and changed teacher attitudes the first year he came" (site visit, 1/7/91, p. 9). Ann Parrish, the founding principal of North Johnston Middle School, has led her school in three short years to adopt a middle school program which is responsive to pre-adolescent needs and has implemented a high degree of shared decision making among her faculty. Her inviting personality, her curiosity, and her willingness to learn from others have been major influences in bringing this about.

These principals have made an obvious difference in their schools. As noted earlier, they are knowledgeable about school culture and they effectively match vision to cultural needs. However, with their visions and goals they

have also shaped the cultures which they lead in significant ways.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

SUMMARY

The purposes of the study were to discover how five successful middle school principals in North Carolina define their visions and how they perceive that they communicate and implement their visions in their respective schools. The intended outcome of the study was increased understanding of how successful middle school principals function as visionary leaders.

An assumption upon which the study rested was that effective or successful principals are visionary principals. The assumption was based upon Blumberg and Greenfield's research (1980), which concluded that what separated the seven effective principals interviewed from their peers, was a commitment on the part of the effective principals to an educational ideal, a vision which they held for their organization. Blumberg and Greenfield's research was conducted with principals from all three levels of schooling. The current study confirmed this assumption among middle level principals.

Participants in the current study were selected by a panel of middle school experts asked to nominate five middle

school principals who, in their opinion, are among the most outstanding middle grades practitioners in the state. From among the 17 names submitted, principals were contacted according to the frequency with which they were nominated. Two of the top nominees were unavailable due to having moved to other positions. One of the nominees declined to participate. From a total of eight principals contacted, five agreed to participate.

A qualitative methodology was used to explore the five research questions. The researcher was the primary instrument. Data was gathered during site visits through extensive interviewing of principals, observation and informal interview of major stakeholders, and examination of documents related to the principals' leadership. A series of questions was pilot tested for use during the interviews. These were later revised to allow for greater flexibility.

Internal validity or credibility was established through prolonged engagement in the research setting. The researcher visited each site from two to three times. In between visits, she corresponded and talked by phone to the principals to clarify information and to have them review drafts of the portraits. In addition, multiple sources were used to verify data. In the final narratives, the researcher included only information which was verified by at least two, and usually three, sources other than the principals themselves. These sources included written

documents and interviews with and observations of teachers, students, administrators, secretaries, and guidance counselors.

Final drafts of the portraits were sent to each of the five principals with the explanation that "the portrait will appear in Chapter 4 of the dissertation along with the portraits of the other principals who participated in the study." Principals were invited to read and comment on the extent to which the portraits are "accurate presentations of your leadership and of your school." Four of the principals made minor notations. For example, one said that an after school program was held on weekdays instead of on Saturday (Bozeman letter, 12/18/90). Another commented that the portrait was realistic but that she wished the quotations had reflected more articulate speech on her part (Bray letter, 3/5/91).

One of the principals made comments and requested that several direct quotations be deleted. The comments related to some extreme statements made regarding his earlier relationship with central office. He felt that the researcher failed to clarify that his current relationship to the central office "has never been better" (Mabe letter, 3/19/91).

For the most part, the content of the portraits came as no surprise to the principals. This is due to the fact that after the initial interview, the researcher met with each

principal and restated what each one had said to her. For example, in a follow-up visit with Dina Braddy, the researcher said, "From our interview I learned that you want your school to be the best in the state of North Carolina. You lead your faculty toward a vision of excellence primarily as an instructional leader who maintains a visible presence. You make time for leadership by delegating responsibility to your assistant principals . . . etc." (Site visit, 10/16/90).

External validity or applicability of the study was ensured by providing a thick description of the studied context. Readers seeking to compare the studied context with another familiar context, will find sufficient detail in the current study for determining degree of transferability.

The researcher chose four methods to ensure reliability or dependability of the study: (1) She stated up-front the assumptions underlying the study and the basis for selecting informants in the study. (2) She used multiple methods of data collection to triangulate data. (3) She established an audit trail by describing how all decisions were made and how all categories were derived. (4) She conducted frequent member checks by taking all data interpretations back to the principals to determine if the perceptions of the researcher matched the perceptions of the informants.

As the study emerged, it became evident that the five research questions should be collapsed into three. The data collected on implementation and communication of vision was interrelated to the extent that forcing it into two categories appeared unnecessary. Thus, research questions 3 and 4 were collapsed into one in the concluding section to read "How do principals say that they communicate and implement vision?"

An insight which was gained from the study is that a leader's vision appears to be a function of several elements, which constantly interact to create and shape it in an ongoing process. It appears, then, that questions 2 and 5 which deal separately with how leaders' visions are created and how they are shaped, should be categorized and discussed together. Thus, questions 2 and 5 have been collapsed to read, "How do principals create vision, and what do they say shapes vision?"

Following is a discussion of the research questions.

How do Successful Middle School Principals Define Their Visions?

In an initial interview, each principal was asked, "How would you define your vision for _____ Middle School?" This question was posed toward the end of the interview, after the questions, "What do you perceive to be your most

important role/roles?" and "What would you say are your goals for _____ Middle School?"

Principals were fluent and articulate in describing the roles they assume and in defining their goals. However, when the question about vision was posed, the tempo of the interview would diminish; the principal would typically rub his or her chin and look up, as if in search of an answer. After an extended pause, the answer would come forth and would typically be amended or revised in the next sentence. Often, the researcher would attempt to prompt an answer by saying, "Is your vision for _____ Middle School the same as your major goal?" The reply would invariably be, "No, my vision is bigger than that; it's more than that."

It is not clear whether the interview questions or the inexperience of the researcher in delving for information were factors in producing the limited responses that the principals gave to the questions concerning vision. Whatever the case, the study indicates that middle school principals do not readily articulate their definitions of vision.

What is clear is that through their actions and words, the principals in the study are in a continual process of defining their visions as they interact with the cultures of the schools that they lead. This finding is similar to that of Brubaker (1989), who after spending time assuming the role of principal concluded that "vision . . . may be part

of a neat and tidy conceptual model in a professor's course on the principalship, but in the real world of schools, it is simply lived by the effective principal" (p. 49).

How Do Successful Middle School Principals Create Visions and How are Their Visions Shaped?

During the initial interviews, principals did not tend to reflect upon or philosophize about how they created their visions; nor, did they talk about the factors which shape their visions. This may have resulted from the researcher's inexperience in using techniques to delve for fuller responses; or, it may have been that the interview questions were inadequately phrased. Whatever the case, principals had little to say directly about the creation and shaping of vision. What they did talk fluently and energetically about were their goals and expectations, issues of schooling that are important to them, and their leadership roles and how they fulfill those roles.

It was in listening to the principals talk about their leadership -- what they do and how they do it -- and in hearing staff members talk about how decisions get made in their school, that the researcher gained insight into the means by which principals' visions are created and shaped.

A major influence in determining the kinds of visions that principals create is school culture. As mentioned

earlier, the researcher found an appropriate fit between the visions of the principals and the schools which they lead.

For the most part, principals bring to the school a strong set of personal values which define for them the essence of good middle grades schooling and which guide them in creating appropriate visions for the particular schools which they lead. Frequently, a principal is chosen to lead a particular school because of the strong values that he/she already possesses. In instances where the principal has been a member of the school culture for some time before being named leader, it is possible for the principal to create his/her vision from the values learned in the culture which he/she comes to lead. School culture can nurture and shape leaders just as leaders nurture and shape culture. In four of five cases in the current study, principals came to the culture with a strong vision for the school. The vision was then shaped and refined through the interaction between the principal and members of the culture.

As pointed out in Chapter 3, a unique feature of middle grades leadership is that it is undergirded by a body of literature which enjoys strong consensus among middle grades educators. This research clearly favors an organizational structure which emphasizes team teaching, flexible blocks of time scheduling, promotes instruction which is interdisciplinary and varied in response to the individual differences of the learner, and supports an advisory

component which addresses the affective needs of the learner. In creating their visions, middle grades principals are guided by their knowledge of middle grades literature. They bring their knowledge to the school culture and through their leadership they hone a vision of excellent middle grades schooling as they interact with the members of the culture.

District goals and expectations also influence the kinds of visions that middle school principals create. The districts which were represented in the study have provided strong support for the creation of research-based middle schools. In addition, they encourage and facilitate shared decision making at the local site. Principals have effectively incorporated these central office goals in creating their visions for exemplary middle schools and in gaining a shared vision among faculty.

The creation and shaping of vision appears to be an ongoing, iterative process. Principals' visions create and are created by culture through interaction within the culture. Culture shapes and is shaped by principals' visions, which stem from a distinct set of values, a knowledge of middle grades research, and the goals and expectations of the district.

How Do Principals Say that They Communicate and Implement Vision?

Each of the principals acknowledged that his/her positional authority provides an effective base for communicating vision. By virtue of the fact that each holds the position of principal, the faculty and staff listen and pay attention to what is said. Principals are aware of this and they use it to a positive advantage.

None of the principals uses his/her positional authority as a platform from which to hand down mandates; nor, do they use their role to communicate en masse to the faculty. What is distinct about the principals is how simple, direct, and personal their methods of communication are. Braddy does "morning rounds" to touch base with her teachers. Bray uses the white bulletin board to send important messages. Bozeman and Parrish manage by constantly roving around the school and taking care of issues as they arise. Mabe is the "rock that sits in that chair." They always know where to find him at certain points during the day.

None of the principals makes use of excessive memos and communiques. Although they use whole faculty meetings to establish policies at the beginning of the year and to take up issues that affect the school at large, each principal tends toward holding meetings with small, trusted groups of teachers who will take the message back to their teams and

smaller groups. Nevertheless, they know, as Mabe put it, that they can "send a message through this school" if they need to.

CONCLUSIONS

The study confirmed several of the findings that were noted in the literature review in Chapter 2:

(1) Successful middle school principals are visionary principals (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980).

(2) Visionary principals work on an hourly, daily basis to communicate their visions through what they pay attention to and what they reinforce (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; Schein, 1986; Peters and Waterman, 1982).

(3) Visionary principals implement their visions primarily through their role as instructional leader: as resource providers, communicators, through modeling instruction, and visible presence (Smith and Andrews, 1989). Through their emphasis on instructional leadership, principals become involved in the core activities which support the core values of schooling (Peters and Austin, 1985).

(4) Visionary principals gain a shared vision primarily through encouraging shared decision making. They find ways to empower teachers as leaders in the change process. They achieve this by treating teachers as professionals, providing them with the resources to get the

job done, and by becoming a part of the change process themselves (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, McCall, 1988).

(5) Visionary principals are highly successful in implementing the visions which they hold for their respective schools. However, the content and scope of their visions are limited by commonly held assumptions or "regularities" which remain essentially unchallenged and which prohibit local initiative in restructuring (Sarason, 1982).

The current research extends the literature in two major ways:

(1) Former studies on vision have typically been conducted with high school or elementary principals (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1982; Lightfoot, 1983). In cases where middle grades principals were included, the grade configuration among the schools from which the principals came varied considerably (Smith and Andrews, 1989). There has also been a tendency among researchers to lump the middle grades with either elementary or high school.

The current study included only principals from schools with 6-8 grade configurations. The study recognizes middle school leadership as a special case which deserves to be examined and evaluated, not only in the context of the greater body of literature on leadership, but also within the context of specific middle grades research.

The study revealed that the visions of the principals who participated in the research are shaped by their knowledge of exemplary middle school practice. The principals in the study are not merely seeking to establish exemplary schools, they are using their knowledge of middle grades research to create exemplary middle schools.

(2) A strength of the current research lies in its treatment of visionary leadership and in the insight which it offers those who seek greater understanding of the concept. In much of the literature, vision is perceived as static and is viewed primarily as a function of school culture (Schein, 1986); central office expectation/ regulations (Lezotte, 1989); a leader's charisma/personal involvement in the core activities of the organization (Peters and Waterman, 1982); or, effective instructional leadership (Smith and Andrews, 1989). In the current study, visionary leadership is portrayed as an interactive, recursive process in which the principal continually draws on his/her own knowledge, values, personal and positional authority, and technical know how, to shape school culture toward a vision of exemplary middle grades schooling. Simultaneously, the influences of district expectation/regulations and the status quo of school culture are shaping the principal's vision in an ongoing manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The current study gives rise to several questions which need further exploration in future studies about middle school principals and their visions. These will be enumerated in the section which follows:

(1) How does the type of vision held by a principal relate to the number of years that his/her school has been organized as a middle school? In the current study, there was evidence that schools which have been organized as middle schools for as many as 8-10 years (Ferndale, Guilford, and Western Middle Schools) are now dealing with issues which differ from those schools which have been organized as middle schools for 2-3 years (North Johnston and Shelby Middle Schools). This relates to the next question:

(2) What developmental "stages" do middle schools go through as institutions and what issues do schools face at each of the stages? Although the current study focused on principals rather than schools, it became evident in visiting the schools that each was at a different stage in implementing the middle school concepts outlined in the literature. Future research might identify those stages and the major issues that accompany each stage.

(3) What role does mentorship play in promoting visionary leadership. The current study offers one example

of successful mentorship -- that of Wilma Parrish and Wayne Bozeman. Bray, Braddy, and Mabe spoke of learning more things "not to do" than "to do" from principals under whom they had served. Do principals learn primarily from negative role models? This would be a good question for future research.

(4) How do the deep structures or regularities of schooling affect visionary leadership? In the current study, this question was answered in retrospect. Future research is needed in which the question is posed early in the study.

In this dissertation the researcher entered the world of five middle grades principals to discover how they communicate and implement vision in their respective schools. The insight that was gained only scratches the surface of what can be known. Further research is needed to add to this body of information about visionary leadership among middle grades principals and to encourage all middle school principals to view themselves as visionary leaders.

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