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The purpose of this research was to examine a leadership team as they facilitated change at a large urban high school. The research questioned the types of changes the team experienced and how they handled those changes. Furthermore, the research discussed the style of leadership utilized by the team members as they implemented changes at the school.

The methodology used for this study included interviewing, observations, document analysis and researcher journaling. The data collection process spanned over the 2005-2006 school year. Measures were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of this study.

The data revealed a strong need for leadership while the school was in the midst of change. The multitude of changes created frustration for faculty members at the school. The principal, assistant principals and curriculum coordinator were charged with implementing a new magnet program and raise student achievement at the school. The twist in this story was the fact that the principal and two of the three assistant principals were new to the school. In the end, it was discovered that a plan and vision for change was needed early on in the change process. The leadership team needed a more complete understanding of the changes in order to potentially ease the frustration of the teachers and help with a smoother implementation process.

LEADING CHANGE: THE STUDY OF  
A LEADERSHIP TEAM  
IN TRANSITION

by

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Completing graduate school and the dissertation process has certainly been an enduring experience. My work at UNCG on my degree has spanned a good portion of my professional career. The experience has certainly strengthened me for the role I play at my school and for future roles I hope to attain.

During this time my life has seen many changes. The most important is the birth of my two sons. I hope that in time, Matthew and Ryan will understand the value of education and will attain the level of education that I have. More importantly, I hope they use their education and their abilities to help others seek their own personal goals in life.

I certainly could not have completed my graduate school work or this dissertation without the help of many people at UNCG. I appreciate all the efforts and patience of my chair, Dr. Rick Reitzug. His guidance has helped me to really think beyond what is obvious and dig into the meaning of leadership. I also appreciate the help of my committee members, Dr. Coble, Dr. Hudak and Dr. Lashley.

I think that it is important to mention my grandmother, Theresa Nichols. She is the one that instilled in me at an early age to pursue my education. She used to tell me all the time to get all the education that you possibly can. When I left home for college she said how envious she was of me to be able to go off and earn a college degree. She has provided me an intrinsic motivation to persevere through the graduate school process.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study examines how a leadership team facilitates the transformation of a high school from a traditional school to a magnet school. The school I have chosen is one that I am currently employed in as the assistant principal. For this study, I will refer to the school as Magnet High School (MHS). This school is just one of 11 high schools in an urban district in the Piedmont of North Carolina. The actual transformation began in early 2005 with the award of a magnet school assistance grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the principal who won the grant retired in May of 2005 and a new principal was appointed on August 1, 2005. Along with the new principal, two new assistant principals (one being me) arrived at the school as well. Of the four administrators, I am the only one with any magnet school experience.

My interest in school change and the leadership styles of magnet school administrators comes from my own work experience in a magnet school. I served as an Assistant Principal at Middle Magnet School for five years (2000-2005). During that time I was a part of the transformation of the school from a neighborhood school to a countywide magnet school. A great deal of time and effort went into this transformation. I was a member of the administrative team that worked to redefine our roles as the transformation process was occurring. We were forced to reexamine our role as school

leaders in order to promote the magnet theme of the school. The change from a zone middle school to a magnet middle school required us to concentrate on how to bring students into the school. We had to rethink our approach to leading Middle Magnet in order to comply with the federal grant and to bring about the necessary changes needed at the school. In thinking about the new roles the administrators played at Middle Magnet caused me to question how other administrators facilitate change. Do school administrators who are in the process of school change have to alter or redefine their roles as leaders? Or, is it business as usual in the main office? My study will investigate how a leadership team at a large urban high school facilitates change in terms of the aspects of change which are discussed in the review of related literature.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem that this study will inquire about is how the leadership team at Magnet High School facilitates change. Change is reported in the literature as a very complex and difficult occurrence for any organization, especially a school. The change for Magnet High School is the transformation from a traditional four-period day comprehensive high school to a magnet school for internationalism, visual arts and the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The change for MHS comes with a 1.7 million dollar federal grant (Magnet School Assistance Grant, MSAG) to help in the process. As with any federal grant, many stipulations and regulations are attached, necessitating change. For MHS, the change represents more than just curriculum changes and federal mandates. MHS also experienced change in the members of the leadership team. This

factor will be an interesting aspect of how the leadership team facilitates changes at MHS.

This study will focus on how the leadership team at MHS goes about implementing the changes at the school. The team is comprised of the principal, three assistant principals, and a curriculum coordinator. What is particularly interesting in this case is the fact that 3 of the members of the team are new to MHS. The principal was just appointed in August of 2005. The principal then hired two new assistant principals. Mr. P., one of the new assistant principals started August 25, 2005. I am the other new assistant principal and I started September 15, 2005.

The former leadership team of MHS dispersed at the end of the 2004-2005 school year. The principal, who won the 1.7 million dollar federal grant, retired and moved to Tennessee. The assistant principal in charge of the grant and the IB program returned to his hometown area, which is in a different county than MHS. The other assistant principal accepted a position at a new high school in the district. This left MHS with only one administrative leader from June, 2005 until August, 2005. This also meant that the magnet program, supposedly in its second year of implementation, was really starting from scratch. With almost all new administrators and no real magnet team in tact from the previous year, the process of magnet implementation really just began with the start of the 2005-2006 school year. Yet, the evaluators hired to assess the MSAG believed that MHS was in its second year and expected to see real changes. This is where the problem of this study begins. This study will examine the entire team whose mission it is

to facilitate changes in order to implement the magnet theme and improve student performance at MHS.

### **Research Questions**

1. What changes are occurring at MHS?
2. How is the leadership team at Magnet High School facilitating change?
3. How is the leadership team responding to problems that have arisen at MHS in the face of change?
4. Was there a particular style of leadership used by the leadership team at MHS?

Listed below are the sub-questions developed for this study. The questions were derived from the literature review conducted for this study. The literature review was constructed utilizing the headings below. The sub-questions have been listed using the same headings for clarity.

#### **Vision of Change**

1. Who is responsible for the vision of change at MHS?
2. What is that vision? If one does not exist, why not?
3. Has the vision changed during the process of change?

#### **Leadership**

1. Is transformational leadership apparent at MHS?
2. If yes, how so, if no, what type/style of leadership is used?
3. How do the teachers at MHS respond to the leadership team members in terms of the changes that are occurring at the school?

### Staff Development

1. What staff development opportunities have been offered to the leaders and teachers at MHS?
2. Is the staff development focused on one or two particular themes?
3. Who decides on the type and topic of staff development opportunities at MHS?

### Agents of Change

1. Who are the most important agents of change?
2. What power is given to these agents? By whom is the power given?
3. What role do the agents of change play?

### Process of Change

1. Is there a plan for facilitating change at MHS?
2. Who is responsible for 'guiding' the change process?
3. Do all members of the school have to be involved in the process of change? Why or why not?

### Problems of Change

1. What problems have resulted due to changes at MHS?
2. How has the leadership team addressed the problems of change?
3. Have the problems of change served as learning experiences? If so how? If not, why not?

### Power of Outcomes

1. Who really holds the power of change at MHS?
2. What groups / individuals have sought power during the change process at MHS?
3. Were those groups / individuals seeking power to positively or negatively affect the change process at MHS?

### **Significance of the Study**

I believe that this study has significance on three different levels. At my level, the study is important to me because I am directly involved with facilitating change at MHS and with the implementation of the magnet program. I was hired there in September of 2005 to help carry out the change process from a traditional high school to a magnet high school. For me, it represents an important step in my career. If I fulfill my responsibilities and provide real help in the change process then MHS can become a successful magnet high school. This can only lead to other opportunities for me in the near future.

On another level, the study is significant to the school district. The magnet school grant that the district received to change MHS is worth 1.7 million dollars. Through successful implementation, the federal government will continue to support the change initiatives that the district embarks on. However, if the change process is not successful at MHS, the district could face having to pay back the money or become ineligible for future money. Therefore, it is important to the school district that MHS be successful throughout the change process.

Finally, the third level of significance of this study is to help others understand how leaders can facilitate change to create a successful magnet school. The federal government continues to advocate for change in our public school system through No Child Left Behind legislation. They also continue to support magnet schools through grants like the one MHS received. Schools that wish to become a magnet school might find insights into the process based on the findings of this study. The change process,

according to the literature, is very complicated and sometimes frustrating. Individual schools should not have to reinvent the wheel for themselves just because they are implementing change or in the process of becoming a magnet school. All magnet schools can share information and advice about the change process and how school leaders work to facilitate that change. This study's purpose is to highlight a leadership team as it facilitates the change from a traditional high school into a magnet school. Since the literature is limited on secondary school research, this study hopes to provide those insights for other high schools to learn from and use as needed.

### **Researcher Bias**

It is important to note that I am the researcher for this study and I am a member of the leadership team at Magnet High School. By working at MHS, I have an all access pass into what is happening at the school. I have used that access to provide as much data as possible for this study. I believe that the data I have collected is richer because of the fact that I am at the school every day.

As I worked on this study I attempted to be very careful about my objectivity. When conducting the interviews I let the participants do the talking. I did not interject my personal thoughts about what they were saying. I also made sure that I never discussed anything that was said during an interview with anyone else at the school. I worked very hard to gain the trust of the participants and I was not going to lose that trust. I also attempted to record observations based on what I was seeing and hearing. Again, I did not interject personal comments until after the observation was over. I did make some notes and personal thoughts on the observations which I included in the

analysis. The majority of my personal thoughts and feelings about what was happening at MHS were recorded in the researcher journal. I used that to vent my frustrations, to record data and to elaborate on what I was seeing at MHS. I also used the journal to record my thoughts about some of the interviews and some of the participants with whom I was working.

In analyzing the data I went back to the literature review to find the basis for my findings. I used the literature to substantiate what I found during the data collection so that my bias would not void my findings. I believe I conducted a trustworthy study with real findings regardless of the fact that I worked at the school. The findings coupled with the literature on change opened my eyes to what was really happening at the school. Conducting the study made me more aware of the dynamics of the school. I thought a great deal more about what was happening at MHS than I ever had before at my former school. I also reflected more on my role at the school and what I was doing as a leadership team member and as an agent of change.

I have been true to my word that I would not share any information given to me by participants with others. I have not discussed my findings with any of the leadership team members, including the principal. As I have written the analysis of the data I have attempted to mask the identity of the participants. There have been several occasions when the principal was identified but that was important in those instances. I felt like readers would understand that a school has only one principal and the principal is typically viewed as the primary leader of the school.

No study can be truly without bias. This is especially true for a study like this one where the researcher is a part of the study. However, every possible measure to remain objective has been taken. The results and the impending implications are valid based on the methods used to conduct this study. The findings and implications are especially important to me as I continue to work at Magnet High School and as I continue to pursue my career as an educational leader.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RESEARCH / CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

In thinking about change and the transformation from a traditional school to a magnet high school I have reviewed the works of Fullan, Leithwood, Hausman, and other change researchers. Through analysis of their combined works I have generated a conceptual framework to guide my study. The framework stems from the themes and major ideas that emerged in the literature. I have taken those themes and important ideas and placed them in categories. These categories serve as my headings which I call the ‘aspects of change.’ I have relied heavily on the works of Fullan to generate the headings for my framework. The aspects of change that I will use for this study are: vision of change, leadership, staff development, agents of change, the change process, problems of change, and the power of outcomes. Within these categories I have included the idea of transformational leadership that Leithwood, Burns and others discuss. This notion of leadership I believe will be an important component of this study. In addition to the discussion of change and transformational leadership, I also review the research about magnet schools, as discussed by Hausman, Goldring and others. From this literature, I developed the framework for this study and to defined the key terms that were be used throughout this dissertation.

To begin this literature review, I open with a history and explanation of magnet schools. Then, I will move into the aspects of change that serve as the foundation of this

study. The framework will be used not only in the literature review, but in the data collection and analysis as well.

### **Magnet Schools**

In a review of the literature, a comparison of magnet versus non-magnet schools provides a means for understanding the differences and the implications facing administrators as they assume leadership roles in these schools. The themes and concepts in which magnet schools are grounded are as different as schools themselves. In this section I will discuss how magnet schools and non-magnet schools differ. I will explore the specialization of magnet schools as compared to the ‘normal’ setting of a traditional school. I will look at definitions of what magnet schools are supposed to be and how school districts across the country interpret those definitions. Finally, I will explore how the principalship in a magnet school has been, or should be, altered to fit the changing needs of these special schools. To begin, a historical perspective is offered to better explain the differences between magnet and non-magnet schools.

The history of magnet schools provided insights into how magnet schools differ from non-magnet schools. Magnet schools were a creation of educational policy makers during the 1970’s school desegregation era. At that time in our nation’s history regular or traditional schools were being desegregated via court orders. One way to ‘attractively’ desegregate schools for parents, educators, and students was to create magnet schools. “Magnet schools were established to promote racial diversity, improve scholastic standards, and provide a range of programs to satisfy individual talents and interests” (Goldring & Smrekar, 2002, p. 13). By the late 1970’s many districts created magnet

schools to both voluntarily and involuntarily assign students to schools. For some school districts, magnet schools served as part of mandatory reassignments plans. The magnet school often served as a compromise for white parents to send their students to traditionally black schools. Magnet school programs created incentives and special programs to attract white students to inner city black schools. The hope was to avoid “white flight” out of black schools and to create integration for all the schools.

Since the 1970’s, the majority of magnet schools have been created in large urban school districts as a means of school choice. School choice had not been available for most students and parents in non-magnet schools. In fact, magnet schools have become the most widespread means of allowing school choice for parents. “Recent surveys have revealed that the majority of the public supports some form of school choice and that such programs within the public schools raise minimal controversy” (Hausman & Brown, 2002, p. 256). Magnet schools have provided parents a choice among specialized themes, instructional methods, or a specific curricular focus. In comparison, parents have no choice of instructional methods or specialized curriculums in non-magnet schools. Blank, Levine, and Steel (1996; cited in Goldring & Smrekar, 2002) reported that over 75 percent of school districts with magnet programs had demands for student enrollments in those schools that surpassed availability. As a means of school choice, magnet schools have proven to be both beneficial and successful.

School districts across the nation have developed magnet schools utilizing varying concepts of the term ‘magnet school’. According to Hausman (2000, 2001, 2002) magnet schools can be defined using four basic characteristics. First, magnet schools focus on a

thematic curriculum or specialized instructional method. Second, some type of admissions criteria is developed to ensure voluntary desegregation. Third, parents and students have choice in selecting a magnet school. Fourth, the attendance boundaries for magnet schools extend beyond that school's neighborhood or what is considered "residential" for that particular school. Therefore, a magnet school is considered a school that encompasses all four of the characteristics outlined above which make it unique from non-magnet schools in a school district.

Another way to think about magnet schools is to consider them as 'alternative schools.' "Magnet schools, sometimes referred to as 'alternative schools' or 'schools of choice' are public schools that provide an alternative to mandatory assignment of children to schools and to busing to achieve racial balance" (Goldring & Smrekar, 2002, p. 13). This notion of alternative school, however, can be deceiving in today's educational jargon. Most educators today consider alternative schools as schools for students who need a different type of learning environment. Students enrolled in today's 'alternative schools' could be assigned to those schools because of discipline issues, home/family concerns or for student safety concerns.

The most predominant type of magnet school program is one that specializes in a certain subject matter (Goldring & Smrekar, 2002). Examples include math, science, technology or foreign language magnet schools. Other popular types of magnet school programs focus on specialized instructional methods. Such examples include Montessori, International Baccalaureate or international studies, and performing or visual arts magnet schools (Rossell, 2003). Magnet High School offers an international focus on learning

and it offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. Some magnet school programs offer reduced class sizes or other special incentives to gain student enrollment.

Magnet schools serve as a means for parents to have choice about their child's education. School districts supply the magnet programs and offer incentives to attract the students. Those incentives could be the focus or specialized curriculum of that particular magnet school. Creating this supply and incentives hopefully creates a demand by parents for enrollment in that magnet school. However, as supply and demand goes, if the demand drops, then school districts cannot afford to keep the supply available. So, factors such as school leadership and concern for parent/family issues are at the forefront of maintaining the demand for magnet schools.

Principal leadership has been identified by Hausman and Goldring (2001) as "an important determinant of magnet school effectiveness" (p. 401). The choice component of magnet schools "fundamentally alters the nature of school administration" (p. 401). The basic outcome of both studies is that the principal serves a key role in how effective a magnet school becomes and whether or not the school can survive. In contrast to principals of non-magnet schools, factors such as school size, student achievement on test scores, and students' socio-economic status are all poor predictors of leadership success of magnet school principals. All those factors will greatly affect a non-magnet school principal, yet are only a few of the factors important to a magnet school leader. "It may be argued that market forces and more permeable boundaries place added role responsibilities and demands on magnet school principals that make the role even more challenging" (Hausman & Goldring, 2001, p. 416). Non-magnet school principals do not

face the market forces that affect magnet schools and their school's boundaries are more concrete than magnet schools.

Since magnet schools depend on student enrollment to survive, the principal's role shifts from daily manager and neighborhood figure to that of a salesman and statesman. Magnet schools do not have guaranteed enrollments. "Magnet principals are forced to sell their schools in order to attract and retain students" (Hausman, 2000, p. 36). Parents have choice to enroll in the magnet school and to withdraw their children from that program if they wish. Therefore, principals have to be more receptive to parents and their concerns. Principals have to allot more time for parents in terms of offering parent information sessions and school tours. Magnet principals in general report that more parents visit and tour their school than their non-magnet counterparts.

School leaders are also involved in the creation of marketing tools such as brochures or other promotional materials. As tour guides, they deliver the sales pitch and serve as the school's ambassador while trying to lead the school (Hausman, 2000). Non-magnet school leaders do not have to allot as much time to parent tours and marketing their school programs. Non-magnet school leaders are not selling their neighborhood schools. They can focus on curriculum, testing, and management issues of leading a school. Magnet school leaders have these same concerns as well as those challenges that come with leading a magnet school.

### ***Problems associated with magnet schools***

In terms of magnet schools, some problems that arise include demand for the program, location of the school, and structure of the program. These problems can

sometimes be out of the control of the leadership team and teachers in a school. Yet, it is important that schools work to overcome these obstacles in order to have a successful magnet school. One such solution to get parents to leave neighborhood schools and attend magnet schools is to make the application process easy (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2004). School districts and local magnet schools should have an easy application process that provides needed information to schools but does not overburden parents. The goal is to attract students, not set up barriers for enrollment. Applications should be consistent throughout a district. The application and procedures to enroll should be disseminated to all parents in a school district. “Complete fairness and strict guidelines are imperative in the admissions process” (p. 20). Without strict guidelines, parents may become suspicious and not take advantage of the opportunities magnet schools provide.

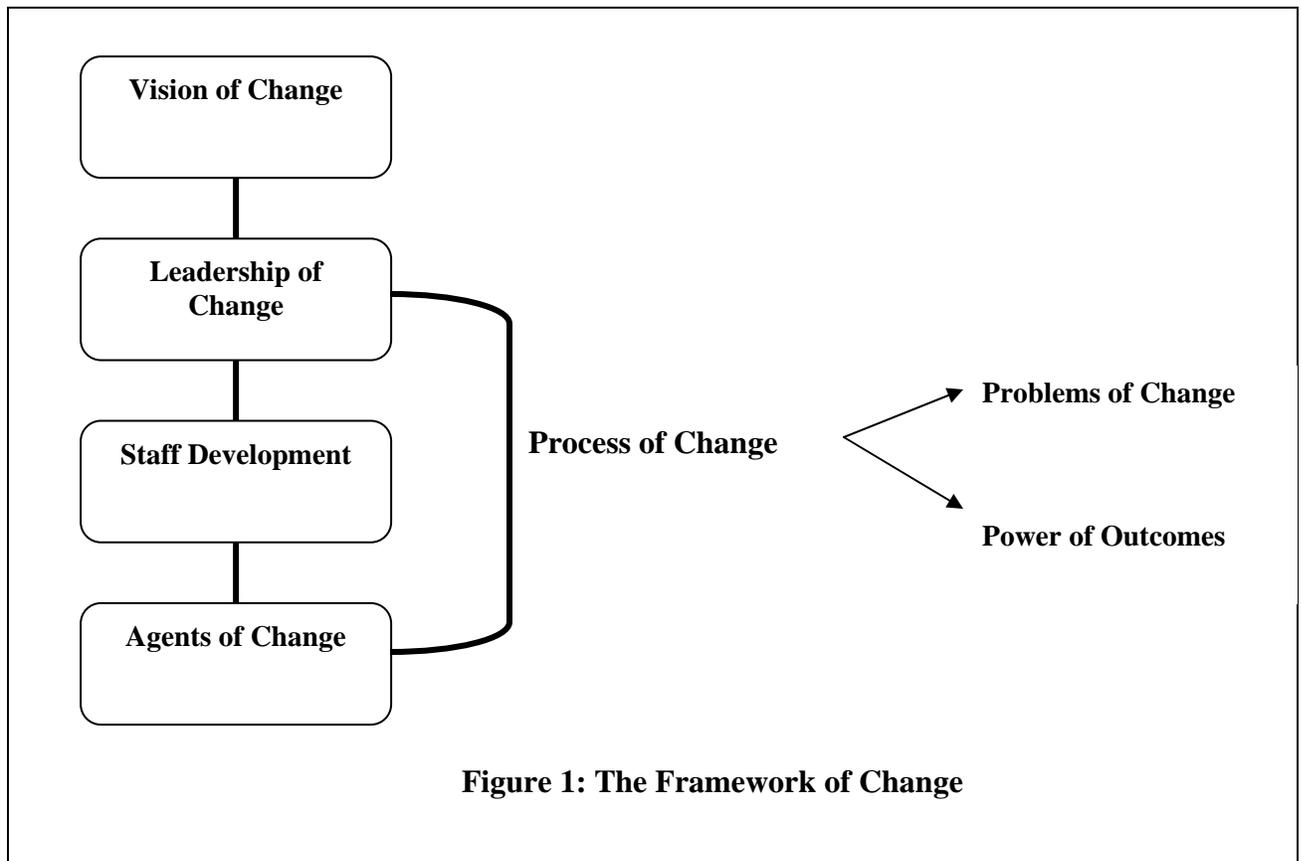
### *The potential of magnet schools for students*

Another idea about power in terms of magnet schools is what they offer school districts. Magnet schools have the power to offer viable choices for parents who are seeking alternatives to neighborhood schools. In some instances, the neighborhood schools may be seen as failing or in need of improvements. Now with the No Child Left Behind legislation, schools are targeted and labeled in terms of their performance. Magnets help provide parents choices to leave failing or impoverished schools for ones with new and innovative programs. Magnets also provide a means of voluntary desegregation for school districts. One primary goal of magnet programs is to reduce minority isolation in schools and districts. Strong magnet programs provide the power to overcome segregation issues.

Another reason for the creation of magnet schools was to reinvigorate the educational system. Educators became concerned with stagnant schools and magnet programs were an effort to spark renewal of all schools, (Blank & Archibald, 1992, Hadderman, 2002). “Magnet schools have been shown to generate renewed motivation for education among students, parents, and teachers and, in some magnet programs, to improve the academic performance of students” (Hadderman, 2002, p. 1). Urban districts started magnet programs to bring renewal to their districts. Thus, magnet schools can be very powerful places of excitement in teaching and learning for school districts that need change.

### **The Framework of Change**

The framework of change that follows was created based on my review of the literature about change (see Figure 1). The framework is heavily grounded in the works of Michael Fullan. Along with his works, other studies that I reviewed talked about change in schools and the importance and complexities of change. From my notes I began to see themes emerge about change. I attempted to group themes together and from that came the category headings. I then took all of my notes about leadership, magnet schools and change and began to sort them into the categories. I generated a table to organize all of the ideas and notes with which I was working. That table served as the outline for my literature review. I will begin this section of the literature review with a discussion about the vision of change.



### *Vision*

#### *Vision is mental model of how things should look*

Vision has been defined as being a “mental model of a future state of a process, group or organization” (Coble, 2003, p. 11). A vision depicts what the future of an organization might look like. For a magnet school, a vision gives an image of how the magnet school will look and operate once implementation is well underway. Visions have to be carefully crafted in order to give others a clear sense of the direction of the organization. Visions stem from leaders and groups of leaders of an organization. In terms of change, vision is important but not the number one priority (Fullan, 1997).

### ***Vision serves as a roadmap for change***

The vision for a school undergoing change is very important. The vision statement serves as the roadmap for change. Teachers need to know where they are headed before they start the change journey (Hall & Hord, 2001). “People alone will not hope for continuous improvement without leadership and vision” (p. 27). The vision needs to explain that direction and why it’s important to follow that path. It also needs to address the issue of continuous improvement. Change is not a one-time overnight phenomenon. It takes time and support. The vision needs to address the continuing process of change that leads to overall success.

### ***A vision statement must reflect a school’s collective values***

In creating a vision the school must have an understanding of its values. A vision statement must reflect those values and must be credible with the members of the group. For effective change, the vision must be derived from, and communicated through, the members of the group. This shared vision should unite the teachers of the school to be involved with the change that is occurring. “A group approach to developing a vision ensures that the resulting vision incorporates a broad range of viewpoints and expertise” (Goldring & Smrekar, 2000, p. 22). The vision of a magnet school should reflect those expert opinions along with sound leadership philosophies. The quest to create the shared vision often broadens the understanding of the participants. They gain a new and more in-depth understanding into the needs of the magnet school.

In thinking about the vision of change at MHS, the following questions were developed:

- Who is responsible for the vision of change at MHS?
- What is that vision? If one does not exist, why not?
- Has the vision changed during the process of change?

### *Leadership*

#### *Leadership is essential for change to occur in a school*

Leadership in today's schools has become the central topic in the discourse about public education. From school reform to schools of choice, school leadership is at the heart of making effective change in schools. Hall and Hord (2001) state that "administrator leadership is essential to long-term change success" in schools (p. 13). In this study, the leadership of the school includes the principal, assistant principals, and the curriculum coordinator which I will refer to as the leadership team of MHS. These individuals are to work together to invoke the changes that are needed to go from a traditional high school to a magnet high school. One reason to study the entire team is that at MHS, the principal attempts to share decision making power with the team. Also, the task of moving from a traditional to magnet high school is so large that one person simply cannot complete the entire task associated with the change. Successful change in schools takes support and commitment from all school leaders (Hall & Hord, 2001). Leadership serves as the first (and one of the most important) foundation pieces of this study.

Hasuman and Goldring (2001) report that “reformists have turned their attention to the principalship as the key to school improvement” (p. 400). They further state that “the behavior of the school principal is the single most important factor supporting high quality educational programs” (p. 400). Delaney (1997) discusses how “the leadership style of the school principal is the primary factor contributing to a successful relationship between school-based management and school improvement” (p. 1). However, these authors do not report about how important shared leadership is in the schools. Yes, principal leadership is important in the transformation of a school. But, a principal cannot alone affect the total transformation of a school into a magnet school. One premise of this study is to look at the shared leadership given to the leadership team of MHS.

### ***Leadership means many things***

The literature contains over 350 definitions and descriptions about the concept of leadership. Some of the basic ingredients of all those definitions include the development and facilitation of a vision, building a coalition, understanding an organization’s culture; maintaining trust and bringing people and communities together (Beyer & Smith, 1996, p. 79). Brubaker (1994) describes leadership as a need to take action so that things may be accomplished. DePree (1992) opens his book with some great thoughts about finding one’s voice in leadership. He says that:

Leadership is, as you know, not a position but a job. It’s hard and exciting and good work. It’s also a serious meddling in other people’s lives. One examines leadership beginning not with techniques but rather with premises, not with tools but beliefs, and not with systems but with understandings. (p. 7)

Another perspective on leadership that I find helpful is from the work of Leithwood and Riehl (2003). These authors talk about how school leadership involves not only developing the organization but also developing the people within the organization. This idea brings a human touch to the notion of what leadership is about. School leaders provide people (teachers) with “intellectual stimulation” and individual support (p. 4). Leaders have to establish positive working relationships with adults and students in order to promote school improvement and change. Only with mutual respect and cooperation can leaders bring about change in a school. Leaders have to provide support (mental, physical, intellectual) for people. In this case, the administrative and magnet teams have to provide what teachers need to promote teaching and learning in the classrooms. Thus, the concept of transformational leadership appears as the building blocks of this study.

### ***Leadership styles***

Leadership style is an important component of this study. The idea of a particular style of leadership has emerged as important in the change process. However, other leadership styles have been discussed in this section to offer a comparison. The premise for this study is that transformational leadership is the leadership of change. Basically, for effective change, a leader has to possess transformational characteristics in order to facilitate change in a school (based on the works of Leithwood). However, other styles of leadership have to be discussed and considered as principals and school leader possess many different styles of leadership. “The evidence from research clearly indicates that there is no single all-purpose leadership style (Schermerhorn, 1997, p. 5). In the following paragraphs, several styles of leadership are defined and explained. The styles

that are discussed are considered important to this study. There are certainly many other leadership styles that exist but for this study those discussed below are considered the most important.

In order to be clear about leadership style, a definition is needed. Based on the numerous styles that are discussed in this section, leadership style can be very complex and include multiple types of leadership behaviors. In an article by Sun (2004), leadership style is defined as “sets of leadership behaviors or actions that can be measured or compared” (p. 18). For this study, I define leadership style as the behaviors and actions administrators engage in as they carry out their responsibilities as building level leaders. Those behaviors and actions that leaders engage in help define their style. However, as mentioned in several sources, a leader does not necessarily fit into one particular style. That idea will be further explored in the analysis of the leaders at Magnet High School.

### ***Instructional Leadership***

Instructional leadership was an educational leadership style born in the 1980’s during the effective schools movement (Marks & Printy, 2003). The focus of an instructional leader was to serve as the sole leader of curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 2003). Instructional leadership “typically assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students” (Leithwood & Duke, 1998, p. 34). The goal was to standardize teaching methods and thus improve student achievement. This style of leadership placed principals at the top of the organizational chart with teachers in the role

of follower (Hallinger, 2003). There was no notion of shared leadership or empowerment of teachers. The principal was the only source of leadership in the school because the principal was the primary expert. Hallinger described instructional leaders as “hands-on principals, ‘hip-deep’ in curriculum and instruction” (p. 332). The primary task of the principal (as instructional leader) was to improve and develop teaching and learning.

Instructional leadership involves several aspects that are important to understanding its meaning, (Hallinger, 2003 and Marks & Printy, 2003). First, instructional leaders develop a mission and set goals focused on curriculum and academic achievement. Second, instructional leaders manage the instructional program through monitoring and evaluating instruction. Third, instructional leaders promote a “positive school-learning climate” (Hallinger, 2003, p. 332; Leithwood & Duke, 1998). Finally, instructional leaders provide a supportive working environment for teachers in order to promote academic achievement. In the first aspect, the principal as leader develops the mission and defines the goals for the school. The mission and goals are then communicated to the staff and expected to be carried out in their (teachers’) classrooms. The second aspect promotes the principal as expert in the area of curriculum and teaching. The principal serves as the evaluator of teachers and monitors their performance and work in the classrooms. Here, the expert “oversees” what is actually going on in the classrooms. In the third aspect, the principal is the primary person who affects the climate of the school. It is the principal’s job as leader to create the learning environment needed for academic success. In the fourth aspect of instructional leadership, the principal’s role is to create an environment in which teachers can perform

their duties in the classroom. According to instructional leadership, the principal is designed to be the all-knowing expert of curriculum and instruction and is expected to be able to communicate that to their staff.

With the principal as primary expert, there is little room for sharing leadership responsibilities among the staff. Teachers serve in a secondary role in a school whose principal is purely an instructional leader. The principal serves in the primary leadership position harnessing all the “power” of the school in that role. This ‘principal as expert’ model of leadership is seen as archaic and “dependent on docile followers” in today’s educational world (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 373). The four aspects of instructional leadership create a top-down approach to leading a school. The principal coordinates and controls all aspects of teaching and learning under this model of leadership. This creates a conflict in today’s movement to empower teachers.

### ***Participatory Leadership***

Part of hearing the voice of others entails letting people be involved in the decision-making process. Participatory leadership is a style that involves others in the decision making process. Participatory leadership “assumes that the decision making processes of the group ought to be the central focus for leaders,” (Leithwood & Duke, 1998, p. 38). Participatory leaders focus on the team approach to solving problems and empower team members to make decisions (Kezar, 2001). The assumption is that teachers will be more committed to what is happening in the school when they are involved in the decision making for the school. Furthermore, teachers will be more collaborative when they are involved with decision making. When teachers take

ownership of their own school they then work together to make the best possible decisions (Zwadyk, 2006).

The literature states that principals who practice participative decision-making have a higher teacher satisfaction rating versus principals who use autocratic decision making (Bogler, 2001, Delaney, 1997). The inclusiveness of participative decision-making leads to a sense of ownership by teachers. Teachers feel like they have a say in what goes on in their schools when principals release some of the “power” of decision making. This process helps to create pride for the members of the faculty. Teachers feel good and express feelings of satisfaction when they can claim ownership in a school decision.

### ***Situational Leadership***

Situational leadership was a concept first introduced to me by my colleague at Magnet High School. This person described himself as a situational leader. He defined it as a style that was adaptive to the issue at hand. He described his leadership as a type that could be participatory when appropriate or autocratic in a tense situation. He viewed himself as able to adapt and provide leadership for anything that happened in a school.

The idea that “successful leaders are those who can adapt their behavior to meet the demands of their own unique situation” comes from Paul Hersey (Schermerhorn, 1997, p. 5). Hersey’s description of situational leadership comes from his book, The Situational Leader. This style of leadership “is based on an interplay among (1) the amount of direction a leader gives (task behavior), (2) the amount of socio-emotional support a leader provides (relationship behavior), and (3) the readiness level that

followers exhibit on a specific task” (Schermerhorn, 1997, p. 6). The amount of direction a leader gives is described as task behavior (Schermerhorn, 1997). This has been explained as how much communication a leader engages in to direct followers. This communication is considered one-way. The degree to which the leader is involved with two-way communication is described as relationship behavior (Schermerhorn, 1997). The third component of readiness centers on the leader accepting personal responsibility for them and how they perform on a task (Schermerhorn, 1997).

These behaviors are contingent on the situation in which the leader is involved in. Depending on the degree of the situation the leader will invoke the behaviors as necessary. One situation might call for more task behavior and less relationship behavior. In another instance, the readiness level of the leader may be high enough to maintain two-way communication between the leader and the follower. The notion of contingency leads to another description of situational leadership.

Leithwood and Duke (1998) discuss the model of contingent leadership. Their model is described as “how leaders respond to the unique organizational circumstances or problems which they face as a consequence of the tasks to be undertaken” (p. 42). Their description of contingent leadership parallels situational leadership as described by Hersey. The central focus is how a leader responds in a situation or on a particular task.

### *Transformational leadership*

Transformational leadership can be thought of as a collaborative partnership between leaders and followers. Burns (1978) defines the transformational leader as:

The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. The transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. (p. 4)

Hall and Hord (2001) say that transformational leadership involves the sharing of power and sharing in the process of leadership. Leithwood and Duke (1998) state that “this form of leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members” (p. 35). Leithwood and Duke also discussed Bennis and Nanus’ interpretation of transformational leadership as “the ability of a person to reach the souls of others in a fashion which raises human consciousness, builds meanings and inspires human intent that is the source of power” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 560 as quoted by Leithwood & Duke, 1998, p. 35). The premise behind transformational leadership in education is to form a partnership between principal and teacher. This partnership is one of mutual respect in which each party promotes the vision and mission of the school. It is not a top-down management approach in which teachers are viewed as followers (Fullan, 1997). Instead, teachers are important members of the leadership team involved in making decisions for the school. However, I should note that Hall and Hord (2001) say that top-down mandates may be necessary in change and may be successful when used. However, they caution that

mandates should be followed up with “continuing communication, ongoing training, on-site coaching and time for implementation” (p. 14). Transformational leaders help teachers develop their own leadership potential so that they can better aid in the process of leading a school. Leaders provide intellectual development for their teachers which helps teachers share the power. The old cliché, knowledge is power, fits well with transformational leadership.

Leithwood has published many articles and studies on the concept of transformational leadership. Along with other authors, Leithwood describes the premises of transformational leadership. These premises help form an understanding of transformational leadership. The first premise is that the means and ends for school restructuring are uncertain. Leithwood (1994) discusses that the purpose of school restructuring is unclear and the ways in which to accomplish it are unclear as well (p. 499). This is sort of ironic – that we may not be sure why or how to restructure a school. Yet, we hear so much about parent’s choice and if schools fail then schools should be restructured and parents offered choice of schools. Our own Federal Government provides magnet school assistance grants to help schools restructure – yet Leithwood believes the whole belief and process is uncertain – clear as mud!

With this uncertainty comes the need for transformational leadership. Leithwood uses the phrase “commitment rather than control.” The basic idea of transformational leadership – as he explains later – is the idea that people will follow leaders when they are committed to the vision. People will not necessarily respond to control or being controlled by someone else. Getting people committed to your cause makes for a much

smoother transition in school restructuring. The transformational leader “inspires followers to pursue organizational goals in lieu of self interests” (Barbuto, 1997, p.1). As Burns (1978) discusses in his work, transformational leaders “engage others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). This is certainly not the idea of control but the idea of mutual investment to help the greater good of the school. The transformational leader has to understand what the followers need in order to create the mutual commitment. Power has to be shared so that followers feel a part of the school.

### ***Transactional Leadership***

In contrast to transformational leadership, the idea of transactional leadership “refers to exchange relationships between the leaders and their followers” (Bogler, 2001, p. 663). “Transactional leadership on the other hand does not bind leaders and followers in any enduring way; therefore it results in a routinized non-creative but stable environment as compared to the responsive and innovative environment that the transformational leader brings about” (p. 663). Transactional leadership assumes that “people are motivated by reward and punishment” (Zwadyk, 2006, p. 4). This type of leadership is a more rank and file, almost military style of leadership where there is a clear leader and followers behind that person. Another leadership phrase that is related to transactional leader is autocratic leader. A transactional or autocratic leader is one who simply deals with the challenges as they arise without creative and innovative solutions. Followers of a transactional leader may receive the help they need but do so in a stagnate environment.

### *Integrated Leadership*

So far I have reviewed and discussed several leadership styles utilized by school principals. In thinking about these styles, it seems impractical to me that a principal can be labeled as one particular type of leader. With the demands principals face, they must show leadership in many areas. Instruction is certainly a key area that principals must serve as leaders. However, as I have noted, being an instructional leader alone will not suffice in the era of school restructuring and improvement. Therefore, the concept of an integrated leadership style emerges. This concept was introduced in a study by Marks and Printy (2003) and a literature review by Hallinger (2003).

A principal who is considered to use an integrated form of leadership possesses the qualities and traits of both an instructional and transformational leader. This person has a clear focus on instructional issues. Marks and Printy (2003) describe this type of principal as a “transformational leader that accepts their instructional role and exercises it in collaboration with teachers” (p. 376). They are able to maintain that instructional focus by empowering others in the school to make decisions and “think for themselves.”

In schools where an integrated form of leadership is being practiced, principals and teachers share leadership for instruction. A learning community exist in which teachers offer solutions to issues through collaboration and intellectual stimulation. The principal is not viewed as the instructional expert in the school. Here, the principal is considered a partner in helping teachers become innovative in their approaches to instruction.

In thinking about leadership at MHS, a few questions were developed:

- Is transformational leadership apparent at MHS?
- If yes, how so? If not, what type/style of leadership is used?
- How do the teachers at MHS respond to the leadership team members in terms of the changes that are occurring at the school?

### *Staff development*

#### *Change requires training for staff*

Staff development is the next piece in the framework for this study. Fullan (1997) describes staff development as a learning process for teachers so that they can understand the “complexities of change” (p. 13). Staff development has to be relevant to teachers so that they will appreciate what is being offered to them. The development is driven by the goals of the school (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2004). The purpose is to provide intellectual stimulation and direction. Teachers need renewal, especially in the midst of change. By providing intellectually stimulating activities, teachers can better embrace change and become a champion of change.

Hall and Hord (2001) refer to staff development as interventions. Interventions are defined as “various actions and events that people take to influence the process” (p. 9). The process that is referred to is the change process. They state that interventions are crucial to successful change. They call for interventions to train the staff on new innovations or to convey new expectations. They do caution that leaders cannot simply call for an innovation without providing the necessary resources and support needed to carry out the innovation or change.

### ***Use staff development sessions to set expectations***

One important aspect of staff development is that it should convey high-performance expectations to teachers (Leithwood et. al. 1994, 1999). The leadership team of a school has the opportunity to spell out its vision and mission through staff development. Also, the opportunity exists to demonstrate what high expectations might look like in the classrooms through modeling. This process of development leads to teachers reaching their true capacities as intellectual people. Developing teachers to their fullest potential (Marks & Printy, 2003) is important so that high performance expectations can permeate throughout the school.

### ***Involve staff in the collaboration process as part of their development***

Friedman (2004) reminds leaders that effective change in schools requires staff development that has teachers involved in “meaningful collaboration” instead of training that “did to” people (p. 209). I take this to mean that teachers have to be actively engaged in their own personal development. Teachers who are lectured to and told how to do things, especially in the light of change, will not have any buy-in to what is being offered. Teachers are too busy today to have another mandate given to them and told to implement it into their classrooms. This is not effective change. Teachers must be able to collaborate and correspond with others in the change and development process. This allows ownership of their development which leads to effective change.

In thinking about staff development at MHS, the following questions were developed:

- What staff development opportunities have been offered to the leaders and teachers at MHS?
- Is the staff development focused on one or two particular themes?
- Who decides on the type and topic of staff development opportunities at MHS?

### *Agents of Change*

#### *The stakeholders must come together to affect change*

The process of change certainly involves many stakeholders of an organization. In schools, the change process brings together leaders, teachers and parents. All of these groups act as agents of change. When that change involves magnet schools, the unification of the three groups is essential for school success and survival. After all, magnet schools depend upon continuous enrollment through parental choice. The choice parents make about attending magnet schools can be heavily dependent on the leaders and teachers of that school. Therefore, schools must involve parents when thinking about the change from a traditional to a magnet school.

Hall and Hord (2001) point out that “an organization does not change until the individuals within it change” (p. 7). I think this is so true, especially in my experiences at MHS. The people, who keep the organization going, in this case, the school, have to be an active part of the change. Teachers are the real agents of change in a school. They are in the “trenches” each day and have the power to really affect change. If they do not get on board with the vision and the change process they can derail any efforts made. The

challenge for leaders is to include teachers in the process and get them involved in leading the change. The team approach is so important here because of the power teachers hold to affect the success of change. The authors strongly state that “an entire organization does not change until each member has changed” (p. 7). In a large school like MHS, it is an awesome task to motivate all the teachers to change.

In thinking about the agents of change at MHS, the following questions were developed:

- Who are the most important agents of change?
- What power is given to these agents? By whom is the power given?
- What role do the agents of change play?

### *Process of Change*

#### *The process of change is a journey*

The change process can be a difficult, exciting, demanding and rewarding journey that a school embarks on. When the change involves creating a magnet school, the journey can be even more frustrating and confusing at times. The frustration can come through federal mandates and guidelines that are typically cumbersome. However, school leaders are the ones who can affect positive change in schools. Through proven leadership tactics (such as transformational leadership), the change process can flow smoothly.

Change truly is a journey and a process as described by Fullan (1997) and Hall and Hord (2001). The journey can take many paths but should lead to the same end – a positive change for a school. The paths of change can be very crooked and uncertain at

times. There is no real blueprint for change because it really is a non-linear process (Fullan, 1997). When moving down the paths of change, unexpected obstacles will occur. Problems that occur can lead to even more powerful experiences for leaders and participants in change. Even the best made plans for change and reforms will not always “unfold as intended” (Fullan, 2003, p. 22). Change must be thought of as a process because it is not an event (Hall & Hord, 2001). There is no magic timeline for change and it is certainly not an overnight occurrence. In fact, most educational change takes “three to five years to be implemented at a high level” (p. 5). Because of the uncertainty in change, transformational leadership has been proposed as useful in keeping the change process flowing.

### ***First order and second order change***

Transformational leadership has been closely associated with change in schools by the works of Leithwood, Hallinger, and Friedman. It represents a bottom-up approach to school improvement (Hallinger, 2003). Many of today’s schools are involved in restructuring and improvement efforts to meet the demands of local and federal performance mandates. The change process in schools is difficult and time consuming. Leithwood (1994) and Hallinger (2003) discuss how the change process occurs in two parts, first-order changes and second-order changes. School improvement happens through changes in “core technology” (Leithwood, 1994, p. 500). Those changes in instruction and curriculum are considered first order changes. Examples of technology changes include understanding how students learn, how instruction is developed and implemented and changes in curriculum. However, many of the first order changes will

fail if second order changes are not addressed. Issues like building organization, in terms of vision, culture and empowerment have to be addressed along with first order changes. If a first order change is made yet the status quo remains in effect, the changes will not survive.

To affect real change in schools, second-order changes must occur. Hallinger (2003) stated that second-order changes were derived from transformational leadership. Second-order changes are considered the changes that make any transformation sustainable in schools. These second-order changes – changes in the people of the school – lead to first-order changes – the curriculum and instruction of the school. Second-order changes include changes in leadership, empowerment of teachers, commitment building of staff, shared vision and dedication. For example, if a teacher is asked to institute Socratic Seminars into their classroom (first-order change) they need to have input into how the seminars are developed and implemented (second-order change). The teacher has to be a valued part of the team that decides about how seminars are to be constructed and conducted in the classroom. A simple mandate to complete a particular seminar on a particular day will not lead to real change. The goal of a transformational leadership team is to have the teachers utilize seminars as a key part of their instructional plans. The leadership team wants the teachers to continue to utilize the new technology without having to be told to do so. Once the teachers take self-initiative then other innovations can be introduced and implemented into the classroom. All of these aspects of change are important for sustainability of any new reform in schools.

The idea of first-order and second-order change has been apparent in my own experience working in a magnet school. I worked in a situation where a first-order change, creating a magnet school, struggled because the second-order changes were not occurring. The situation with poor culture and empowerment of teachers caused the school to struggle to maintain the first-order changes. Yet, the school was considered an effective magnet based on increased enrollment. But, the staff was not growing professionally to meet the demands of the students. If the school does not address those second-order issues they may be serious trouble.

### ***The innovations from change***

The process of change not only involves first and second order changes, but also the development and implementation of innovations (Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 6). These innovations that drive change come in all varieties. Innovations may work in different ways at different locations. What is key to successful innovations is that proper resources, time and support is given to make innovations successful (Hall & Hord, 2001). School leaders have to remember that large scale innovations are difficult and often unrealistic. Smaller innovations typically are instituted and bundled together to form large scale innovations. The idea of a puzzle works well with this concept. Each piece of the puzzle represents a small innovation. As the innovations are linked together the picture emerges and the change is implemented. The final result is a change that must be sustained through leadership and empowerment. What is important to remember is that the puzzle can fall apart at any time if its jarred, dropped or pieces are removed. These

obstacles to sustainable change have to be addressed by the leadership of the school.

Thus, the mark of a good leader is to create sustainable change.

In thinking about the change process at MHS, the following questions were developed:

- Is there a plan for facilitating change at MHS?
- Who is responsible for ‘guiding’ the change process?
- Do all members of the school have to be involved in the process of change?  
Why or why not?

### *Problems of Change*

#### *Problems create learning*

In dealing with any change, problems will occur. Hall and Hord (2001) state that “appropriate interventions reduce the challenges of change” (p. 15). But, as Fullan (1997) says “problems are inevitable” (p. 22). Both leaders and teachers must understand that surprises and obstacles will pop up in any change process. Add in the additional needs of creating a magnet school and sometimes the problems can seem overwhelming. However, it is how the leaders of the school handle problems that make the real difference. Fullan (2003) cautions that leaders should avoid “off the shelf” solutions to problems (p. 27). There is no magic solution that solves problems in all schools. Each school’s problems are unique and require individual solutions. A one-size fits all mentality does not work in schools undergoing change.

When problems occur in the change process, the focus should be on solving the issue through collaboration. Teachers should be involved in solving the issue with the leadership of the school. By involving teachers more and better solutions arise to solve

the problems. Through collaboration among all stakeholders, “failure and uncertainty are not protected and defended, but shared and discussed with a view to gain help and support” (Friedman, 2004, p. 220). The notion is that mistakes and problems will occur. The real test of leadership is not to hide or allow mistakes to be hidden. Rather, an open atmosphere is created in which those mistakes and problems can be discussed. The discussion does not point fingers or cast blame on others. Open communication is encouraged to bring many solutions and ideas to the table. This makes teachers feel that they have a real say in what is going on in the school. Their commitment level is strengthened which is very important in the midst of confusion or crisis.

In thinking about the problems of change at MHS, the following questions were developed:

- What problems have resulted due to changes at MHS?
- How has the leadership team addressed the problems of change?
- Have the problems of change served as learning experiences? If so how? If not, why not?

### *Power of Outcomes*

#### *Sharing power to affect change*

Change can be very powerful for a school, especially a school that is instituting a magnet program. The power of that change has to be harnessed in the school to create substantial and sustainable improvements for student learning. In order to create those improvements, the real power of the school cannot be located in one person, the principal. Transformational leadership gives power to the stakeholders in an

organization. The power has to be shared among leaders and teachers, not just the principal.

To share power, individualism and collectivism must have equal opportunities in a school (Fullan, 1997). Teachers are allowed to have power as individuals and as a group. The principal shares the power of the school through shared decision making. Teachers have to use their power as individuals and as a group to promote teaching and learning. One way to share power is by encouraging consensus. This notion does not apply to every decision made in schools, but will help in determining direction and focus for change and for creating/implementing a magnet program.

Since creating a magnet school requires so much extra time and work among teachers, they must have some say into how the magnet will work. Teachers need power to shape the focus and direction of the magnet program. One main reason is that it is the teachers who will implement the magnet program into their classrooms. For successful implementation, teachers must have buy-in into the concepts and themes of the magnet program.

In thinking about the power of change at MHS, the following questions were developed:

- Who really holds the power of change at MHS?
- What groups / individuals have sought power during the change process at MHS?
- Were those groups / individuals seeking power to positively or negatively affect the change process at MHS?

The framework of change provided an organizational tool with which to construct this literature review. The headings in the framework were created after reviewing the literature for this study. The organization of the framework was created after careful consideration about the importance of each heading. Vision was listed first because of the importance of having vision when instituting change. Leadership came next because leadership was at the crux of change. The literature on leadership provided some very important insights for this study. The next element was staff development. Its importance surfaced as the need for training became an important part of instituting change at a school. Finally, agents of change was listed last, but certainly was very important. The agents, teachers at the school, were found to be extremely important in the change process. For a school, they were the ones with the power to really make change happen.

The elements of leadership, staff development and agents of change were identified as parts of the process of change. In the framework, these three elements were grouped together to form the process of change. As learned in the literature on change, each of these three elements functioned together to bring about change in a school. Each had its own importance and depended on the other elements to make change happen. During the interaction of these three elements came problems of change and the power of outcomes. The literature discussed that problems and barriers existed in any change process. Often the real learning took place while solving the problems associated with change. The process and the problems associated with the process yielded outcomes of change. The hope was that these outcomes would be positive. Regardless, the outcomes

had some very powerful affects on the school undergoing change. All of these elements together formed the framework of change. Figure 1 provided a visual representation of how the elements of change function and interact based on the reviewed literature of change.

### **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In order to best study how the leadership team at Magnet High School facilitates change, I conducted a qualitative case study. The case was set at Magnet High School and the participants were the leadership team members and the faculty members of the school. I, too, served as a participant in this study since I was a member of the leadership team. In this chapter, I discuss the methodology for this study by explaining the ways and means in which I carried out this project.

A qualitative researcher is someone who “uses various techniques and rigorous and tested procedures in working to capture the nuance and complexity of the social setting under study” (Janesick, 2000, p. 381). In this study, the social setting is Magnet High School and the school leadership team. The main idea is to get a first-hand account of what a leadership team faces in terms of challenges and demands based on the fact that they are leading the change process. The principal of a magnet school has been determined to be a very important facet of the effectiveness of the school (Hausman & Goldring, 2001). That idea was extended to include the leadership team of a school. The very idea of a magnet school as choice for parents has altered the nature of principal leadership, and the structure and purpose of school leadership teams (Hausman & Goldring, 2001). Thus, a qualitative case study can provide insights into the all-important role of the school leadership team.

### *Data Collection*

For this study several data collection strategies (or techniques) were utilized. The devices included observation, interviews, document analysis, and researcher journaling. Each strategy served a specific purpose in this study. Observations were used to capture the leadership team in action. The members of the team were observed in several situations in the school setting. Interviews were used to capture the thoughts and feelings of the team members. The team members had two formal opportunities to discuss how change had affected the school and themselves as leaders. There were also numerous informal conversations carried out between myself and the team members in the course of our daily work. The information gathered from those conversations was recorded in the researcher's journal. Document analysis was used to capture the change process in action. Documents were analyzed for key terms and ideas as they related to change. Finally, researcher journaling was used to capture my thoughts about change at MHS. As a member of the team it was important that I tell my piece of the story as I went about my daily work.

The goal of all of the data collection strategies was to piece together the story of the leadership team at MHS. In the dissertation, a story unfolded based on the data collected from observations, interviews, documents and journal entries. The story gave the researcher and reader an account of how change was facilitated at a large complex high school.

## *Observation*

One of the qualitative tools employed in this study was observation. The goal of conducting observations at MHS was to gather evidence of the change process as it unfolded. As the researcher, I was a part of the social world of the school in which I collected data about what was seen and heard in that setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The observations were conducted throughout the study. The main goal of the observations was to look for and document the aspects of change at MHS. Places and events that the observations occurred were:

- Leadership team / Magnet team meetings
- Faculty meetings
- Staff development sessions
- Student recruitment sessions/events
- Teachers classrooms
- System-wide magnet school meetings

I considered conducting observations at PTA meetings. However, during the data collection period, no PTA meetings occurred at the school. Therefore, I did not record any parent reaction to change. This has been discussed further in the limitations to this study section of the final chapter.

Some of what I looked for included how the principal and team members interacted with the staff and students. What language, verbal and body, did the team members use? Did all of the team members communicate to others about the change process and about the magnet school? What was the message being sent, both implicitly

and directly? What leadership techniques were being utilized in the setting? Finally, how well did the principal and team members communicate his/her message or position?

Conducting the actual observations required some preliminary planning. The observations had to be unobtrusive to the school and people in the school. As Denzin and Lincoln (2003) discussed, the point of observation was not to “interfere with the people and activities under observation” (p. 108). As the observer, I sat to the side and recorded what I saw and heard, the interactions taking place and the nature of the physical surroundings. If I was an active member of the discussion, I discussed my thoughts in a journal entry that accompanied that particular observation.

In considering what type of format to use in collecting observational data, I realized that a published checklist system would most likely not work in this study. Since each situation and each team member was different, a standardized checklist would not allow enough flexibility in capturing the essence of the situation being observed. The data collection tool that was utilized was the framework used to create the literature review for this proposal (see Appendix B for Observation Protocol). The framework was built around the aspects of change intertwined with transformational leadership. A table using the framework’s headings about change that I have laid out from the works of Fullan, Leithwood and others was developed in order to record observations and analysis from observations.

Example of Observation using framework:

**OBSERVATION 2/24/06**

**Observation 2**

Date: 2/24/06

Setting: Friday Admin Team Meeting

Time: 7:45 – 9:45am

Location: Principal’s Office

Participants: Principal, Assistant Principal 1, Assistant Principal 2, Curriculum Coordinator, Nichols

Raw Notes

<p><b>LEADERSHIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working towards EOC score success             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Divide depts. among administrators</li> <li>○ Refocus on teachers on lesson planning</li> <li>○ Publicize 1<sup>st</sup> semester EOC results and goals for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester</li> <li>○ Publicize teacher results without names</li> <li>○ Institute benchmark testing for 06-07 school year</li> <li>○ Schedule observations for admin – see daily schedule (Doc 2/24/Observation Sch)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>VISION OF CHANGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working toward goal of over 60% proficiency on EOC tests</li> <li>• Teachers need to know that we (admin) are paying attention – that we realize what’s going on in the classrooms and know what’s important</li> <li>• Principal produced a document listing departments, their fall EOC scores and the goal for spring EOC scores. The goal scores will bring the school over 60% proficient for the year</li> </ul>
<p><b>STAFF DEVELOPMENT (and Evaluation)</b></p> <p><b>CHANGE PROCESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with EOC teachers to share scores and focus on planning – we have not met to specifically discuss EOC testing – this is a new tactic for us – we’ll meet EOC teachers 2/28 to share where we are and where we want to go</li> <li>• Working with action groups in our depts. – Principal wants us to meet with the action groups – to this point we have not met with them directly or been instructed to do so.</li> <li>• Working with teachers feelings about test scores – how to we handle this - evidently teachers have not had this data before – we are not wanting to publicize names but by individuals...such as teacher 1, teacher 2, etc.</li> </ul>	<p><b>POWER OF CHANGE</b></p> <p><b>AGENTS OF CHANGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admin will divide depts.. and meet with the action groups in that dept. Each action group will be assigned a specific date/time to meet. We are to attend as many meetings as possible.</li> <li>• Teachers to focus on planning – EOC results are most important at this time. Teachers are the key to improved test scores.</li> <li>• Focus on action group meetings to complete lesson planning</li> </ul>
<p><b>PROBLEMS OF CHANGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requiring something new now (lesson planning) – what format do we want to require – are we going to require all teachers to submit 6-point plans – discussion was to let ILT’s complete lessons as they’ve been instructed – we’ll look at tenured teachers on case-by-case basis</li> <li>• Publicize results of individual teachers may hurt feelings and cause “political” problems – we have to watch getting results vs. hurting teachers feelings – consensus of group was to publicize w/o teacher names</li> </ul>	<p><b>OTHER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute Reading Plus software program into 2 English 1 classes. Principal has 2 teachers agreeing to use program once a week in their 2<sup>nd</sup> period classes. To this point, Reading Plus has not been used at the school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>NOTES</b></p> <p>See Reflection, Entry 8, 2/24/06</p>	<p><b>FOLLOW UP / ADDITIONAL INFO NEEDED</b></p>

Another collection device used was an “open-ended narrative” to collect the observation data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 108). By writing the actual observation first as a narrative, I had the opportunity to give a rich description of what was observed. After completing the “open-ended narrative” observations, I working to categorize the data into the framework established in the literature review.

#### Example of Observation using Narrative

#### **OBSERVATION 3/30/2006**

#### **Observation 4**

Date: 3/30/2006      Setting: Magnet Evaluation Meeting w/ Sherrill & Levy  
Time: 9:00am      Location: Principal’s office  
Participants: Principal, AP, District Magnet Coordinator, Federal Magnet Grant Evaluator, School Magnet Resource Teacher, IB Coordinator.

#### Raw Notes

Meeting started with casual discussion of new North Carolina lottery.

Fed started off saying she is very happy with the school. She says that the school is moving forward well and she is very pleased.

Fed wants to start talking about the extended essay. The extended essay is a requirement of the IB program. Students must complete the essay as part of the diploma requirements. Levy wants to know what the process is for students and how its going so far.

IB Coordinator begins discussing the ext. essay. He discusses how its new to the school but not new to him. He used it in his teaching in Virginia. The ext. essay is not tied to a class. Its only for IB Diploma students – they must complete the essay for diploma requirements. Without the essay there is no diploma.

On the students’ transcripts a stamp is placed saying that they are IB Diploma candidates. This is because the IB organization does not alert candidates of their diploma status until July.

Fed asked how many students are completing ext. essay. IB Coordinator says about 40 students.

Fed asked if the ext. essay could be a school wide project. Can it be incorporated into the school wide literacy program? Can every kid get the essay?

IB Coordinator discusses that the county is beginning to incorporate a senior project. The school can learn from the IB process; having measurable benchmarks and faculty advisors in completing the ext. essay to help with the senior project. The grunt work of the ext. essay is completed in the junior year. For the senior project, the same process could be followed.

Fed discusses that it seems all students should be challenged to this process.

Principal discusses that the school is focusing on reading and writing. Fed asks if the school will consider using the ext. essay process for everyone. Principal says yes, we'll consider it.

*Personal Reflection: It seems that the Principal realizes how loaded Fed's question is. He knows that the ext. essay process is very cumbersome and time consuming. To complete this for almost 350 – 400 juniors would be enormous. Its tough enough for 30 juniors but to multiply that by 10 or 12 times is a lot to consider and undertake.*  
END OF EXAMPLE

### ***Document analysis***

Document analysis served as another data collection source for this study. The purpose of analyzing documents was to look for a theme that correlated to the change process at MHS. Documents that were sought after for analysis included:

- MHS Magnet Grant Application
- Year 1 grant plan
- Year 1 evaluation document
- Year 2 grant plan
- Year 2 evaluation document
- Teacher survey results from Year 1
- Magnet meeting agendas and notes
- Faculty meeting agendas and notes

- MHS recruitment materials (brochures, etc.)
- Researcher's Journal (that I complete throughout this process)

The purpose in analyzing these and other documents was to answer some questions.

Those questions to be answered through document analysis included:

- What message was being transmitted, both implicitly and directly?
- What was the vision for this school as publicized through written communications?
- Was there a direct correlation to the change process that was being communicated to others in the school community?
- What aspects of transformational leadership were apparent, if any?

The aspects of the change framework were used to analyze the data (see Appendix B for Document Analysis Protocol). This was appropriate since document analysis has been considered another form of observation (as discussed by Denzin & Lincoln, (2003). Other considerations such as type of document, apparent theme, implicit message, and obvious leadership tactics, were also used to analyze the documents. Those findings were categorized and sorted using the aspects of change framework that has been previously outlined.

Several issues that Denzin and Lincoln discussed in their chapter on document analysis (2003) were considered when I completed the data collection. One primary issue was the interpretation of the document by the researcher. Since the documents contained text, I had to consider what the writer's specific meaning may have been when completing the document. However, as the reader of that text I did have to use my own

paradigms and background knowledge to interpret that text. The text itself may have contained different meanings to different readers. I had to be careful to interpret the text as an unbiased researcher. Since I was a member of the school’s leadership team, it was difficult to remove my own personal bias from my interpretation and analysis.

Two other issues that I attended to when gathering documents and conducting the analysis was the date and the authors of the documents. Many of the documents that I considered and analyzed (from the list above) were created before this school year. Therefore, they were created under the supervision of the previous administration. That administration’s vision and mission was certainly different from the current administration. For example, the magnet school grant and the yearly magnet plans were all created before the current principal arrived. However, because they were submitted as part of the magnet grant, they had to be followed by the school. Revisions were acceptable and completed, but the main ideas of the yearly plans were left in place.

Example of Document Analysis

Document Number: **108.1**  
 Date: 10/11/05

Title: **Magnet High School**  
 Analysis Date: 2/6/06 Analysis Number: **3**

<p><b>LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>This document was created by the principal to spell out all that is going on at MHS this year. There are several different changes occurring at the same time. This document spells out for teachers what those changes are and how they relate to the magnet school theme; rigor, relevance, relationships, International and Arts Focus. (D108)</p>	<p><b>VISION OF CHANGE</b></p> <p>This document lists the different changes that are occurring this school year. The document tells teachers what is important to the principal. Since the principal created this document he’s expressing what is important to him. At the top of the document are two goals. They are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Successfully implement the Magnet school concept and philosophy</li> <li>2. Improve academic performance to a proficiency level above 60%</li> </ol> <p>These two goals give teachers a clear indication of where the principal wants MHS to go this year.</p>
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<p><b>STAFF DEVELOPMENT (and Evaluation)</b></p> <p>The document states that the staff development that is occurring this year is about rigor, relevance and the International focus. Teachers are in the midst of change due to the magnet grant. The staff development that has already occurred focused on rigor and relevance strategies. Future staff development sessions on reading strategies and unit templates will also help to improve rigor and relevance in the classroom. (D108)</p>	<p><b>POWER OF CHANGE</b></p> <p>This document is powerful because it list the changes as viewed by the principal. Teachers have a document that tells them what changes are important to the principal and the school, thus they should be important to him. Teachers see what the principal and leadership team at MHS sees as the most important changes taking place.</p> <p>It should be noted that all of the bullets listed on the document represent changes at MHS. None of the bullets listed have been in place at MHS until this year. Action groups, A/B scheduling, Reading strategies, etc. are all new ideas / items at MHS this year. (D108)</p>
<p><b>CHANGE PROCESS</b></p> <p>As a magnet school, MHS had to develop a theme. MHS chose rigor, relevance, relationships with an International and Arts focus as their theme. This document lists the various changes and how they relate to the theme. For example, the school is focusing on reading strategies to improve proficiency. The document relates reading strategies to rigor and relevance.</p> <p>The process for teachers at this point is to help implement these changes. Teachers are a part of Action Groups that generate Unit Templates. Many of them work in the A/B day scheduling. All teachers are involved with assigning and assessing Grade Level Projects. All teachers need to utilize reading strategies in their classes as data shows reading to be a serious weakness at MHS. Finally, partnerships with Middle Magnet, WSSU and WFU affect what MHS can do for its current and future students. (D108)</p>	<p><b>AGENTS OF CHANGE</b></p> <p>This document certainly represents teachers as change agents. As mentioned in the Change process box, teachers are the ones who, for the most part, will implement the items on the list. Their success in implementing the items will determine the success of MHS. Their success directly impacts whether or not MHS achieves the 2 goals that were stated. Very powerful! (D108)</p>
<p><b>PROBLEMS OF CHANGE</b></p> <p>One problem that may arise is making sure that all teachers understand their roles as they relate to the items on this document. Teachers need a clear understanding of how to implement reading strategies into their classroom – a staff development issue. Teachers need a clear understanding of how the grade level project can benefit their students and how to implement that into their curriculum – again a staff development issue. Clear communication is definitely needed to make sure teachers know the expectations as they relate to the 2 goals and the items listed on the document. (D108)</p>	<p><b>OTHER</b></p>

## *Interviews*

Another data collection method that I used for this study was the interview. Interviewing has been described as a qualitative tool that serves as both a methodology and a social relationship (Seidman, 1991). Several aspects of interviewing were important to this study: type of interview, establishing trust and confidence, and the number of interviews. For this study, two formal interviews were conducted with the individual members of the leadership team except for one. One assistant principal did not want to be interviewed a second time. I asked the person several times if I could ask them some questions. Each time the person said “maybe later.” After several weeks of this I realized the person did not want to participate any further. A list of questions were generated and asked of each participant. The interview sessions were recorded on tape and transcripts were created. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each. The members of the leadership team were the principal, three assistant principals and the curriculum coordinator. As a member of the team myself, I answered the interview questions first before conducting each round.

A focus group of all the leadership team members was considered at the onset of this study. However, after conducting the first round of interviews, I realized that conducting the focus group might prove to be detrimental to the cohesiveness of the team. The team consisted of three new people to the school and by January, they still had not formed a close bond. After listening to the first interview responses, I decided that a focus group might not yield any valuable information. In fact, such an event might damage the relationship between members of the group. As a team member myself, I did

not want to jeopardize the fragile state of the group. I knew the principal was working hard to bring everyone together and to focus on a common vision. My asking questions about leadership and change might have derailed the principal's efforts. Therefore, I abandoned the focus group idea.

In this study, the interview took on the form of a conversation. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) said that the interview was in fact a conversation that involved the "art of asking questions and listening" (p. 48). I used both structured and unstructured interview techniques. Structured interviews were conducted in the first round with a list of questions. I wanted to be sure to ask the members of the leadership team the same series of questions. I did allow enough flexibility so that the interview participants could talk freely about what they felt was most important. I did not want to hinder them from providing valuable data for this study. Several of the participants did vary off course a little during the session. However, their thoughts were important and valuable.

In the second round I used more of an unstructured interview. I still had a list of guiding questions based on what I learned in round one, but I wanted the participants to talk more and open up about MHS. That method of interviewing lends itself to the conversation aspect as discussed by Denzin and Lincoln and to "free interaction between the researcher and interviewee" as discussed by Reinharz (1992, p. 18). The more unstructured interview in round two allowed me to get a more in-depth understanding of what team members were thinking and feeling. Fontana and Frey (2000) said that the unstructured interview provides a "greater breadth of data than the other types, given its qualitative nature" (p. 652). I found that to be true with three of the participants. I felt

like they opened up more and discussed their feelings more about change than just cut and dry answers to standard questions. The fourth participant was not as open but did provide some very thoughtful answers. The answers that person gave in round two showed more compassion and understanding about change and where MHS was going than in round one. I was ultimately pleased with the results of the round two interviews.

During the dissertation proposal process, I identified some objectives and questions for each round of interviews. I did not list specific questions for round two because I wanted to conduct round one and analyze what was learned during those sessions. I wanted round two to be a follow up from round one and to expand to include more about MHS. Primarily, round one interview questions dealt with the first half of the school year and round two focused on the second half of the year. The guiding questions used for each round are listed below:

#### Round 1 Interview Questions

1. Do you think this school has changed?
2. How has it changed?
3. What are the causes of change at MHS?
4. What roles have you played in the changes?
5. Have you noticed any changes in your leadership style?
6. What are those changes?
7. Who do you think holds the power of change at MHS?
8. What barriers or problems of change have you experienced at MHS?
9. Do you see the change process at MHS
  - a. Improving MHS? How?
  - b. Improving student achievement? How?
  - c. Improving your leadership? How?

## Round 2 Interview Questions

1. Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester has begun, have you noticed any differences in the school?
  - a. Differences in the faculty?
  - b. Differences in the students?
  - c. Differences in the leadership team?
2. What impact do you think the faculty meeting that was themed by some as “take back our school” had on any of the differences you mentioned?
3. Can you think back to your own personal thoughts in reference to the “take back our school” email and meeting? What do you think about that event now? Was it a turning point for our school?
4. Has there been any power changes since the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester began?
5. Can you identify any barriers that have arisen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester – barriers to change or to the progress of the school?
6. How do you feel about the turn-around team visit and all the preparation that went into that event? Was that visit a positive or negative event for our school?
7. Can you identify some changes that have been taking place that would address the issues being investigated by the turn-around team?
8. What additional changes do you propose that are needed to address the issues under investigation by the turn-around team?
9. With the changes that you have spoken about thus far, has your role as a leader changed during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester?
10. With all the emphasis on test scores, can you make a prediction on how our school will rate? Have the changes you’ve discussed in this interview and interview 1 affected your prediction? How so?

Round two interview questions were developed based on the objectives I identified early on in this study along with the responses from round one. I did ask other questions of the participants that were not a part of the standard set for each person. As the participants talked, I noted follow-up questions to ask and did so as needed. I also found that several

of the participants addressed certain questions in responses to other questions. Therefore, each participant did not get asked each question as laid out in the protocol above.

Example of Interview:

CN: Alright, thank you for participating in my study. Today I am going to ask you some questions about change at our school. Please feel free to be open and honest. Anything you say will be kept confidential, of course. At no time will I discuss this interview with anybody else here at school. I do have some questions, but feel free to share with me anything you think would be beneficial for my study. So, question number one, do you think this school has changed from August of this year – 2005 – until the end of second quarter in January?

P: Yes, I do. I think there were some, a few subtle changes, and also probably a few major changes on the way.

CN: Can you say how has this school changed during the first semester?

P: I think there were several factors in the changes that took place here. One had to do with just, I guess the climate, among the students and the faculty, with the new ESL program, bringing a new group of students in. That changed the cultural mix of the school so that was a change and adjustment period that I think probably took most of the first semester for people to make that adjustment. I also think there were some changes in things that I and the other new administrators were asking the faculty to do. Some changes in procedures, some changes in processes, and in some cases, some changes in the way they were being asked to teach their particular class or to plan to teach their particular class. And I think also there was, I guess, a time at the very beginning of the year that with a new principal, two new assistant principals, there was a time of students and faculty both trying to see what the rules were, what was expected. I think that changed over the course of that period of time to the point that the students and teachers both had a better idea at the end of the first semester of what was expected.

### ***Researcher journaling***

Since I was a member of the leadership team that was being studied, I wrote about my experiences at MHS as part of the data collection for this study. I did so and found it to be a very valuable exercise in my own development as a leader at the school. The act of reflecting on my work and feelings about the school has helped me to grow and has

helped in this study as well. As one of the assistant principals, I too, was involved in facilitating change at MHS. Therefore, I found my experiences to be just as beneficial to this study as the experiences of the other assistant principals. I kept my journal electronically using the Word program. After I completed my journal entries I went back and looked for the themes and commonalities among my thoughts and those of the interview participants.

Excerpt from Researcher Journal:

**Entry 11/15/05**

**Setting: Faculty Meeting**

**Topic: Principal's speech**

During today's faculty meeting, Dr. Prin devoted the entire session to discussing his thoughts about the goals and mission of MHS. He started by saying that there's been a lot of rumors going around and a lot of negativity about what's happening at the school. He's also concerned that the faculty is hearing the words about what needs to be happening but not following through with action. He addressed these concerns in his message.

First, Dr. Prin's concerned that faculty members are talking about the changes at MHS but not implementing them in their classroom. The biggest change is the magnet theme. Teachers know that they must internationalize their curriculum and must institute grade level projects. Yet, teachers are complaining and in some cases, doing a poor job at implementing these initiatives.

Dr. Prin said that he knows and understands that teachers feel overwhelmed. He realizes that they are frustrated and tired. He knows that the magnet implementation along with academic issues of our students is hard on teachers. What frustrates and him is hearing that teachers don't know the goals and mission of MHS. He reminded them that he put out a document in the last faculty meeting addressing his goals and vision for MHS. Yet, teachers are telling each other and the community that we have no goals and direction. He again stated that the goal was to successfully implement the magnet and to achieve over 60% proficiency on state testing. He made the comment that he wants the faculty to 'go with us' as we work towards achieving these goals. He made the analogy to a school bus. He said that there is plenty of room on the bus for our entire faculty. However, to ride the bus you have to be a part of the vision of MHS. There is plenty of room on the bus for all who want to ride.

### *Data Analysis*

I have found that there was a great deal of data generated while conducting this study. From observation, interview, and document data, I have attempted to answer the research questions associated with this study. To answer those questions I have carefully analyzed the data I collected.

In analyzing the data I looked for emerging themes. I attempted to place those themes in the framework that was constructed in the literature review (see Appendix A). That framework served as the backbone for the analysis process. Not all of the data fit into the specific categories of the framework but the majority of data items did. I then began linking the themes together to tell the story of MHS and its leaders. The story of MHS was told chronologically as events occurred throughout the 2005-2006 school year. Data were used to enrich the story to give the reader a more complete understanding of the change process at MHS.

The story of MHS revealed several critical incidents that occurred during the 2005-2006 school year. Those incidents were listed and briefly explained. Then, I attempted to relate those incidents back to the framework of change that was created for this study. Incidents that were not linked to the framework were explained as necessary. Finally, I looked at the framework of change components and linked them back to the critical incidents. Each piece of this process revealed more about the complexities of change at MHS.

### ***Trustworthiness***

In order to establish trustworthiness for my study I utilized several techniques. They included: member checking, prolonged engagement, negative case analysis, and creating an audit trail. Each method of trustworthiness has been explained in greater detail in the subsequent sections.

#### ***Member checking***

The technique of member checking was used to help establish trustworthiness for this study. Member checking has been described as having interview participants work through the interview data with the researcher to check for errors or inaccuracies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It has been considered as the “most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). By discussing and sharing the interview data and conclusions with the participant the researcher had the opportunity to correct errors or misinterpretations. One peril of member checking was that “member checks can be misleading if all the members share some common myth or front, or conspire to mislead or cover up” (p. 315). Such actions could have caused the data to be invalid or cause the researcher to misinterpret the results.

For this study, I utilized member checking after the transcripts had been generated from the interviews. I asked the participants to read through the interview transcript. I then asked that they note any inaccuracies in the transcripts. They also were given the opportunity to clarify any information that they would like and also add any information that might be missing. The participants were given a two week period of time to complete this so that the process did not drag out over several weeks.

The curriculum coordinator was the quickest to return her transcripts. She returned her notes back to me for the first interview within a few days of receiving the transcript. Her notes were reviewed and were considered in the analysis of her interview. Her notes really were not of any content changes, mostly interpretation changes from what she said to what the transcriptionist heard. The curriculum coordinator completed some missing words and missing sentences. With interview 2 she did not have any notes to return to me. She was pleased with the transcript from interview 2.

The principal and assistant principals received both interview 1 and interview 2 transcripts at the same time. One assistant principal took only a few days and reported back to me that the transcripts were fine. The Principal did not provide any written feedback on either document.

### ***Triangulation***

By utilizing interviews, observations, and document analysis to complete this study, triangulation can occur. Triangulation is important because it establishes trustworthiness in the study. Triangulation is the use of multiple data sources and/or data collection methods to draw conclusions about the issue being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Denzin (1978) discusses, triangulation through data collection methods will force me to “situationally check the validity and reliability” of the data collected (p. 101). Establishing validity and reliability is important as it contributes to the overall trustworthiness of the entire study. By analyzing the data from three methods and multiple sources a truer sense of the change process can be understood.

To complete triangulation for this study I looked for common themes that arose in the data sources. I anticipated that some themes would emerge while completing the interview process that was validated in the observation and document analysis processes. My framework, the aspects of change, helped with the triangulation process. I used the framework to organize the data and to find emerging themes. The organized data helped outline the story of MHS. From that, I identified the critical incidents for further analysis.

### ***Prolonged engagement***

One aspect of data collection in this study was the concept of prolonged engagement. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained this concept best by describing it as “learning the culture” (p. 301). I felt certain that since I worked at MHS and was a member of the leadership team the issue of prolonged engagement was resolved. I had the opportunity to interact with the leadership team members on a daily basis. I worked to develop trusting relationships with the team members. I continued to learn about and interact with the culture of Magnet High School on a daily basis. As I conducted observations, I had the ability to spend time in the settings to really collect valuable data. By being there daily, I could better interpret my observational data. My reflective notes were valuable in my analysis of the observations since I was a part of the culture.

### ***Audit trail***

As a means of accountability for this study I have kept all records and documents I collected as data. I also kept careful notes on my collection and analysis processes. All transcripts, consent forms, observation forms and document analysis forms were filed in

notebooks and kept in a secure location. All interview tapes were secured according to IRB standards.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE STORY OF MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL**

The story of Magnet High School (MHS) was one of great change. It was the story of a school in transition with a new magnet program and a new leadership team. The story began on August 1, 2005 with the hiring of a new principal. It continued with the hiring of two new assistant principals, one being me. The story developed with the implementation of the magnet program as prescribed by a magnet school grant that the previous administration wrote. The story was enhanced with the magnet school grant's 1.7 million dollar award that was intended to be used to purchase needed materials to implement the magnet theme. The twist in the story was the fact that the existing faculty really had no idea about what was involved, neither with the federal magnet grant nor with the implementation of a new magnet program. Also, with a new administrative team, change was certainly inherent at MHS. "We knew this year [2005-2006] was a big year for change" (Asst. Principal 2, Interview #1). The bottom line was that the new administration had their work cut out for them as they began to lead the change efforts at MHS.

Magnet High School was a well established high school that served the southern part of a large urban county in North Carolina. The school was built in the 1960's and served many prominent citizens of the urban county. The school's population changed over the years from a predominantly white to predominantly minority student body. The

school's student population also grew in numbers. The most notable increase had occurred over the past few years. In 1997 there were approximately 1100 students enrolled at MHS. In August of 2005, there were 1550 students enrolled. Many of the students enrolled at MHS were considered at-risk and qualified for free or reduced lunch. The increase in population, a population with great needs contributed to the challenges that the new administration faced.

Another factor that spurred changes at MHS was test scores. As one assistant principal put it, "the data is not where we need to go...and if we don't achieve the goals required by the state department of public instruction, something bad is going to happen," (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #1). Since the state of North Carolina began using end-of-course (EOC) test, MHS had scored low in student proficiency. When testing began in the late 1990's, MHS had a student proficiency score of approximately 39%. That meant that only 39% of the students who were administered EOC tests in Algebra, Biology, English and History scored at a level considered as proficient by the state. Over the years, the test scores slowly increased. "They've (test scores) gone from 39% proficient to about 59% proficient. I think in order for MHS to take the next step to significantly improve those, some changes in process had to take place" (Principal, Interview #1). However, the state of North Carolina decreed that high schools under 60% were considered as low performing. Therefore, an emphasis on test scores had to be placed on the school during the 2005-2006 school year. Magnet High School had "made AYP for the first time and we had expected growth all these years" (Curriculum Coordinator, Interview #1). So, there was some positive news in terms of test scores. However, the

overall student proficiency scores took center stage. There was a great deal of press about MHS' test scores and how they compared to other local high schools. This negative press coverage certainly contributed to the stress level and the pressure on the new principal.

Starting with the arrival of the new principal, controversy began to brew at MHS. It started with the unexpected departure of an assistant principal that many at MHS wanted to see as the next principal. However, that person felt it was best he leave and return to his home county. Another assistant principal also left under a cloud of unrest. Her departure created mixed emotions among different members of the staff. The third assistant principal, who had served for 8 years by this point, remained on staff. That was when the principal interviewed and offered me a position. He also hired a veteran administrator from another large urban county. Together, the three of us were, for the most part, brand new to MHS. Though I had taught there years ago, the school was different and I was serving in a different and more challenging capacity. Unfortunately, I was not able to join the MHS team until the middle of September. I had to continue my duties at the middle school until my replacement was hired there. Therefore, MHS opened school with a new principal, a new assistant principal, and a veteran assistant principal, missing one member of the team.

As the new principal was trying to settle in, he quickly learned of an ill-planned faculty retreat scheduled for 14 days after his arrival. This retreat was an over-night meeting scheduled to bring the faculty together and was planned during the former administration's time at MHS. The new principal learned of the retreat and quickly had

to decide how to handle it. The retreat's events were being planned by the magnet resource teacher who helped write the magnet grant. The initial thought behind the retreat was to create a time for faculty to learn about the new initiatives of the magnet program. Up until this point, the majority of the faculty believed that the magnet program consisted of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program being implemented. At the retreat, the faculty learned that they ALL had a role in the new magnet program. As the principal discussed in his interview "this was a year where we had to change focus on the requirements of our magnet school grant, the magnet school concept and the IB concept and trying to infuse that [into the school]" (Principal, Interview #1). They all learned that there was paper work and documentation that had to be completed by everyone for the grant. "There was a lot more work written down that the teachers had to do than they ever had to do before" (Curriculum Coordinator, Interview #1). This came as a great surprise to the teachers and to the principal. The principal stated that "I didn't know all of the details of all of those different areas [referring to the magnet grant] and in many ways the underpinnings or the underlying details of making all of those changes was somewhat overwhelming" (Interview #1). He was not aware that the teachers did not know what was required of them through the grant. All of the grant requirements were changes in the way in which the staff did business at MHS "as far as meeting together, planning together" (Principal, Interview #1).

With the new requirements of the magnet grant came confusion and "a lot of frustration" among the staff (Curriculum Coordinator, Interview #1). Teachers really did not understand what they were supposed to do and why they were supposed to do it. The

veteran teachers thought that the grant only applied to a handful of teachers who worked with the IB students. They claimed that they never agreed to do any “extra” work and seemed to resent the grant. However, these same teachers enjoyed the financial windfall the school experienced as they purchased equipment for all classrooms.

As the school year began with the arrival of the students, the atmosphere at MHS was one of confusion and skepticism. Teachers were not comfortable with the new administrative team and the team was not comfortable with each other. “With a new principal, two new assistant principals, there was a time of students and faculty both trying to see what the rules were and what was expected” (Principal, Interview #1). Policies and procedures in the school were not clear. One participant commented that “the vision of the school and the direction of the school needs to be in place by the end of the first thirty days of school” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #1). Unfortunately this was not the case at MHS. “The vision was also slow to be established” (Asst. Principal 2, Interview #1). There was not an understanding on how to handle such routine things as attendance, tardies, and discipline. The Curriculum Coordinator stated that many teachers “really didn’t think this school was under control” (Interview #1). The master school schedule was also a mess. There were many classes with 40 to 50 students on the roll, and these students actually showed up. Also, there continued to be the construction issues for the school. There was a new design in the parking lot which meant that parents and students had to be retrained on how to enter and exit the lot. This, of course, created confusion and hostility towards teachers who were directing parents in and out of the lot. Many parents did not understand nor were opening minded about the physical changes at

the school. The opening weeks for MHS were certainly stressful for teachers and administrators.

As the first semester progressed, the confusion began to lift but the skepticism and low morale remained. Teachers were feeling almost alienated by the administrative team because they were not getting to know them. Some of the team members were not making the effort to get to know the faculty. Several teachers made the comment to me (as the assistant principal) that some of the team members seemed withdrawn and almost unfriendly at times. They, the teachers making the comments, understood that the administrators were focused on the issues that faced them but they wanted the administrators to be more personable. It seemed as if the team members were not concerned with developing relationships with the faculty members. One team member discussed that it was business; his job was about the business of schooling (Asst. Principal 1, Interview 1). He also stated that “the stress of dealing with a new administration is a normal part of the process” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #1). The administrative team worked more on process than relationships.

The team focused on implementing the magnet grant and pushed the processes required by the grant. Staff development sessions were scheduled to train teachers how to use the new unit plan and lesson plan templates. Faculty meetings centered on the process of created unit plans that incorporated rigorous strategies along with internationalism. Curriculum staff at MHS along with staff from the Central Office was utilized to instruct teachers about strategies to increase rigor. Strategies such as active engagement and brainstorming were being taught to staff. The observation process was

tweaked by administrators to incorporate the magnet objectives as well. The administrative team was looking for rigorous instruction in the classrooms. They looked to make sure teachers were utilizing the strategies (such as brainstorming) with their students. They also were looking for internationalism integrated into the lesson.

Teachers viewed administration as the people who were creating more and more work for them. Teachers were being asked to “do things very differently than they had in the past” (Principal, Interview #1). They were not seeing the connections with the new unit plan and lesson plan formats, the push for internationalism in the classes, and grade level projects as good teaching tools. “I’m not so sure that we are getting the buy in from teachers overall as to how we are going to be a school committed to excellence” (Asst. Principal 2, Interview #1). Teachers seemed very hesitant “to try to make the changes we’re asking because I guess there is a little bit of doubt as to whether these new processes are going to more or less productive” (Principal, Interview #1). Teachers were “talking about the changes at MHS but were not implementing them into their classrooms” (Researcher Journal, 11/15/05). Another participant stated that “nothing is more frightening to human beings than change” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #1). This “resistance, resistance to change” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #1) really created a barrier for the change process at MHS. As much as the administrative team attempted to discuss and train teachers in these new processes the more the teachers tried to “buck” what was happening. The principal was having an endless parade of teachers coming in and out of his office complaining (Researcher Journal, 11/15/05). Some did not come to his office, some sent emails to other colleagues or central office administrators complaining about

“conditions” and requirements at the school. All of this turmoil came to a boil in January with an email sent by one faculty member to his colleagues.

One of the teachers sent out an email to the staff about “taking back our school.” In this email, several references were made to the confusion and low morale the staff was experiencing. Also, references were made to the students’ perceived lack of discipline and lack of discipline support from administration. A comment was made in the email that it appeared that the “inmates were running the asylum.” The comment, I believe, was intended to reflect the author’s view that the students were running the school. However, the principal and other leadership team members took that in a different light. The principal said that he “felt that it was not the preferred procedure for that to have been sent out the way it was” (Principal, Interview #2). One assistant principal stated that “it sort of forced us as administrators to put on the table the agenda of our expectations” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). This email certainly created a buzz around the building. Many faculty members cheered the email and wanted to have the meeting that was called for by the author. Others saw it as a distraction and unnecessary. The meeting that was called for was described as a meeting to “take back our school”. The date was set for the teacher workday, the time was 9:00am and the location was TBD. It was not clear where the meeting was going to be held and if even was going to be held at the school. Rumors circulated that the meeting would be at the author’s church or another off campus location. The leadership team came together to address the email and the rumors circulating throughout the school.

During the regular administrative meeting, the principal, assistant principals, and curriculum coordinator began discussing the email. Actually, prior to this point, the administrators had begun some policy additions and revisions that were to be instituted with the beginning of the second semester. “The things that [the teacher] was talking about were exactly the same things we were talking about. We were talking about those things as administrators; they were probably talking about those things as teachers” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). The assistant principal perceived the whole email issue as a “move away from site based management to a move closer to site based accountability” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). The teachers were asking the administrators to be accountable for the direction of the school. It was decided that the principal would call a meeting to be scheduled on the January workday to review new policies and procedures for the second semester. Also, the principal was going to talk with the author about the email.

The faculty meeting was held on the January workday. Faculty members were actually given a choice to attend that meeting. The principal set up two other meeting times and directed faculty to attend just one session. However, the majority of the teachers attended the main meeting on the workday. At that time, the principal provided breakfast and had an agenda for the meeting (Observation 1/17/06). It was decided by the administrative team that the principal needed to control the tone and direction of the meeting, not the teachers. Therefore, he crafted a plan and put together a handbook supplement for the teachers. The principal was pleased that he went to that meeting with a plan, “it wasn’t just my plan, it was myself and the other members of the administrative

team's plan" (Principal, Interview #2). He began the meeting with a video of motivational quotes that centered on change and how change is positive and beneficial in order to set the tone (Observation 1/17/06). He then began the discussion by addressing the email and he said that the purpose of the meeting was to talk about some new policies and procedures. He stated that he hoped to address teachers' concerns through the handbook supplement he distributed to the staff. The principal felt that the meeting showed that he "was willing to talk to them and was willing to listen to them" (Principal, Interview #2).

The majority of the meeting went well. There were some questions from staff and clarification was provided for several issues. Many of the staff showed signs of support for the new initiatives (Observation 1/17/06). They also seemed more at ease after hearing about the reasons for the changes made in reference to the magnet grant. The principal also shared with the faculty how the changes that were taking place related to his vision for the school (Researcher Journal, 1/17/06). Again, this seemed to ease some of the faculty members' fears and frustrations because they better understood what was and should be happening at MHS. The "meeting was cathartic in its own way. People got their voice in" (Curriculum Coordinator, Interview #2). As the assistant principal said, "the more predictable an environment is, the more relaxed people are" (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2).

As the second semester progressed the climate in the building began to improve. This time period was a "turning point" for the school (Principal, Interview #2). Teachers seemed happier and were less negative. "I think the faculty buy in was better the second

half of the year. [At] the January meeting they expressed their feelings and people got more buy in” (Curriculum Coordinator, Interview #2). They also appeared in the halls more and helped supervise students better (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). The administrators had a renewed effort to improve student discipline. Students in general also appeared to be more responsive to the teachers and were better disciplined. As the spring approached the morale of the entire building was improving greatly over what it was in September. “I think some of those people (who were unhappy at first) began to be a little bit more comfortable with the fact that I was doing things differently and it wasn’t me trying to attack them personally” (Principal, Interview #2). The end of the year looked promising.

The spring semester did come with a better feeling in the building. “The teachers were on task, students were on task...and there was a lot less fooling around. There was a lot more focus on teaching from bell to bell” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). Yet, there were still issues to tackle. Some staff still did not understand the concepts of rigor and relevance in their classrooms. Classroom observations showed several faculty were not increasing rigor, they were just teaching the “old way” (Researcher Journal 3/15/06). Test scores became the dominant discussion by administrative team members and faculty (Observation 2/24/06). The principal quickly became absorbed in dealing with the press that was coming out about low test scores at MHS and another nearby school. “We have gotten some negative publicity in the newspaper based on some statewide initiatives with the Leandro case and Judge Manning’s and Governor Easley’s turn around schools which MHS is one of” (Principal, Interview #2). The negative publicity did not help improve

the image of MHS. It also hindered the hiring of teachers (Principal, Interview #2). Shortly after the negative press started, the principal heard that a “turn around team” had been assigned to MHS. This came as a quick surprise to him and the school. As time passed more details about the team emerged. There were two people assigned to visit the school for one day in May. They would be spending the entire day at the school observing and learning about the school. From that, they would create a report and recommendations for the school.

In order to prepare for this visit, the assistant principals called meetings for all the teachers during their planning periods. Each administrator talked with the teachers about who was coming and what the team members were looking for. The new assistant principal had actually served on a state assistance team before coming to MHS. He was able to provide some insights into the team’s visit and ease some of the teacher’s fears. The meetings seemed to really help the teachers and helped the school “put its best foot forward” (Researcher Journal, 5/9/06). The principal stated that the whole process of preparing for the visit had “the potential to be a positive (event)” because it “can serve as a little wake up call to some people who do need to face some cold hard facts” (Principal, Interview #2). The principal alluded to the fact that many teachers at MHS needed to understand how their teaching and their methodologies affected student outcomes. The wakeup call served as a reminder that following state curriculum and adhering to good teaching practices was important (Principal, Interview #2).

The visit itself went fine. The team came and enjoyed a full day at MHS (Researcher Journal, 5/10/06). They visited classrooms, talked to teachers, and met with

students. The two visitors were from the Raleigh/Chapel Hill area. The interesting piece was that they spent one day at MHS and from that they were going to put together recommendations to turn the school around. It was certainly interesting that in one day a school could be turned around after years and years of work. But, that was how the state decided to fix the problem. The assistant principal who served on a state team commented that “in terms of helping the school or hurting the school, there’s nothing the turnaround team could do” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). That certainly was an interesting comment coming from a former member of a state team about the current team visiting MHS.

A few weeks later the “turn around team” sent a report back to the school, system superintendent and the Department of Public Instruction. The report provided some recommendations for action. However, the report really did not provide any new ideas (Researcher Journal, 6/29/06). “There’s absolutely, positively nothing they said that we hadn’t discussed. The difference is somebody else put it into writing” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). One recommendation was to have administrators in the classrooms more. The report said that administrators’ time was consumed with construction and with magnet program and IB program implementation. What was interesting was that in the post-interview before the team left, the principal talked about that very notion. He stated to the team that it was his goal to have administrators in the classroom more for the remainder of the year and especially for next year.

The local newspaper printed the information in the report from the “turn around team” (Researcher Journal, 7/10/06). The reporter printed the recommendations made by

the team. However, they did not print the fact that the principal had discussed all those recommendations with the team on the day of the visit. So, the article portrayed the recommendations as originating from the team when in fact they came from the principal. The perception was created that the state was providing all the good ideas for MHS (Principal, Interview #2). “Sometimes when somebody else puts it in writing, especially somebody from the outside, people tend to pay more attention to it” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). The newspaper article certainly put the wisdom of the turnaround team into writing.

As the year began to wind down, the administrative team began talking about next year. Everyone began to brainstorm ideas to improve MHS. The team started with student achievement scores on state tests. One assistant principal made the point that “if we do business with a focus on improving instruction, test scores will increase dramatically” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). They also discussed ways to improve teacher working conditions and student behavior. One big decision made by the team was the implementation of the Balanced Literacy initiative (Principal, Interview #2). This program was seen as a unifying program to bring together all the training teachers at received thus far in reading instruction, in rigor and relevance instruction and the Prioritized Curriculum workshops held by the Central Office. The goal of utilizing the Balanced Literacy program was to provide teachers a framework in which to structure their classes so that all the components of good teaching, of the magnet grant, of the state assistance team and of the school system could be implemented without adding something “new” to teachers’ workloads (Observation 4/24/06). The staff received

training in the Balanced Literacy approach over the summer before the 2006-2007 school year began. Many of the staff were open to the ideas of Balanced Literacy. They seemed to appreciate its unifying qualities of all the other trainings they had received. The principal commented that staff “felt like there was a need for teaching techniques to change here at MHS” (Principal, Interview #2). New staff were very open to the ideas because it was presented as the way MHS conducts business in the classrooms.

Before the 2005-2006 school year ended it was apparent that several teachers were not interested in continuing the changes at MHS (Researcher Journal, 3/26/06). There were approximately 15 teachers who resigned their positions at the end of the school year. A few teachers moved to different cities or sought new jobs. Several teachers went together to another school in a neighboring county. They followed the former assistant principal from MHS. Others received transfers to different high schools in the system. Some people at MHS saw this as the “mass exodus” of teachers from the school (Researcher Journal, 5/15/06). However, the administrative team viewed this as an opportunity to bring in teachers who would be supportive of the changes and who would bring positive energy in the school (Researcher Journal, 5/30/06). The majority of the teachers that left harnessed a great deal of negative energy that was detrimental to the entire change process.

As the principal began thinking about replacing the teachers who resigned, he was also given an extra allotment of teachers due to the student population increase. He actually was given 10 new teaching positions. Therefore, he had approximately 25 new people to hire. This was certainly a staggering amount of teachers to find, especially in

subjects such as math and science. The process for hiring these teachers took up his entire summer. He and two assistant principals worked up until opening day to hire all the teachers needed at MHS. It was a daunting task but was completed just in time for school opening.

Hiring so many new teachers actually was a blessing for the principal. He was able to personally select almost one-third of his staff. These new people had no real knowledge of the previous administration of the school or the prior problems of the school. The principal had the opportunity to make-over the composition of the staff at MHS. He hired people in every department in the school. This was certainly an enormous challenge but one that had the potential to yield huge dividends for the school. These new teachers represented new blood in the school. As they were hired, the principal explained to them his vision and expectations. They took that as the way MHS conducted business (Principal, Interview #2). They were told about the struggles of change but came in after most of the struggling was over. One issue that arose with so many new teachers was training. “They have to be trained on how to be effective teachers in the ninety minute block” (Asst. Principal 1, Interview #2). Thus that became the mission of that assistant principal to develop and provide training for the new staff during the 2006-2007 school year.

The 2005-2006 school year certainly provided many challenges for the new administrative team and for the teachers of Magnet High School. With all the changes, some mandated, some necessary, that were being instituted the atmosphere of MHS was one of confusion and distrust. One assistant principal stated that “I think we actually

have, this year, put too much on the plate, on the MHS plate, for this time in order for us to get to where we need to get and be effective in getting [there]" (Asst. Principal 2, Interview #1). However, the school survived the year and was able to open for the new school year planned and ready for the increased student enrollment. The changes from the previous year were now part of business and a few new changes were instituted. The start of the new school year certainly was far more pleasant than the previous year. For MHS, the agony of instituting many changes was over and now the job of focusing on student test scores could begin. It was certainly an interesting year for all involved!

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

In this chapter I have identified the critical incidents that occurred throughout the year. The purpose of this section was to provide another layer of data analysis. The incidents were identified based on the data collected. Table 1 has been created to show the linkage between the data and the incidents. The table has been arranged to show some examples of data that were utilized in the identification of the critical incidents. The format of the table has each critical incident listed and how data from each method (interviewing, observation and document analysis) supported each incident. The incidents have been discussed in terms of its importance to the change process at Magnet High School. The individual incidents stood out in the data as key moments in the story of MHS. The incidents did not necessarily represent isolated events that occurred on a single day. Each incident represented an important event or time in the 2005-2006 school year. After each incident is discussed, a section follows that links the critical incident back to the framework (see Figure 1) used for the literature review. If no linkage existed then the incident was discussed in terms of its own importance. The goal was to connect what happened at MHS to what the literature revealed about change and the framework of change derived from the literature reviewed for this study. The critical incidents have been listed below:

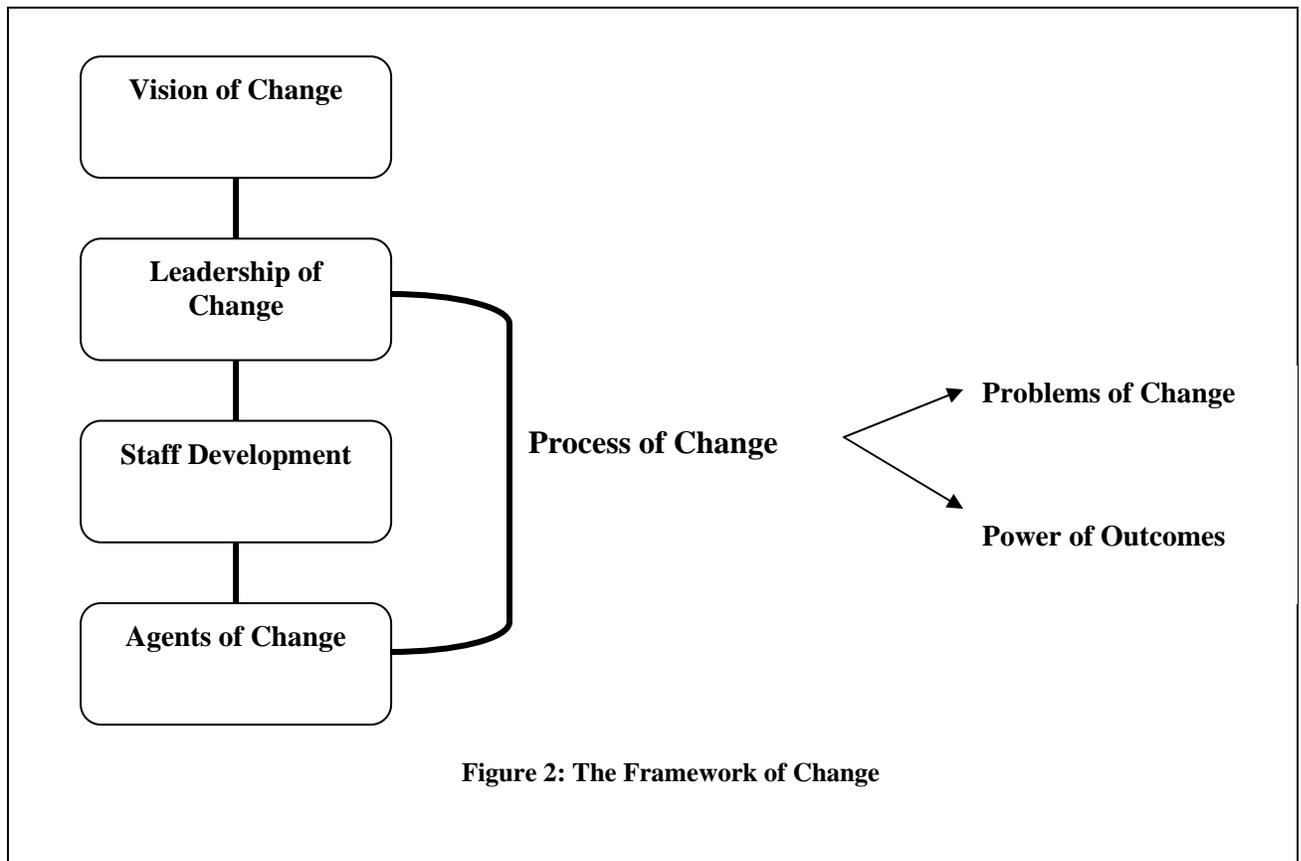
- New Administrative Team
- Magnet Program Implementation

- “Take Back Our School”
- Leadership Team Begins to Work Together
- State Team Visit
- The “Mass Exodus”

Table 1: Critical Incident Data Table

<b>Critical Incident</b>	<b>Interview Data</b>	<b>Observation Data</b>	<b>Document Data</b>
New Administrative Team	“Leadership team was dysfunctional at the beginning. It did improve some as year progressed,” (AP 2)	Magnet Evaluator says that she’s impressed with the new leadership this year. Eval says she knows school is undergoing changes with 3 new administrators	Memo by Principal lists different changes occurring at school. Lists some items of importance to principal (magnet program implementation, increase student test scores)
Magnet Program Implementation	“Biggest initial change for staff was the planning components of the magnet grant,” (AP1)	Principal addresses complaints about extra paperwork for magnet grant – says that its good educational practice to develop quality unit plans in a written form – its now a new way to conduct business at MHS (11/15/05, Faculty Meeting).	Magnet committee meeting to discuss magnet implementation at MHS – document lays out school action planning (D 208)
“Take Back Our School” Email	“Take back our school meeting forced administrators to put the issues on the table and deal with team” (AP1)  “The take back our school email was a rallying cry for teachers and administrators,” (CC)	*After the interruption by PE teacher, Dr Prin’s voice deepened and contained more emphasis. I think he was trying to convey that he was in charge and that no interruption could shake him as a leader (1/17/06, Faculty Meeting). *The Principal had been “battered and bruised” up to this point, but 1/17 meeting started the healing process (Journal).	Email from teacher discussed the frustrations of that person, but was meant to represent frustrations of entire staff. Made reference to “inmates running the asylum”

<p><b>Leadership Team Begins to Work Together</b></p>	<p>“By mid-year, the leadership team began to know each other better...they figured each other out and knew each other’s talents and strengths,” (Prin)  “Understanding and acceptance was occurring slowly, teachers could sense that the team was not united and working together as one” in response to how the team functioned during the first half of school year</p>	<p>AP communicated to Principal that he had to trust AP’s...that the job of leading MHS was too great for one person (Admin Meeting, 1/06)</p>	<p>January handbook addition – created by all administrators to help clarify policies/procedures for staff</p>
<p><b>State Team Visit</b></p>	<p>“The turnaround team visit was a wakeup call for some staff – that we have to move forward with test scores. The wakeup call also made some aware that they too had to change, not just the school,” (Prin)</p>	<p>Teachers came together in meeting just before visit – all administrators were present for all 4 sessions and all 4 spoke to staff each time. First time this has ever happened to show unified front</p>	<p>Newspaper article written about team visit. Stated that team gave school several recommendations; visit classrooms more, less emphasis on construction, etc.</p>
<p><b>The “Mass Exodus”</b></p>	<p>“For some this meant leaving MHS and several teachers did,” (Prin).  “The negative teachers submitted their resignations, which was positive for MHS” (AP1).</p>	<p>Principal upset by the term mass exodus. Gives feeling of unhappiness and everyone’s jumping ship. Not actually true when comparing turnover rates to previous years (according to Prin.)</p>	<p>Email from teacher stated that whoever was left after the mass exodus of teachers leaving would come together and work towards school improvement. Email portrayed that most of the staff were leaving – when in fact was same turnover rate as previous years.</p>



**Figure 2: The Framework of Change**

### *New Administrative Team*

The majority of the administrative team at MHS came to the school in August, 2005. The principal was appointed and began at MHS on August 1, 2005. The new principal then hired two new assistant principals. One new assistant started the week that school opened. The other new assistant, me, started after the Labor Day holiday. The fourth administrator had served at MHS for the past eight years. She had worked for two principals at MHS before the new principal arrived.

An issue for the new team was group cohesiveness. With three new administrators on a team of four no one really knew each other. Some of the members knew other members but none of the four had ever worked together as school leaders.

Coming together as a group was slow and difficult. The lack of cohesiveness caused confusion at times among the staff. Also, staff members were learning about and getting to know the new administrators. The lack of unity was a hindrance to instituting some changes at MHS during the 2005-2006 school year.

***New administrative team linked to vision of change, leadership of change***

Vision appeared as a key concept during the data collection for this study. All interview participants discussed the importance of, and the need for, a vision at MHS. During the analysis three sub-categories emerged from the data, implementing vision, understanding vision, and communicating vision. Implementing and communicating the vision was a task for the leadership team of the school. From that, teachers were charged with understanding the vision. This last concept of understanding led to some of the problems associated with the changes at MHS.

The new administrative team inherited the previous administration's vision for the magnet program that was spelled out in the magnet grant. The new team had to take that vision and start the year with it while trying to create their own vision of how the magnet program would work at MHS. As school began teachers and administrators were uncertain of just what that vision would be for the school. This could have been due to the fact that the principal had just started on August 1 and teachers began work within fourteen days after that. Regardless of timing, there was no clear plan of change (Hall & Hord, 2001) for teachers to follow as school began. It was not until November that the principal along with the assistant principals began openly discussing the vision for the school. At that time, it was to raise student achievement to over 60% proficient on state

testing and to successfully implement the magnet goals during the 2005-2006 school year. At that time (November) teachers also heard the short version of the vision (the catch phrase) for the school, “Excellence Matters”. This slogan was to be used for the remainder of the year to remind staff, students and parents about what was important to MHS.

The responsible party for the creation and communication of the vision at MHS was the principal. The assistant principals, curriculum coordinator and teachers looked to the principal to set the priorities for the school. It was the principal’s responsibility to prepare the vision and to discuss it at the November faculty meeting. One could tell that the teachers wanted to hear from the principal and that they wanted the principal to set the tone for the school. Up until that point it appeared that teachers were working in isolation and were becoming increasingly frustrated. The frustration level continued after the November meeting when the vision was discussed, but teachers did not complain as much about lack of direction. It was not until January when the teachers began to really understand the vision, that they were able to discuss it themselves and began to understand what it meant for the school and for their students.

What was interesting in terms of vision was the teachers’ desire for direction. The participants discussed during their interviews that the teachers needed direction and boundaries. Several commented that teachers had been allowed to do as they please over the past several years. Now, with a new principal a new set of rules were imposed. Many teachers complained but yet they still wanted direction as well. The people who resisted the new policies the most were those who did the least in terms of the magnet

grant implementation (as observed by the researcher). The resisters were the last group of staff at the school to understand the vision of the school and to begin acceptance of the changes at MHS. However, the majority of the teachers who did not like the new procedures and were slow to follow the vision did leave the school at the end of the year.

The new administrative team, while working with the vision set by the magnet grant, was also charged with providing leadership for the school. Regardless of who created the vision, the school still needed leadership and direction, especially since the school was in the midst of change. According to the literature reviewed for this study, the style of leadership that was needed for change was transformational leadership. The data was reviewed to answer the question if transformational leadership was apparent at MHS. The answer was not a simple yes or no. The data revealed that some aspects of transformational leadership were apparent at MHS and it appeared to be emerging more and more as the school year progressed. For example, the principal stated in his interview that he was becoming more collaborative and listening more to other's perspectives. He was attempting to bring more opinions together to better formulate decisions for the school. His hope was to build stronger relationships with the faculty members in order to foster the change process even more. One of the assistant principals discussed how his style had become more focused on consensus building rather than dictatorial or autocratic. He stated that in past positions, he used the phrase mandatory with his faculty. At MHS, he worked more to create a consensus as to how to handle the changes the school was experiencing. The curriculum coordinator actually had the opposite effect on her style of leadership. Previous to the 2005-2006 school year she was

seen as more of a motivator for the faculty. She was a person who would be the champion of change for the school. However, because of her new responsibilities she was more secluded in her office and not out in the school motivating and helping teachers. She viewed her new role negatively because it did not match her style of leadership. She thought of herself as a type of transformational leader but with her new responsibilities of testing and magnet grant documentation her leadership role at the school diminished greatly.

Hall and Hord (2001) discussed in their description of transformational leadership the idea of leaders sharing power with teachers to affect change. The leadership team was trying to establish power and did not really share what was harnessed. One factor that affected this limited sharing of power was the newness factor. Having three new administrators attempting to establish themselves did not lend itself to the sharing of power. However, as the school year progressed the administrative team, primarily the principal, began to empower some of the staff. The principal first empowered the assistant principals to help make decisions for the school. Up until January, the principal had reserved the decision making process for himself. At the leadership team meeting when the team discussed the “take back our school” email, one assistant principal made the point that the principal would have to trust his assistants and share with us his frustrations and problems. The assistants reminded the principal that no one person could lead the change process entirely by themselves at MHS. The principal was going to have to open up more and let others in to help solve the problems of the school. From that point on, the team met more and discussed the issues of the school as a group and

provided feedback as a group as to how to resolve those issues. Also, the principal started sharing more with the School Improvement Team (SIT) and solicited their feedback on issues in the school. As the principal began to relinquish some of his power by trusting others, he became more at ease with his role in the school and the other team members stepped up more as leaders in the school.

### ***Magnet Program Implementation***

The 2005-2006 school year started off with mass confusion over the implementation of the magnet program. The previous administration had written and was awarded a federal magnet grant to implement a cultural arts and internationalism theme throughout MHS. However, the majority of the staff thought all the magnet work would be done by teachers working with the International Baccalaureate program. What they learned at the teacher retreat in August 2005 and as the school year began was that everyone had to work with the magnet program. The program brought to MHS over one and a half million dollars to upgrade training, technology and the physical building. However, with that money came requirements of lesson plans, theme integration, subject meetings and documentation. Teachers, for the first time in August 2005, were being required to complete and submit unit plans. These plans were to be created on a template on the computer and submitted electronically. Teachers were also to implement internationalism into their units. They were to include some type of international instruction during each unit throughout the school year. Also, new for the 2005-2006 school year were grade level projects. Teachers were expected to develop and have students complete a project during each quarter of their class. The project had to relate to

some unit of study in their content area and have an international focus. Unfortunately the majority of the faculty were not aware of all of the requirements the magnet grant had with it prior to August of 2005. Therefore, it was up to the new administration to make all of these things happen with staff. Needless to say, many staff were not happy with all the “new work” they had to complete.

***Magnet program implementation linked to vision of change, staff development***

Vision has been discussed as a key element of change. The magnet grant provided a vision based on the previous administrations thoughts and ideas. At the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year that vision was the only one available for MHS. However, the vision was not clear to the new administration and thus was not communicated effectively. The magnet grant itself had the vision of incorporating internationalism into the curriculum at MHS (MHS Magnet Grant). The hope was to infuse international elements into each class giving students a broader understanding of their world. Yet, with the new administrative team the vision of the magnet was lost in translation. The principal at first focused on more of the requirements of the grant (lesson plans, unit plans, increasing rigor and relevance in classes) which created the frustration among staff. It was unclear if the vision of the grant had been explored and communicated better that have eased teacher frustrations and helped the implementation process.

The data revealed two key concepts about staff development. One, the idea of using staff development to increase understanding and two, the notion of improving instruction through staff development emerged. These two concepts were used to answer

the questions from the literature review. The questions centered on what staff development was available, was it focused on particular themes and who decided about what staff development to offer.

Staff development, as described by Friedman (2004) should be a time for “meaningful collaboration” for teachers (p. 209). The staff development at MHS focused on explaining the changes and teaching the teachers how to institute the changes. The majority of changes for teachers in terms of instruction came from the magnet grant. The grant focused on lesson planning and how teachers would document those plans. The development sessions trained teachers on how to use templates and what information was needed to document the implementation of the magnet goals. Some time was given to staff to collaborate but more often it was a training session.

Teachers were involved with planning period meetings that occurred twice each month. Teachers across all disciplines came together every other week during their planning periods to review magnet guidelines and instructional methods. The school’s magnet resource teacher, the curriculum coordinator and the system magnet facilitator conducted these meetings. The overarching purpose was to improve instruction. However, teachers needed understanding first on what the methods and documentation requirements were before implementation could begin.

The federal magnet evaluator from Washington D.C. also discussed staff development in her visits to MHS. She discussed how teachers needed to use lesson templates to provide documentation that the school was actually implementing the magnet goals and objectives. Also, she wanted to see the school train teachers on how to

incorporate writing into all classes. The incorporation of writing would lead to improved instruction and student performance according to the evaluator.

One downfall of the leadership team was that they were not more active in the development sessions. Often, the magnet resource teachers (MHS and system) were leading the sessions. Administrators should have lead more sessions in order to convey the high expectations for MHS that were created by the leadership team. As Leithwood (1994, 1999) discussed, staff development sessions were an opportunity to spell out the vision and mission for the school. Yet, the leadership team at MHS decided to let the sessions be about the “nuts and bolts” of what needed to be happening at the school. The leadership team could have used the sessions more as opportunities to motivate and inspire rather than to just inform and instruct.

### ***“Take Back Our School”***

One of the teachers at MHS sent an email in early January, 2006 to all the staff. The subject of the email was “take back our school.” The email suggested that the “inmates were running the asylum,” (email) and that teachers and administrators had lost control. The teacher suggested a meeting of all staff on the January workday at a location to be determined. The teacher had not discussed any of the issues raised in the email with any administrator. However, several of the issues that were raised were being discussed among the members of the administrative team. The issue of classroom discipline and hallway behavior had been discussed and several options considered to improve the situation. The team had also been discussing the lack of participation by teachers in supervising students before school, during hall changes and after school.

The administrative team discussed the email and addressed the concerns raised by the teacher. The team had already begun discussions about changes needed for the second semester. The email just forced administrators to address all the issues and provide a more concrete plan to operate with during semester two. The team put together a handbook addition for faculty. The handbook piece put in writing the changes that had already been implemented along with updates and new changes for the second semester. The principal ended up calling a meeting for the January workday to review the new handbook additions with the faculty. The principal ran the meeting and faculty seemed responsive to the changes given to them. The event served as a turning point for the second semester.

***Take back our school linked to agents of change, change process (problems of change)***

The email and the leadership team's response to the email represented a crucial turning point at MHS. The email revealed to the leadership team that the teachers had reached their boiling point in terms of the frustration from all the changes that were being imposed and what was happening at the school. Though the email was written by one person, it was evident that the message originated from the majority of the staff. The message clearly was that the faculty needed help. They needed guidance and assistance because they viewed the school as out of control and without leadership. It really was a wakeup call for the entire leadership team.

The creation of this email really started from the beginning of the year (the beginning of the change process) because there was a great deal of confusion and frustration by staff because of the lack of a real plan. There were a lot of conversations

about “where we are, where we need to go and what we have to do to get there” (Assistant Principal 1, Interview 1). Yet, there were only conversations, nothing written except the magnet grant itself. As the year progressed it became apparent that teachers needed a more defined plan for the changes at MHS. With three new leadership team members, one being the principal, there was no real time to put together a plan. The magnet grant did provide some guidance. The grant spelled out some requirements of lesson planning and documentation. It laid out the specifics about creating action groups, writing lesson plans on a common template and implementing rigor and relevance into the classrooms with an international component as well. However, the magnet grant needed some translation into how each component would work on a day-to-day basis. A plan provided by the leadership team would have helped in this process but one was not created until later in the year.

The frustration level of teachers during the first semester continued because of the confusion over the processes that were being implemented. The participants all said in their interviews that teachers were stressed over the new lesson plan formats and requirements, the new administration and the push for increase student performance on state tests. It appeared that teachers did not see the connection between the changes (new processes) and what they could do for students. Teachers did not understand why they had to complete unit templates for each unit of study in their curriculum. Though it was explained to them they did not see the connection of having quality unit plans to quality instruction. Teachers saw the changes as additional work and not as a new means of doing business. The principal was trying to get teachers to understand that submitting

unit plans and creating lesson plans was the way MHS was conducting business under his leadership. In several faculty meetings the principal discussed that he understood staff were frustrated. However he continued to reiterate his vision and goals for MHS and continued to explain how he expected teachers to plan and teach under the new guidelines.

### ***Leadership Team Begins to Work Together***

The second semester started off a little better than the first semester. The new semester began the day after the “take back our school” faculty meeting. The semester opened with a calmer, more relaxed feeling in the building. Staff were more visible during class changes helping to supervise students. Teachers were up more in their rooms instructing students. There was evidence of more active engagement by students in the classrooms. The feel of the building was one of control and peace. There were still issues that arose due to the changes being implemented but the issues were not as major as before. There was more of a sense of unity among staff and administration. Teachers were finally getting to know the new administrators and the administrators were finally working together.

### ***Working together linked to leadership, change process***

The leadership team did begin to function more as a team during the second half of the school year. During the first half the team members worked in isolation. One participant said that there was an imbalance of duties among leadership team members. This person was saying that some team members were doing more than others. Also, the team members really did not know what each other was doing in terms of their duties and

responsibilities. Another team member described themselves as a type of ambassador that worked between the teachers and the principals. It was not until the leadership team began to focus on the needs of the teachers that the group actually began to work together.

After the infamous “take back our school” email from a teacher the leadership team began to actually work together as school leaders. From that point on the team members discussed openly the needs of the school and the needs of the faculty. The team began to focus on classrooms more by increasing teacher observations and feedback and by tightening up on student discipline. The team members impressed upon the principal that he had to trust the team and rely on them to carry out his vision and mission for the school. The work of change at the school had to be a team effort; no one person could do all of it. The principal was asked to let his guard down and share openly with his assistant principals. The assistants made the point that everyone was together working for him, not against him. The principal was asked to share his emotions and feelings with the assistants. They encouraged the principal to share his frustrations with the team so that he would not have to carry the burden alone.

As a result of the principal relying on the team members more, the team began discussing real solutions to some of the problems the school was facing. One problem the principal recognized was that staff needed additional training in the requirements that were being implemented. He charged one of the assistant principals with the responsibility of organizing and providing additional training for the staff. The training focused on developing quality unit and lesson plans within the requirements of the

magnet grant. The team also looked at the evaluation process for teachers and committed to a uniform way to observe the staff. It was decided that quick snapshot observations would be conducted along with the formal observations. The team was committed to providing feedback for all the teachers in the building. The staff was divided among team members for evaluation and dates were set for completion of those evaluations. Everyone agreed that classroom monitoring was missing and needed to be an important part of the second half of the year.

Another problem the principal and leadership team addressed was visibility. The teachers wanted to see their principal and assistant principals more in the building. The principal began to stand out front more and take charge more with the staff. He said in his interview that he has typically enjoyed a behind the scenes type of leadership style. But, with all the changes and problems at MHS he realized that he had to be out front leading the way. He became the face of change at MHS and it started with the January faculty meeting that was in response to the “take back our school” email. At that meeting he led the conversation and provided solutions to some of the problems faculty were experiencing. The principal continued to lead the way by being more visible in the halls during class changes. He also visited with students and teachers during lunch by helping with cafeteria supervision. His increased visibility in the building certainly had a positive impact on the students and the teachers during the second semester.

As the second semester progressed the problems seemed to decrease. Participants discussed in their interviews that the second semester seemed calmer, people were more trusting, people were teaching better and student behavior had improved. Teachers’

perceptions of the students improved as well. At the beginning of the year many teachers perceived the students as incapable of achieving the state testing goal and they thought the students would be resistant to the magnet themes. However, as second semester progressed, teachers talked openly about their perceptions of the students and began to dialogue about what the students could do and how the teachers could help them.

### *State Team Visit*

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction sent a “state team” to assess MHS in May of 2006. The team consisted of two individuals, both of whom had worked in the public schools of North Carolina. Their purpose was to assess the school and offer suggestions for improvement. Their reason for visiting was due to low test scores at MHS. The composite proficiency score for MHS students was less than 60%. This meant that less than 60% of students at MHS who took state tests in core subjects scored at a level considered proficient. The team’s job was to figure out, in one day, what was going on with MHS and offer suggestions to “turn it around.”

The actual visit went well with the team. They gave very little feedback on the day of their visit about what they saw. However, the MHS staff was prepared and the day went well. A few weeks after the visit, a report was issued to the school and released in the newspaper about their findings. They did offer several suggestions but none of them were anything new or innovative. One suggestion, administrators need to be in the classrooms more, was very accurate. The MHS administrative team had already discussed and made a plan to make this happen. So, unfortunately, the recommendations

only put in writing what had already been thought about at MHS. Nothing new or innovative was offered to help increase student performance on state tests.

***State team visit: no direct linkage***

The State Team visit did not actually link to any particular aspect of the framework for change. However, the visit was important for MHS. The preparation that went into the visit was positive for the leadership team. The team actually came together to help focus the faculty on the visit. Each member of the team presented information and thoughts about the visit to help ease the concerns of the teachers. This was the first time that the faculty saw the four members of the leadership team working directly together for the school.

The visit also helped focus the efforts of the leadership team. Though the recommendations made by the team were not anything new or innovative, they served as reminders for the leadership team members. The idea of being in classrooms more has been discussed greatly. But, having the team write it down on paper brought importance to that issue.

In terms of change, the visit brought purpose to some of the changes that were being implemented at MHS. The team focused on student achievement and the need to improve test scores. This validated the need for teachers to complete lesson plans and include rigor and relevance strategies. The team suggested that doing things the same way was leading to poor results. The school needed to focus on new strategies to improve student achievement. This helped springboard the discussion about implementing Balanced Literacy into the curriculum for the 2006-2007 school year.

### *The “Mass Exodus”*

As the 2005-2006 school year ended there were a lot of rumors circulating among staff about teachers leaving MHS. It was true that several faculty members were leaving MHS and going to other schools or other career paths. Throughout the summer there were approximately fifteen teachers who choose to leave. What was interesting was that one teacher, who was remaining, sent an email to all the staff about the “mass exodus” from MHS. The email made it seem that over half of the teachers were leaving. The principal’s perception of the email was very negative and upsetting. He felt like the email was a stab at him and the work he was trying to do at MHS. The message gave the perception that everyone was unhappy at MHS and was leaving. The truth of the matter was that less than one-fourth of the staff had asked for a transfer or had resigned. The principal commented that the turnover rate at the end of the school year was the same as in years past, under the previous administration.

With the resignations of several faculty members and with the new allotment of staff positions, the principal had the opportunity during the summer of 2006 to hire several teachers. In all, the principal hired almost 30 new staff. This represented almost one-third of the total staff at MHS. Therefore, the principal had the opportunity to hire teachers who had no knowledge about the “old” ways of MHS. He hired staff and discussed with them his vision and expectations. The new staff saw the magnet grant requirements as the way MHS conducted business, not as something new.

*The “mass exodus” linked to agents of change, vision of change*

The literature discussed how important it was to have members of an organization working together to implement change. Leaders of change have to work to bring members on board with the changes being implemented. Unfortunately, as with any organization, not all the members were willing to be a part of change. At MHS, several teachers decided that the changes and the process of change was simply not for them. They did not see the connections between the change process and their classrooms. Many were resistant to the idea that the changes would actually have a positive impact on their classrooms. They chose to leave MHS instead of embracing the changes taking place. The requirements of creating and submitting unit and lesson plans was seen by many of these teachers as unnecessary and too cumbersome. Several of the teachers who left had very negative attitudes and were toxic to the staff. They were undermining the principal with their comments and actions. They were using their power as agents of change to negatively affect the change process. Their departure from MHS helped to ease some of the frustrations between teachers and administrators.

Hiring new faculty members was positive for the principal and for the school as a whole. By hiring new faculty, the principal did have the opportunity to push his vision further into the school. The principal was able to discuss his vision for the school during the interview process. New teachers entered MHS understanding what the vision was for the 2006-2007 school year. With so many new teachers the vision had more of a chance to permeate throughout the school. The new teachers acted as agents for implementing this vision. They were told of how MHS operated with requirements for lesson planning

and unit planning. They were trained in Balanced Literacy and rigor and relevance strategies that were to be used in their classrooms. New faculty understood the importance of test data and strategies for improving achievement and what it meant for MHS. For new teachers, this was how teaching was to be conducted at MHS. It did not represent a change for them.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The data revealed some great insights into the change process as it relates to a school. The leadership team and staff at Magnet High School experienced a whirlwind of change. The journey was certainly not easy and proved difficult at times for the leadership team to manage and guide. Yet, the process of change went on and the members of the leadership team provided some great lessons for other leaders and schools experiencing change.

In order to organize the data, table 2 was created to help answer each research question. The table was set up to provide examples of data from interviews, observations and document analysis that addressed each research question. Each research question is then addressed in the narrative and is linked to the corresponding critical incidents. In the discussion of each question, practice and policy implications are given along with ideas for further research.

Table 2: Research Question Data Table

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Data</b>	<b>Observation Data</b>	<b>Document Data</b>
What changes are occurring at MHS?	“Causes of change at MHS: new cultural mix (with additional ESL students), new administrators, new procedures and new policies, new magnet program, spotlight on test scores and construction,” (Prin)	*Writing lesson plans – teachers complaining about having to write lesson plans – is new way to conduct business at MHS. *Action groups set up by subject – working with AP’s. *Meeting with EOC teachers to share scores and develop focus on common planning	*Memo spells out all that is happening at MHS. This document spells out for teachers what those changes are and how they relate to the magnet school theme (D108). *Memo discusses what makes MHS a magnet school and an IB school (D104)
How is the leadership team at MHS facilitating change?	*“Teachers had to be trained on how to complete unit plans in the required format,” (Prin). *Email forced admin team to look at real needs of school *	*Principal addresses teachers concerns about extra paperwork associated with magnet grant. *Faculty meeting centered around addressing concerns about multitude of changes	*Principal’s message (10/27/05) communicated some positive news about the changes taking place *Handbook Edition, 11/3/05 – clarified some expectations of teachers, and gave procedural changes
How is the leadership team responding to problems that have arisen at MHS in the face of change?	*“Biggest problem was communicating about change – communication was not flowing between admin and teachers,” (CC) – forced admin to address communication issue	At January faculty meeting, he (Principal) came with a plan, plan developed by admin. Team – plan included changes and clarifications in policy and procedures	January handbook addition – clarified some policies/procedures for staff. Gave additional instructions for how to conduct business at MHS
Was there a particular style of leadership used by the leadership team at MHS?	*Describes leadership style as collaborative, collegial type of leadership, listens and considers various perspectives (Prin) *Leadership style is ‘wait and see’. As AP, cannot really display personal leadership style,” (AP2)	*Principal addresses complaints about extra paperwork (11/15). *Meeting with EOC teachers to share data – new for MHS – shows willingness to share and treat teachers as leaders in their classrooms	*Principal’s Message 10/27 centered on positive news about changes – showed positive side of Prin. *Memo discusses vision for school and plans to make MHS successful Magnet school

## **Research Question 1: What changes are occurring at MHS?**

### ***Critical Incident 1: New Administrative Team***

### ***Critical Incident 2: Magnet Program Implementation***

### ***Critical Incident 6: The “Mass Exodus”***

The first question that this study set out to answer was what changes were occurring at MHS. Listed below are some of the changes discussed in this study:

- New principal, started August 1, 2005
- Two new assistant principals
- New ESL program with new students
- Magnet grant in its second year of implementation
- New stipulations on unit and lesson planning
- Strategies to improve student performance on state testing
- New building under construction
- Renovations to existing building while school in session

The answer seemed very complicated because so many things were occurring during the 2005-2006 school year. The year began with a new principal and two new assistant principals. With a new administration came new policies and procedures. Also, a new ESL (English as a second language) program was placed at MHS. This meant new challenges for the staff working with students who may not speak English at all or very little. The newly awarded magnet grant was imposing changes on MHS. The grant stipulated that teachers would create unit and lesson plans on an electronic template and be submitted for review. Imbedded in those lessons plans were to be elements of internationalism. The lesson plans were to include strategies for increasing the rigor of the classes and the relevance for students. Finally, student performance issues at MHS constituted change. Students were not performing at levels deemed proficient by the state of North Carolina. Changes were being required to identify problems in student

performance and to increase the proficiency level of students. Fortunately, the magnet grant's requirements of lesson plans and rigor helped with student performance issues. All of these changes created a great deal of frustration and confusion as mentioned in the previous chapters.

At the end of the 2005-2006 school year several teachers decided to leave MHS. This in itself created change for the upcoming school year with new faculty at the school. However, this was a positive change that helped the school. The majority of the teachers that chose to leave did so because they were unhappy with the changes. Their departure opened the door for new staff that saw the current policies and procedures as business as usual. The new staff were hired with the understanding of the new expectations at MHS. They knew as they walked in the front door what was expected of them in terms of what teachers were expected to do inside and outside the classroom.

### **Practice & Policy**

For school leaders understanding the changes that are occurring in the school is important. All members of the leadership team should understand the changes that are occurring and be able to assist teachers with those changes. At MHS, not every member of the leadership team understood the complexities of all the changes. Individual members were handling individual changes and there was not a group understanding of what was happening at MHS. An administrative team has to develop a unified approach for dealing with the multitude of changes.

## **Further Study**

A point for further study would be to examine how schools react to new principals (as a change). What affect did hiring a new principal at MHS have on the staff and the direction of the school? How did the fact that the principal was new contribute to the number of changes taking place at one time? This study did not examine the issue of a new principal nor had the fact that the person hired never served as principal before. Examining those factors would make for an interesting comparison to what happened with the principal at MHS.

### **Research Question 2: How is the leadership team at MHS facilitating change?**

#### ***Critical Incident 2: Magnet Program Implementation***

#### ***Critical Incident 3: “Take Back Our School”***

#### ***Critical Incident 4: Leadership Team Begins to Work Together***

Another question this study set out to answer was how the leadership team was facilitating change at MHS. Listed below are some of the ways the leadership team at MHS facilitated change:

- Conducted staff meetings about new unit and lesson plan requirements
- Arranged for staff development on new unit and lesson plan requirements
- Arranged for staff development on rigor strategies
- Conducted staff development for grade level project requirements
- Conducted staff meeting where teachers were able to voice their concerns and frustrations
- Presented written vision statement to staff to help focus school on increasing student achievement and on magnet grant goals and objectives
- Provided written policy and procedural changes to staff at beginning of second quarter
- Provided written policy and procedural changes to staff during January faculty meeting in response to teacher email about “take back our school”
- Met with parents to discuss vision for school and magnet requirements

- Created staff evaluation instrument that focused on rigor/relevance strategies and internationalism
- Conducted regularly scheduled planning period meetings with staff about magnet goals, state goals and increased student achievement
- Required that state goals be listed on lesson plans to help with alignment of state curriculum standards
- Conducted student meetings to reinforce importance of academics and state test scores
- Conducted Honor Roll celebrations to highlight student achievement
- Discussed and solicited feedback from school improvement team about implementing Balanced Literacy program in 2006-2007

The data revealed that a need for leadership existed at MHS. Change was described in the literature as being very difficult and unpredictable. The leadership team had a difficult time coming together and managing the change at the beginning of the school year. MHS did suffer from the non-cohesiveness of the leadership team. There was more frustration and confusion because of that fact. However, it may not be fair to blame the leadership team for lack of leadership. A major factor that played into the non-cohesive team was the newness of the team members. There was a new principal appointed just twenty-four days before school began. The new principal hired two new assistant principals just days before school began. The team did not have much time to come together before the students arrived and the change process began. In fact, the changes at MHS had already begun before even the new principal arrived. Still, the need for leadership existed at MHS because of all the changes taking place.

Another aspect that the data revealed about the leadership team facilitating change was the need for a plan. It appeared from the data that a great deal of the frustration level of the teachers was the result of not truly understanding all the changes taking place at MHS. The leadership team members in interviews commented that most of the staff

understood some parts of the changes or had heard about all that was happening at MHS. Yet, most could not take the changes and implement them into their own routines of teaching or planning. The teachers heard what should be happening but could not translate it to their personal practice. It was not until teachers started receiving written procedures from the principal that teachers started implementing the changes into their practice. A written plan for the entire year might have helped out at MHS. However, the point was made earlier about the leadership team members being new and only arriving at the school a few days before teachers and students. So, was a written plan a reasonable request from new leaders? The answer may be no but a plan was needed at MHS from the beginning or as soon as possible. When a plan was provided after the first quarter and a more detailed plan after the second quarter the teachers became more comfortable with the changes being implemented.

The research made clear that change was a process and leaders had to foster that process (Fullan, 1997). However, with a process a plan was important in order to carry out what was expected. Fullan (1997) suggested that a group should start small and think big without over planning. The key there was planning. It took several months for the administrative team to put together a plan in order to better facilitate the changes that were occurring. The U.S. Department of Education (2004) stated that successful school innovation was about time, making time, taking time. Yet, the time that was taken to unveil a plan really caused frustration for the staff.

Fullan (1997) stated that leaders cannot mandate what matters. In the case of MHS I disagree with Fullan. There were times when mandates were needed in order to continue the change process. Teachers should have been given a mandate about how to plan their lessons from the first day of school. Yet, with the new administrative team not knowing the requirements of the grant and not fully understanding the test score situation, a unified requirement was not put into place until later. Once the requirement was set, not all teachers completed the plans as they should have.

Another mandate that should have been instituted was how teachers conducted class. Teachers should have been required to post their essential question each day and be able to state how that question tied back to their standard course of study. They should have been required to have copies of their lesson plans readily available anytime an evaluator walked in the classroom. This mandate might have led to increased student performance on state testing.

The issue learned from the MHS about mandates was that administrative follow-up was needed. Even though mandates were not used, many expectations were given to teachers about their professional behavior at MHS. Yet, as I observed and learned through interviews, teachers needed to be monitored on how they carried out those expectations. It was not until the second half of the year, when administrators took on the role of evaluators that the monitoring piece began. Those teachers who were carrying out their professional responsibilities were unhappy with those who were not, and were unhappy with administration for not addressing the problems.

## **Practice & Policy**

Leaders of school change need to develop a plan for change and understand the process of change. A vision of how the changes would impact MHS was needed earlier in the year. However, was a vision that encompassed all the changes even possible at the beginning of the year from a new administration? For school leaders in the midst of change a vision should be an important first step in fostering the change process. Fullan warns that a “premature clarity is a dangerous thing” (2003, p. 23). I would argue that some type of understanding of where the changes are taking the school is needed. Its needed early on in the process and needs to be communicated to the teachers. Maybe then, schools and leaders can avoid some of the problems that occurred at MHS.

## **Further Research**

A follow up study of the leadership team at MHS would be beneficial. Examining how the leadership team managed the continuous changes during the second year of their tenure and comparing that to the first year would be interesting. The questions that the data revealed could be answered with a follow up study. One could look at the cohesiveness of the team and how that impacted the school.

Also, an examination of the plan and vision of the school for the 2006-2007 school year could be conducted and compared to the 2005-2006 school year. Did the vision change from the first year to the second, why or why not? What impact did the vision statement and its implementation have on the staff at MHS? These questions that came from the data could be answered in a follow up study.

**Research Question 3: How is the leadership team responding to problems that have arisen at MHS in the face of change?**

*Critical Incident 2: Magnet Program Implementation*

*Critical Incident 3: "Take Back Our School"*

*Critical Incident 4: Leadership Team Begins to Work Together*

*Critical Incident 5: State Team Visit*

The third research question that this study sought to answer was how the leadership team members were responding to the problems that arose at MHS in the face of change. Several problems that were identified in the data have been listed below. The problem that is listed is followed by the leadership team's response followed by the outcome of the response.

- Leadership team cohesiveness / team began to focus on issues teachers faced due to changes / atmosphere of school was less tense and more collaborative
- Need for school vision / principal presented vision during faculty meetings first in November and review in January / teachers began to understand the changes and why they were important for MHS
- Leadership team first inherited previous administration's vision of the magnet program / new team worked to implement magnet goals based on new vision for school / leadership team members understood magnet grant better and did a better job communicating the goals and objectives of grant to teachers
- No plan for all the changes occurring at MHS when school started in August 2005 / leadership team members slowly developed plans to assist teachers / teachers began to understand all the changes and slowly began to implement them into their classes
- Teachers thought requirements of magnet grant only applied to those working with IB students / leadership team worked with all staff on requirements of magnet grant and required all teachers to complete unit and lesson plans / teachers were very frustrated with all the requirements

- Teachers were frustrated with all the requirements of the magnet grant / leadership team organized staff development sessions to assist teachers with lesson planning and new teaching strategies / majority of teachers completed lesson plans which incorporated internationalism and rigor strategies
- Many teachers did not see connections between new requirements and student achievement / leadership team attempted to explain new requirements as the new way to do business at MHS and based on research the new strategies would improve achievement / some teachers did not buy explanation and left MHS at the end of the year
- Students began to become more disruptive in classroom and hallways / leadership team required staff to be visible during class change and focused on student discipline more / atmosphere of building improved second semester and student behavior improved
- Almost one-fourth of staff left MHS at end of school year / leadership team had to hire over 30 staff (including new positions) / new staff saw requirements as the way MHS conducted business, not as changes

The biggest issue was the frustration level and confusion of the teachers during the first half of the year. The leadership team attempted to address this issue first at the November faculty meeting. However, the issue persisted and finally exploded with the “take back our school” email. It was then that the leadership team started talking seriously about the problems of the school and how to address those issues. The team responded to the frustration issue by providing a written plan of how the second semester would proceed.

Another issue that arose in the data was the need for vision. As discussed in the previous chapter, teachers wanted and needed direction. The lack of vision led to the frustration and confusion mentioned above. The principal responded to this issue in November of 2005 by discussing his vision during a staff meeting. He provided the staff with a copy of what he thought the vision should be for the 2005-2006 school year. He

also reiterated the vision during the January faculty meeting where he presented solutions to the issues highlighted in the “take back our school” email.

### **Practice & Policy**

As Fullan discusses in his books, problems will occur during the change process. Learning occurs as a group attempts to solve the problems associated with change. For school leaders, attempting to predict some of the problems is helpful. Understanding how a faculty might react to certain changes would help ease the frustration for both leaders and faculty members.

### **Further Research**

This study ended just as the leadership team was attempting to brainstorm solutions for the next school year. A follow-up with the leadership team and the solutions they derived for the problems during the 2005-2006 school year would be interesting. What solutions were generated for the 2006-2007 year to deal with the issues of the previous year? Did the same problems occur again? Were there different problems? Did the solutions work? One example would be the balanced literacy program. The principal mentioned that this program would be implemented during the 2006-2007 school year to bring a central focus for all the changes taking place. The program would also address the student achievement issues. A follow-up study could examine if the balanced literacy program was helpful to MHS and in what way.

**Research Question 4: Was there a particular style of leadership used by the leadership team at MHS?**

In attempting to answer the fourth research question, the participants in this study were asked about and discussed their leadership styles. In the literature review, the leadership style that emerged as one that was important to lead the change process was transformational leadership. None of the team members described themselves as transformational leaders. Yet, each member did highlight one or two aspects of transformational leadership as part of their own personal style. Some examples of the leadership team member's transformational characteristics included:

- Being a listener – hearing other's opinions and ideas
- Collaborative leader
- Strengthening relationships with teachers
- Consensus builder
- Leaders who understood teachers' frustrations and attempted to resolve them
- Created vision and worked to promote vision
- Empower staff to make decisions about change
- Provide training for teachers
- Increase visibility for administrators in school

For example, the principal considered himself as one who listened to teachers. This was but one part of being a transformational leader. Even as a team, the style of the collective unit could not be described as transformational. What was missing was the ability to bring followers along and engage them in the changes being implemented. One key element of transformational leadership was being able to get followers on board with the changes being made and making the followers the champion of the changes. Having followers embrace the changes and actually being the ones who implements those changes was a key part of being a transformational leader. I do not think that really

occurred at MHS on a large scale. Yes, there were some teachers who did embrace the changes being imposed and worked to implement those. But, this was a small group and the leadership team members were not successfully converting more teachers to be champions of change. As the school year progressed more teachers became the champions but it took to the very end of the year to affect a larger number of staff.

There were instances during the 2005-2006 school year when the leadership team could have practiced transformational leadership. One opportunity at the beginning of the year was with the vision for the school. There was no clear explanation of the vision for the teachers. The vision of the new administration was not really prepared at the beginning of the year but the teachers did need something to give them direction. Teachers needed direction and if some type of guidance had been given earlier then teachers might have embraced the changes earlier in the year. The teachers needed the inspiration of a vision or some guidance to motivate them to change. I believe this was a real opportunity missed by all the members of the leadership team.

Another missed opportunity to exercise transformational leadership was during staff development sessions. Typically, the sessions were lead by a district official or the magnet resource teacher at MHS. Rarely were the sessions led by leadership team members. These development sessions would have provided an opportunity to inspire and motivate the teachers. A shared vision could have been discussed and created along with some discussions of the problems that were occurring. Instead, the sessions focused on new requirements and new strategies for teaching. Though requirements and strategies were important, inspiring and listening to teachers was equally important.

I believe that had leadership team members worked with staff during development sessions they might have helped them see the connection between the magnet goals and increased student achievement. Several participants discussed how teachers did not understand how unit and lesson planning, internationalism and grade level projects would improve student test scores. Yet, knowing that teachers did not get the connection, little effort was made to help them understand the benefits of what was occurring. During staff meetings there were discussions about improving student achievement but teachers struggled to grasp how it would really help students. Maybe more effort from the leadership team could have eased teachers' skepticism and thus lowered their frustration level.

### **Practice and Policy**

Leaders grappling with change would be wise to examine their own leadership style and the styles of their colleagues. Surely each member of the team does not have the same style of leadership. But, some commonalities hopefully exist and those similarities should be discussed, explored and exploited to bring unity to a team. From that point a common approach should be developed for how to deal with implementation and problems of change.

### **Further Research**

The discussion about missed opportunities for transformational leadership leads me to an interesting issue for further study. A study examining how an established leadership team handles change would make a great comparison to this study of a new leadership team managing change. Does an established team utilize transformational

leadership more than a new team? I would suspect that there would be some differences in how the leaders manage change and the style of leadership they use to do so.

### **Conclusion**

The leadership team graciously allowed me access into how they dealt with the changes at Magnet High School during the 2005-2006 school year. They easily shared their thoughts and feelings with me as I went about collecting data for this study. Their thoughts, my observations and the documents examined helped me to understand the change process in greater depth.

First, the change process was difficult and time consuming. The changes that were being implemented, some by choice, others by virtue of a new administration, were confusing at first but were important to the school. The confusion and frustration derived from the newness of the administration and the lack of a clear plan for change. Again, not to lay blame, but planning was found to be essential for effective change. I discovered that as the administration began to plan together and incorporate the needs of the teachers, the change process began to go more smoothly and became less problematic.

Second, the need for strong leadership stood out to me in the data. The new administration first had to come together as a group before strong leadership was apparent. As the team grew closer together and began to function together the changes being implemented became more reasonable and understandable to the staff. The team, though slow to unify, did finally come together to help teachers understand and cope with

the state team visit. That was an example of how a unified leadership team could really affect a faculty. Teachers were at ease during that visit and were understanding of why the visit was important and how it could help MHS. I believe their comfort level was due to a large part in how the administration united and presented the information to the staff.

The administration of the school could have benefited from learning about transformational leadership. The qualities of a transformational leader might have helped ease some of the problems MHS experienced. Being open to shared decision making and empowering teachers might have brought about more buy-in from teachers to the changes taking place. However, I was not certain that with a brand new principal and two new assistant principals that transformational leadership was even possible. The principal was new to that position so he really had not had the opportunity to fully explore his leadership style. The assistant principals were not new to their positions but, as one AP said, it's difficult to assert your own style in the AP role. Some training on transformational leadership could have helped all the team members better clarify and understand their own styles of leadership, thus helping to unify the team quicker. Maybe it was unfair to think that transformational leadership could have helped MHS but a more distinct style of leadership was needed for the leadership team as a whole. With so many different styles and thoughts about leadership, the team was having a difficult time uniting and thus created more problems for the school.

Finally, the importance of a vision rang out to me in this study. Vision had often been discussed as being very important in any organization. However, for a school in the midst of change, vision was so very important. A vision statement or plan proved to be

critical for the implementation of the changes at MHS. A clear guiding vision should be viewed by future change leaders as an essential element of their plan for change. I would really like to see how an established principal and an established leadership team who have a united style and have developed a vision for change go about implementing change and what problems occur. I believe that the process for such a team would be less frustrating and time consuming as it was for the team at MHS. But, that is an issue for further study. For this study, the lesson learned is that vision and leadership are certainly key components of any change process that a school is about to undertake.

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## APPENDIX A

### Data Analysis Framework of Change (by sub-categories)

#### **LEADERSHIP**

##### **1) Leadership Style**

- Initial role was to listen and observe – to find out what was working well, decide what could remain in place and decide on what needed to be changed (assessing the situation)
- As school year progressed – role became more active – taking more action to set tone he thought was appropriate
- Describes leadership style as collaborative, collegial type of leadership – listens and considers various perspectives.
- Wants to be more open and available to faculty – develop more personal relationship with faculty
- Changes improving leadership style: more of a delegator, better listener, more decisive and quicker decision maker
- Develop more confidence as changes continue to unfold and he gains experience
- As school year progressed he became more comfortable – more comfortable with changes, with job and responsibilities
- Goal is to be more assertive as principal, more out front for MHS – serve as the face of MHS
- Leadership style is more exciting and forward thinking than in years past. Now have some real responsibilities and leadership challenges at the AP level.
- Leadership style of principal at first was top-down. This ok as long as there is a plan
- Listener...role as leader in school is to listen. Teachers always talked with CC.
- Leadership style is “wait and see.” As AP cannot really display personal leadership style – have to do what’s assigned to you by principal. Personal strength is instructional leader but not being utilized in that respect
- Was a more out front presence in school as a school leader – now more quiet and behind the scenes
- Role change is viewed as negative – prefers working out front with teachers and enjoys change. However new prin. Has not given her the authority nor responsibilities of change
- “I think change always improves leadership.”
- Leadership style softened somewhat from being a principal to an AP - worked more for consensus than mandatory
- Leadership style is situational – adapts to the situation at hand and handles it – leaders cannot be the same all the time – must look at each situation and read what’s necessary
- Good leader can assess the situation and make good leadership decisions and use the appropriate leadership style based on the given circumstances that fit within the comfort zone of the person’s core beliefs, but there is no such thing as a leader that acts the same way all the time.

##### **2) Working as a Leader**

- Principal hears in the comments from some staff that MHS students cannot achieve and cannot be successful. That’s the wrong message to be sending and he’s tired of hearing it. He does not ever want to hear teachers either directly or indirectly say that our students at MHS are inferior.
- Principal had been “battered and bruised” up to this point..but 1/17 faculty meeting started the healing process
- Working towards EOC score success
  - Divide depts. among administrators
  - Refocus on teachers on lesson planning

Publicize 1<sup>st</sup> semester EOC results and goals for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester

Publicize teacher results without names

Institute benchmark testing for 06-07 school year

- Schedule observations for admin – see daily schedule (Doc 2/24/Observation Sch)
- January faculty meeting showed that he would listen and respond to teachers' concerns
- Got to hire almost 30 staff members for 06-07 school year – ability to shape the faculty since new faculty members should be more loyal to him and more open to changes
- Charged with carrying out principal's vision, magnet grant implementation and school reconstruction
- Served as a balance between the school and the principal
- Principal led 'take back our school' faculty meeting – had agenda and a plan to address concerns of staff
- Second half of year teachers accepted the power of the principal more, he asserted his power more
- We can't be satisfied with where we were yesterday – we have to pay attention and listen, and be sensitive to the stimuli around us
- One change that was occurring was a move to site based accountability. The hype about test scores and student performance steered the school in that direction
- AP's should be the mentors and coaches in the building. Resources need to be made available to hire people to handle discipline. AP's need to be observing and evaluating teachers...not stuck in the office with discipline.
- Role change occurred in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester – principal began to understand need for staff development which is what was advocated from the beginning. Now, role was to train and evaluate teachers.
- Before this year, change involved classroom monitoring – not happening in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of year
- Role was diminished somewhat with new administration. Was more of a school leader – almost an AP but new principal did not utilize CC in that capacity
- Some people in school probably thought CC had too much power anyway in years past
- Feels very tired with current role and is looking elsewhere for another job.
- Did more paperwork with federal grant and testing

### **3)Leadership Team Dynamics**

- AP communicated to Prin that he had to trust the AP's ...that the job of leading MHS was too great for one person – he needed help and he hired 2 out of 3 of us and he had to trust us. He needed to open up to us and express his feelings so we know where he stands.
- Mag. Evaluator says that she's impressed with the new leadership this year. She's happy that the administration at PHS has changed because she was very worried about the previous admin team. Mag. Evaluator has said on multiple occasions that she is impressed with the new leadership at MHS. She knows that the school is undergoing extensive changes with 3 new administrators, a magnet grant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, emphasis on test scores, construction and a new ESL program. However, she continues to be pleased with what she sees.
- Teachers came together in planning period meetings just before turn-around team visit. All administrators were present for all 4 sessions and all 4 spoke to staff each time. First time this has ever happened and for the first time showed a unified front.
- By late spring, admin team began planning for the next school year – brainstorming new ways to improve MHS
- Leadership team was dysfunctional at the beginning. It did improve some as year progressed
- Don't think that all team members every truly trusted each other
- Understanding and acceptance was occurring slowly, but very slowly and teachers could sense that the team was not united and worked together as one
- During second semester the leadership team began to know each other better and could anticipate each others' behavior and reactions better
- Administrators were relaxed more and not so stressful in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester
- Take back our school meeting forced administrators to put the issues on the table and deal with them
- First of year change was very difficult – was an imbalance in AP workload which hindered AP's from

helping with vision.

- Little to no communication between administrators – no team approach
- Overload for some AP's and not others – imbalance and little communication does not bring team together – no team approach
- AP's and Principal checking each other out at first – developing trust
- Trust factor is missing – trust of prin. For CC and trust by CC of prin.
- Need principal to assign responsibilities and set expectations for assistants
- Administrative team never came together – improved somewhat 2<sup>nd</sup> semester but never gelled.

#### **4) Instituting Change**

- Institute Balanced Literacy program for 06-07 school year. B.L. will streamline new efforts underway at school. Designed to incorporate previous rigor & relevance training – will improve test scores
- At January faculty meeting he came with a plan, plan developed by admin team – plan included changes and clarifications in policy and procedures
- For next year, 06-07, revamping the SIT team – to function as a true SIT team and not the former Comer component. Hopefully this gives teachers more input into the direction of the school
- For next year, 06-07 implementing the Balanced Literacy and Focused Learning programs while continuing to develop IB program. Institute IB methods into all classes, especially the Humanities Wheel for 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
- The power struggle over who would run the school that was apparent with faculty in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester had settled by 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and it was evident that the principal was running the school
- Change has to be planned and there is no plan
- The SPMT committee represents the teacher leadership for the school. This group existed before this year. However, several items that the group discussed represents a change for Magnet High School. (D104)
- Principal's message 10/27/05 communicated some positive news about the changes taking place. Principal discussed how the federal evaluator was very pleased with MHS' progress. She found evidence that the school was changing and making a greater impact on student achievement (D116)
- Principal spelled out faculty expectations in a handbook addition dated 11/3/05. This was one of two additions given to staff. The handbook gave some specific directions to teachers and listed some expectations for teachers. Ex: hallway supervision, building security, attendance procedures, discipline procedures, etc. Purpose was to clarify these procedures for teachers. Teachers were not consistent in what they were doing with these procedures. (D117)
- AP met with Math/Science dept. to clarify some issues in the school (11/7/05). Agenda shows that group discussed action groups and test data. Also discussed classroom strategies in terms of teaching time, objectives and grading. Rigor also discussed. Document shows that AP was working with change process with a small group of teachers (D120)
- Principal gave analysis of 1<sup>st</sup> semester test data in Principal's Message 3/11/06. Document gives break down of test scores by department and the school as a whole. Principal discusses in document the implications of 1<sup>st</sup> semester scores and what goal is for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. (D128)

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT (and Evaluation)**

#### **1) Increase Understanding**

- The purpose of the faculty meeting was to provide teachers with information about new procedures to follow during the second half of the school year. Dr. Prin wanted to personally discuss the changes with the faculty. He had already sent the written version to the faculty via email.
- Mag. Director points out that teachers don't see the connection between all the staff development – that its for magnet / IB implementation.
- Teachers receiving training in grade level projects. Many do not understand purpose and value in

projects. Teachers given examples of good projects and good models for projects. Teachers also trained in using rubrics to assess projects and other class work.

- Teachers had to be trained on how to complete unit plans in the required format.
- Many teachers were not compliant with submitting plans, their evaluations noted this non-compliance
- The group discussed working with teachers on their Unit Templates that should be coming from Action Groups. Teachers need instructions on what to do with the Unit Templates. The MRT will instruct the teachers on how to fill in the Unit Template. (D104)
- This document spells out for teachers what is different about MHS this year. It gives information on what makes MHS a magnet school and an IB school. Teachers needed clarification on this to know what is new and different this year. (D104)
- The document states that the staff development that is occurring this year is about rigor, relevance and the International focus. Teachers are in the midst of change due to the magnet grant. The staff development that has already occurred focused on rigor and relevance strategies. Future staff development sessions on reading strategies and unit templates will also help to improve rigor and relevance in the classroom. (D108)
- D208 Action Plan: Provide lesson plan training to increase internationalism in lessons, grade level project training to increase teacher understanding, planning meetings with departments for action groups

## **2)Improve Instruction**

- Mag. Evaluator points out that all teachers need to be trained in using writing in all classes. Dr. Prin says that summer training will be scheduled for teachers in writing across all curriculums.
- Mag. Director points out to make sure we include all teachers in the training process. One thing learned from teacher focus groups was that teachers who are hired late get left out of training needed for the school year.
- Mag. Evaluator reminds group to focus on internationalism when completing the EE or other writing activities for students. Internationalism is the focus of the entire magnet grant. Mag. Evaluator reminded to continue the rigor and relevance implementation. She said that all opportunities for coaching should be used to help teachers. Even email can be a great coaching tool for rigor and relevance.
- Implementing a comprehensive school wide writing program is certainly new for MHS. It is a tremendous undertaking to train staff to use writing on a daily basis. As of July 2006, the program being implemented is Balanced Literacy. All teachers will attend training in July designed to help them establish the principles of Balanced Literacy into their individual classrooms. Teachers will need help to see the connections between the training already conducted with the new Balanced Literacy program. The goal here is not to “add something else” to what teachers are already doing. The goal is to see how Balanced Literacy can help their students.
- Teachers need constant reinforcement in good teaching practices
- Teachers need to see models of effective teaching and learn how to become effective teachers
- Effective teaching is the name of the game to improve student achievement
- Schools will not move forward without effective teaching
- See new Evaluation Snapshot (doc 110.2). This is a new tool to help evaluate teachers this year. The new snap shot evaluation document was created by Dr. Morrison. She is the Magnet Lead teacher for the school system. Her job is to help all the magnet schools (4) in the implementation of their magnet themes. This evaluation tool was actually developed for Technology High School and revamped for our school. The purpose of the document is to allow administrators to provide feedback to teachers and to provide a basis for formal evaluations. The principal wanted a way to assess staff to make sure they are incorporated all the pieces of the magnet theme into their classroom instruction. Administrators are to use this document when they are doing a walk-through or quick snap-shot evaluation of teachers. The goal is to complete at least 3 – 4 visits per staff member. Each administrator is responsible for several departments and they should concentrate on their departments. However, they can certainly evaluate others in various departments. (D110)

## **CHANGE PROCESS**

### **A) First Order Changes**

#### **1) Instructional**

- Teachers complaining of having to complete written lesson plans. Principal asked that if you do not have time to do lesson plans then what are you doing? How are you planning your lessons? The change in lesson planning this year is that they are required to be submitted in a specific format. Evidently no lesson plan monitoring occurred last year. **NEW WAY TO CONDUCT BUSINESS!**
- Balanced Literacy program that's coming in 06-07 actually does not represent anything new – it incorporates previous training and proven methods for student literacy
- Teacher questions why using IB process and grade level projects. Says colleagues are not doing what they are supposed to do. Says that IB will not increase scores. MRT responds by saying that IB processes will improve test scores and overall student achievement at school.
- Increase rigor of grade level projects in all subjects. Some displays were elementary. Make sure internationalism is apparent in GLP.
- The biggest reason for change has to do with standardized tests and accountability – we as a school must achieve state goals
- The way teachers planned was different – had to do lesson plans and provide written evidence of plans
- Lot of frustration at the begin of school year – new action plans and lesson plans
- Changes were necessary to meet mandates of federal grant
- Principal memo to teachers about magnet evaluator's comments (11/8/05). Teachers reminded of the expectations of the grant – which are new to MHS this year. Lesson plans should be submitted electronically on templates. Grade level projects need to continue to be enhanced and revamped. Continue with documentation of action group meetings was brought back up as a need. Teachers should be meeting by subject in action groups to develop unit plans and submit the minutes of those meetings to the MRT. (D121)
- Magnet committee met 9/6/05 to discuss magnet implementation at MHS: Reading program needed for 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> graders. Rigor & relevance identified as goal for year. (D208)

#### **2) Procedural**

- Faculty and students were waiting to see how the administration would handle business, what the rules were, what would be tolerated (at the beginning of school)

### **B) Second Order Changes**

#### **1) Instructional**

- Meeting with EOC teachers to share scores and focus on planning – we have not met to specifically discuss EOC testing – this is a new tactic for us – we'll meet EOC teachers 2/28 to share where we are and where we want to go
- Action groups set up by subject – teachers of a particular course are expected to meet and create unit plans together. Courses should be taught as one.
- Evidently from teacher training meeting with MRT, its evident that teachers still do not see connection between IB process and magnet goals as a way to improve student achievement. Teachers need to be shown the connections so that they can support the changes in the classroom.
- Teachers complained of all the “new work” that had to be done – didn't see connections of new processes to improved student achievement
- Biggest initial change for staff was the planning components of the magnet grant. Teachers had to submit unit plans electronically for each course they taught. Teachers saw this as extra work, not good teaching practices. Administration saw unit plans as good teaching practices.
- Faculty seemed more relaxed during second semester. Seemed to be more focus on teaching and learning and less complaining and stress.

- Teachers seemed on task more than students on task more during second semester
- Need change in schedule. Current 4x4 schedule does not promote high standards and real change. To really move MHS from current status, a 7 period schedule is needed.
- New for staff this year is the idea of Action Groups and Unit Templates. These items are required by the Magnet School Assistance Grant. The teachers who wrote the grant for MHS said that teachers would serve on Action Groups by subject. The purpose would be to align state curriculum with IB standards. From these group meetings would come Unit Templates. The templates would address the IB standards along with rigor and relevance standards. (D104)
- As a magnet school, MHS had to develop a theme. MHS chose rigor, relevance, relationships with an International and Arts focus as their theme. This document lists the various changes and how they relate to the theme. For example, the school is focusing on reading strategies to improve proficiency. The document relates reading strategies to rigor and relevance. The process for teachers at this point is to help implement these changes. Teachers are a part of Action Groups that generate Unit Templates. Many of them work in the A/B day scheduling. All teachers are involved with assigning and assessing Grade Level Projects. All teachers need to utilize reading strategies in their classes as data shows reading to be a serious weakness at MHS. Finally, partnerships with Middle Magnet, WSSU and WFU affect what MHS can do for its current and future students. (D108)
- Document 110.2 – Evaluation Snapshot addresses the change process as well. It lays out for teachers the new teaching practices that are expected to be in use at the school during the year. The process here is that teachers have started receiving training in the various aspects laid out on the document. For example, International Component; teachers have received training over the summer and at the beginning of school in how internationalism should be incorporated into their classrooms. This is not expected each and every day in every lesson, but should be a regular component of their teaching. Also, Students using Reading Strategies has been discussed at length as well. One of the biggest issues at the school is students' reading ability. There has been some training on reading strategies and more is planned. (D110)
- D208 lays out school action planning: Continue implementation of internationalism – rigor & relevance by raising expectations, reading and writing across curriculum, consistency and accountability of lesson planning, increase involvement of grade level project
- D208 – recruitment: change school image, increase non-minority population, encourage enrollment of IB students

## **2)Procedural**

- The new handbook addition was a listing of new procedures and policies that teachers and students were expected to follow. Several teachers were not impressed with the new rules while others were appreciative for them.
- Mag evaluator says that IB teachers should be used for recruitment of IB students, not just MRT or admin. Let IB teachers and students be the face of IB program for MHS to attract students to MHS.
- The 'take back our school' email was a rallying cry for teachers and administrators
- Forced admin team to look at real needs of school. Some had already been identified by team
- Was a wake up call for everyone,
- The faculty meeting helped ease tensions and made most teachers more comfortable

## **3)Leadership Affecting Change Process**

- Working with action groups in our depts. – Principal wants us to meet with the action groups – to this point we have not met with them directly or been instructed to do so.
- Working with teachers feelings about test scores – how to we handle this - evidently teachers have not had this data before – we are not wanting to publicize names but by individuals...such as teacher 1, teacher 2, etc
- Presentation at district magnet meeting hit home for MHS. Change takes time and is not easy. Change can take up to 8 to 15 years to implement and sustain. First 4 years of change, processes take effect and

either stabilize or decrease. After year 5, change processes increase slightly and after year 8 it levels off – from presentation (stats. From Marzano’s work on change)

- Thus, federal magnet grant giving 3 years for change is somewhat ridiculous – cannot expect sweeping change in just 3 years.
- Causes of change at MHS: new cultural mix (with additional of ESL students), new administration, new procedures and new policies, new magnet program, spotlight on test scores, construction
- With new administration came new ways of doing things...this created change within itself
- “Of course with any change sometimes you have a half step backwards before you take two or three steps forward.” (interview 1)
- “Change is always very difficult” (interview 1)
- By mid-year, the leadership team began to know each other better...they figured each other out and knew each other’s talents and strengths. The team members knew what the principal would expect and think and he knew more about how they were reacting and what they were thinking.
- January faculty meeting was a turning point for school – teachers better understood policies and procedures, they had gotten to know admin team better
- The turnaround team visit was a wakeup call for some staff – that we have to move forward with test scores
- The wakeup call also made some aware that they too had to change, not just the school – for some this meant leaving MHS and several teachers did
- Hiring 30 staff allowed to principal to shape faculty – remake the face of MHS
- September – teachers very timid and cautious – didn’t know administrators – didn’t know what to expect
- The climate of the school changed very very slowly. Teachers were used to doing as they pleased in the years past. However, new principal set some limits and guidelines for teachers to follow. One example is leaving during the day. Teachers were used to coming and going as they pleased. Now they had to check with an administrator and sign out. This created some controversy
- Causes of change: new leadership, magnet grant and past student performance on state tests. Also, a stagnant atmosphere at the school which created a need for some changes
- Changes necessary because staff and students needed boundaries and needed a new focus
- Teachers began to trust and respect leadership more at school as spring semester progressed
- Teachers are getting used to the new administrators and their styles
- Teachers beginning to understand vision of school and where we need to go (December – on )
- We had a lot of conversations about where we are, where we need to go and what we have to do to get there
- “Sometimes you are too busy to be successful. You need to stop being too busy and focus on something very simple and do it.”
- There is a need for change because the data is not where it needs to be.
- Changes during 1<sup>st</sup> semester were necessary and should have been mandatory – should have been written as administrative directives
- January faculty meeting put necessary changes in writing. Humans need it in written form to accept it and make it happen
- No buy-in from teachers at first – too many competing factions for power – no plan
- Rules were different from previous admin. Leadership style changed.
- Teachers didn’t know who was in control of school – did not feel safe at all times in school
- Change is going to happen with an almost entirely new administration
- School was not in dire straights...had met AYP and met growth
- Change just happened with federal grant and new administration
- Need the right teachers for IB classes. Need hard working staff to implement the IB program and sustain it
- January faculty meeting was not negative – faculty wanted more input into decisions. They were used to having all decision making power. Now they had very little to none.
- January meeting was a healing time for staff. Helped calm teachers fears and helped set a more positive

tone for school. Showed that admin would listen to concerns

- Was a turning point for MHS. 2<sup>nd</sup> semester much better from 1<sup>st</sup> semester
- Turn around team visit was good for school – provided reminders of what needed to be done – provided outside reinforcement of problems of school
- The process for these changes will be a little slower. There is money involved along with a commitment from outsiders to make this happen. Those outsiders include school system maintenance personnel. Budget concerns enter into the process as well. Painting a building, painting murals, etc. requires money as well as time. All of these factors will have to be accounted for in the process of making these changes. (D109)

## **PROBLEMS OF CHANGE**

### **1) Leadership problems**

- Requiring something new now (lesson planning) – what format do we want to require – are we going to require all teachers to submit 6-point plans – discussion was to let ILT's complete lessons as they've been instructed – we'll look at tenured teachers on case-by-case basis
- Teachers in focus group voiced confusion over the Comer School terms. In years past, PHS has been identified as a Comer school and used its terminology. This year, the terminology is in place but not all the components. Mag. Evaluator says the Comer terminology and components are holding the school back. Everything Comer should be removed and move the school forward with internationalism and magnet.
- Principal says he knows that teachers are tired and frustrated. Understands that change is difficult. But, what frustrates him is that teachers don't know vision of MHS. They tell others that MHS has no direction and focus yet Principal wrote that vision of MHS was to successfully implement the magnet program and raise test scores to at least 60% proficiency.
- School district creates barrier by not controlling residential versus magnet enrollment at the school. No clear guidelines on neither enrollment nor school size exist. Thus, MHS continues to grow beyond its capacity.
- One barrier was the multiple changes imposed on MHS at one time: magnet grant, ESL population, low test scores, construction, implementing IB program, new administration
- Teachers doubted whether or not changes would lead to anything positive and productive (teachers were not convinced on the benefits of the changes – is this a lack of a clear vision of change by leadership team?)
- When principal accepted position on Aug. 1, 2005, he was aware of some of the changes coming to MHS. However, did not know all of the impact that these imposed changes would have and the details that were involved. All of changes were initially overwhelming. Didn't know extent of changes
- “the changes that had to be made but it did become a little bit overwhelming and after some period of time of being overwhelmed, you just decide the only way to get over being overwhelmed is to put your head down and go to work, just plow through it.” (interview 1)
- Prin finds that many people talk about change in education and they often feel change is necessary, but the changes are needed with something or someone else besides them. Teachers may like change but not for themselves. At the personal level, “change becomes something of a battle,” (interview 1).
- Barrier to change is past culture of school. Culture of freedom and non-accountability by teachers has been hard to overcome and adjust
- Hard to win trust, but success as a leader helps to win trust
- How people are treated determines some barriers. Need good interpersonal communication skills
- One problem is decision making. Decisions from admin need to come faster and with more decisiveness
- Teachers not getting answers to their questions from admin. Very frustrating to them
- Feels like that principal utilized boss style management in the beginning and CC does not function with this type of style

- Biggest problem was communicating about change – communication was not flowing between admin and teachers
- Barriers of magnet grant and what Central Office required continued to be hurdles for school
- Time and money appear to be the biggest problems associated with these changes. (D109)
- Bus transportation still a problem for magnet students (D208)
- Reading level of students (D208)

## **2)Individual problems**

- Publicize results of individual teachers may hurt feelings and cause “political” problems – we have to watch getting results vs. hurting teachers feelings – consensus of group was to publicize w/o teacher names
- Asking teachers to follow new planning and teaching guidelines formed a barrier. (Magnet grant imposed unit templates and internationalism into all lessons)
- Some teachers still resistant to believing in the capabilities of the students at MHS. They hold low expectations for students
- Resistance to change is huge barrier. Human beings naturally resist change
- There are tensions at MHS that have been in place for years, cultural and racial tensions – this creates power struggle at MHS..but these tensions are beginning to ease
- Teachers were not willing to move away from lectures to a more student centered classroom. The change needed to be to a more student friendly room.
- Data showed that students were not engaged in classes – that’s why student test scores were down
- Magnet grant forced teachers to do things they didn’t do in the past
- Teachers view the Action Groups and Unit Templates as add-ons to their already stressful job. However, working to align curriculum and facilitate common lesson planning is actually good practice. The magnet grant is simply implementing good teacher practice – not something new as some teachers will perceive. (D104)
- One problem that may arise is making sure that all teachers understand their roles as they relate to the items on this document. Teachers need a clear understanding of how to implement reading strategies into their classroom – a staff development issue. Teachers need a clear understanding of how the grade level project can benefit their students and how to implement that into their curriculum – again a staff development issue. Clear communication is definitely needed to make sure teachers know the expectations as they relate to the 2 goals and the items listed on the document. (D108)
- Extra paperwork for teachers and their perception of responsibilities related to magnet implementation (D208)

## **3)Perception Issues**

- Teachers do not see connections between changes being enforced in classrooms and increased student achievement.
- Teachers talking about changes at MHS, here the words and use the words of change but are not implementing them into their classrooms. Still “business as usual.” Teachers know they must internationalize the curriculum and increase rigor.
- Public perception continues to be problem of change at MHS – however perception appears to be changing
- Negative publicity over test scores and the 60% threshold – has been barrier in hiring new teachers needed
- Teachers resent having changes made to what they perceive as their freedoms – leaving campus, not required to have lesson plans, etc.
- One barrier to change is perception of school in community...seen as low performing, unruly school
- Turn around team visit gave no new ideas. All that they had discussed and printed in their reports had already been discussed by admin team...they just put it out in writing thus it got attention
- Continues to be race issues among faculty which makes change difficult.

## VISION OF CHANGE

### 1) Implementing Vision

- Principal talking to faculty at meeting (11/15/05) about the “message.” Teachers are hearing the words about change and the need for change but not working to incorporate those changes. Teachers not putting together the vision for the school along with the needs for the school. Principal spends time talking about his vision and his goals for the school.
- Principal expresses frustration (11/15/05) with teachers who are talking negative about the school in the community and who do not want to help move the school forward. He reminds staff that the vision is successful implementation of the magnet program and for student proficiency to be over 60% on EOC tests.
- Principal addresses complaints about extra paperwork (11/15/05) for magnet grant – says that its good educational practice to develop quality unit plans in a written form. The new requirements for unit and lesson planning are not just a 3 year magnet deal – its now the NEW way to conduct business at MHS.
- Motto for 2005-2006 school year is EXCELLENCE MATTERS (given to faculty 11/15/05)
- Dr. Prin ran the Jan 17 faculty meeting – started the video and then began discussing the need for changes at MHS. Video was to set tone for change as positive and manageable. After the interruption by PE teacher, Dr Prin’s voice deepened and contained more emphasis. I think he was trying to convey that he was in charge and that no interruption could shake him as the leader. I could tell he was not happy with what happened...but he did a good job of letting the teachers handle PE teacher and maintaining his composure.
- One central issue with fundraising is being able to sell to area businesses the vision for MHS’s future. MHS does not enjoy a positive reputation within the community. If Dr. Prin wants to raise money, he’ll have to address that primary issue. He’ll have to explain how he’s attempting to raise the bar at MHS for teachers and students. The job will not be easy but the rewards are great.
- Teachers had a better idea of principal’s expectations after that meeting
- A good leader is one with a good vision and it’s a worthy vision and he’s willing to “go into hell wearing a gasoline jacket and never ask for ice water” to make it happen
- Vision was slow to come at first – no real plan of where school was headed – seemed to be a lot of players with different visions at first – no real vision and no real plan to bring everyone together
- “First of all, in order to fix that situation, you got to realize that situation needs to be fixed,” (AP2)
- This document was created by the principal to spell out all that is going on at MHS this year. There are several different changes occurring at the same time. This document spells out for teachers what those changes are and how they relate to the magnet school theme; rigor, relevance, relationships, International and Arts Focus. (D108)
- Strategic Plan of Implementation for MHS lays out 3 magnet goals for 3 years at MHS. Goal 1: MHS teachers will teach their courses so that a culture of rigor, relevance and relationships exists. Goal 2: Students will read and write at or above grade level. Goal 3: 100% of MHS teachers will be trained in staff development to use differentiated instruction to implement the magnet standards (D201) (This document created during 2004-2005 school year by previous MRT).
- Several speakers at the meeting talked about programs for students. AP has coordinated with a reverend, school nurse and college professor to provide mentoring to several groups of our students. So many of our students are needy and have no real support at home. Even as MHS moves forward through change, many of these students get left behind without someone who supports them. These 3 people were explaining how they are attempting to provide assistance to some of our students.
- Improve student literacy through incorporation of balanced literacy program
- The same teaching techniques that took MHS from 39% to 59.9% would not take MHS any further. Had to institute changes to take MHS to the next level. Hope is that after 06-07, students will be at least 60 – 65%

- Institute advisory program for 06-07 in order to allow students to make connections to the school
- The vision and mission of the school needed to be in place by 9/1...it was not
- Create vision for school by looking at the data – test scores, teacher/student attendance, etc.
- Role as leader is to promote high teaching standards

## 2)Understanding Vision

- Teachers do not understand vision for school. Initial vision of magnet implementation and student proficiency of 60% was lost in translation. Teachers not communicating vision to others, but telling others that there is no vision or focus for the school. Teachers need a clear understanding of the vision – leadership has to communicate that to them
- Mag. Evaluator really wants the vision for the school to focus on writing and all the benefits that brings. She believes the extended essay should be incorporated for all students and that such a program could be a model for other high schools. With the senior project coming on, MHS could be a model for how to implement such a deal through its work the extended essay. Establishing coaches to work with students in IB will only benefit other students as well by extending the essay opportunity to all students. It would be a tremendous undertaking but one that could really pay off for students. As of July 2006, there's no plans to implement a school wide extended essay. I suppose that this idea will need another year of discussion and planning
- New atmosphere not an overnight phenomenon...will take several years
- Initial vision was to implement the magnet grant and raise student proficiency on tests to above 60%
- Need commitment to change from staff

## 3)Communicating Vision

- Video of inspirational quotes – change is positive and beneficial – set the tone for the faculty meeting. Changes being discussed at the meeting were designed to improve the learning environment for students and teachers
- Working toward goal of over 60% proficiency on EOC tests. Teachers need to know that we (admin) are paying attention – that we realize what's going on in the classrooms and know what's important. Principal produced a document listing departments, their fall EOC scores and the goal for spring EOC scores. The goal scores will bring the school over 60% proficient for the year
- School fundraising is a big deal for MHS. Traditionally the school has not done well with raising funds because of the image of the school. Also, parents have little money themselves and certainly do not make contributions to the school. Area businesses have not been supportive (according to those people who've been at MHS for a while) of MHS in years past. Therefore, any major initiative to raise funds is a giant project and one that's desperately needed.
- How changes might improve school: increase academic expectations of students, show faculty and community that MHS students can really perform, produce collegial atmosphere at MHS.
- Hopes the changes will help community see MHS in a different light – improved reputation
- Vision not promoted as much as it could have been...was discussed briefly but not much
- Vision for effective school is to be about 80 to 85% proficient for academic achievement
- Improvement comes with talking to people, guiding through change process, having specific measurable goals, being positive role models, providing professional development - these are the multidimensional components of change as I see it
- This document, created by the principal, spells out the vision of making MHS a successful Magnet school which houses an IB program. The document lists the six goals of the magnet school. All the goals represent good school / teacher practices to improve student achievement. (D104)
- This document lists the different changes that are occurring this school year. The document tells teachers what is important to the principal. Since the principal created this document he's expressing what is important to him. At the top of the document are two goals. They are:
  3. Successfully implement the Magnet school concept and philosophy
  4. Improve academic performance to a proficiency level above 60%

These two goals give teachers a clear indication of where the principal wants MHS to go this year. (D108)

- This document lists some changes needed inside and outside the building. Several areas of concern for each are listed. The overall vision is to make MHS an attractive school for all to enjoy. The building itself is rather old but has great potential. The suggested improvements would brighten up and make the building more inviting. (D109)
- See Mission Statement page (doc 110.1): The mission statement is new for the school. The previous principal used a mission that incorporated a “Community of Champions.” Whereas, the new principal has incorporated the rigor and relevance theme associated with the school this year. Mission: “To provide educational opportunities to each student that are both rigorous and relevant to the course of study chosen by the student. Those educational opportunities will address the increasing need for a global perspective in the process of identifying and solving problems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” This statement sets the tone for the teachers, students and community of the school. Everyone can read that the mission is to get students ready for their future. (D110)

## **POWER OF CHANGE**

### **1)Administrative Power**

- The meeting, though tough at times, ended well. Dr. Prin has been “beaten and bruised” at every turn this year while at MHS. The meeting seemed to provide some healing today. Finally, the faculty saw Dr. Prin in a leadership position handling good and bad while maintaining his composure. Hopefully, this will set the stage for a better second semester.
- Post Analysis Comment: This meeting I think was a real turning point for the school. It seemed to me that the entire school moved forward after this meeting. Faculty members were more aware of what was going on and seemed more visible in halls. The negative comments and rumors seemed to come to a stop. The semester started off very well and continued throughout the spring. I would have to say that the second semester was certainly more enjoyable than the first.
- Post Analysis Comments:Implementing writing has some real power for all students. Writing is an ability that all schools want to focus on more. By doing some type of extended essay piece for all students MHS can lead the way in improving student writing performance. Students themselves will benefit from improved writing instruction – though they may not see the benefits at first.
- Principal holds power to dictate necessary changes
- Leadership team has power to implement new policies and procedures – which the team at MHS did during 05-06 school year and planned for 06-07 school year
- By January, people began to become more comfortable with admin team, with policies and with principal personally
- Teachers began to understand that principal was doing things different – and began to accept it
- Need commitment to change from staff
- Leader has to control change and have a plan for change and delegate power
- Teachers feeding principal ideas but not taking accountability for negative results – pointing fingers at principal
- The changes listed here could be very powerful for MHS. The changes have the potential to change the whole mood of the school. Currently, MHS is seen as an old run down school. However, by completing the recommended improvements, MHS can be viewed as a rich and vibrant school. MHS can easily become a school that students want to attend because of the look and feel of the building and the area around the school. (D109)
- The mission statement can be very powerful for the school community. People need to know the direction in which they are going. By providing a statement about that direction, students and teachers have a better understanding of what’s happening in the school. At this point, October, 2005, the staff is

crying out for direction and purpose. This statement can be very powerful in addressing some of the staff's concerns. (D110)

## **2)Teacher Power**

- Teachers hold power to affect change in their classrooms – they control teaching techniques and approaches to curriculum – they place the emphasis on the lessons they choose
- Prin believes the real power of change is in the hands of the teachers and they have to be convinced of the benefits of the changes.
- Believes that at MHS, there are several teachers who are viewed by colleagues as teacher leaders and they have power to affect change among teachers. Teacher leaders can also affect how much change takes place and the pace of change.
- Teachers hold power of change at school because they are in the classrooms daily. Any changes in curriculum and methodology that's being implemented depends on the teachers doing the actual work.
- Teachers can derail any change in a school if they do not have buy-in and feel supported
- Power of change in high profile people in school...maybe the "thugs" of the school, may be the athletes or coaches. At MHS, its veteran women teachers who hold the power.
- Teachers hold power – "they are running it" and its going downhill
- Teachers have to have a passion for kids because classroom is a battleground
- Power of change rests with teachers – they make the real changes in the classroom. Various people emerged as leaders in school – that helped move changes forward. The new MRT was very positive addition to the staff – helped with listening and working with teachers' concerns
- The Unit Templates can be very powerful tools if teachers accept and complete them. The templates will force the teachers to think about their lessons and relate them to rigor and relevance. All good teaching practices! (D104)
- This document is powerful because it list the changes as viewed by the principal. Teachers have a document that tells them what changes are important to the principal and the school, thus they should be important to him. Teachers see what the principal and leadership team at MHS sees as the most important changes taking place. It should be noted that all of the bullets listed on the document represent changes at MHS. None of the bullets listed have been in place at MHS until this year. Action groups, A/B scheduling, Reading strategies, etc. are all new ideas / items at MHS this year. (D108)

## **3)Others' Power**

- Students too can derail changes but that does not appear to be the case at MHS
- Parents and community members hold a lot of power from the past administration. They evidently had a large voice in the school in years past. However, new leader has not released that power

## **AGENTS OF CHANGE**

### **1)Leaders as Agents**

- Mr. A.P. 1 then spoke about excellence and change. He used his old "principal" voice and praised the faculty but warned of the work to be done to continue moving forward. At one point, I was concerned that he was upstaging the principal with his ability to deliver his words with such conviction and purpose. Hopefully, Dr. Prin realizes that his comments were meant to help him and help the school move forward.
- Admin will divide depts.. and meet with the action groups in that dept. Each action group will be assigned a specific date/time to meet. We are to attend as many meetings as possible. Teachers to focus on planning – EOC results are most important at this time. Teachers are the key to improved test scores. Focus on action group meetings to complete lesson planning
- After round of classroom visitations, I realized that some teachers had no real idea about increasing rigor and relevance in their classrooms. Teachers need additional training by subject on what to do.

- Teachers were being asked to change the way they taught their classes. Magnet grant asked for unit plans and the incorporation of internationalism.
- Staff at the beginning of the school year were confused and weary of the magnet program and the new administration
- Students were not accepting of changes initially.
- Real school improvement starts with the teachers – either replacing teachers or convincing the ones that remain of the need and benefits of change
- The mission statement involves the administration in its creation. Its up to this team to set the tone and direction for the school. The Evaluation Snapshot was proposed by the Magnet Lead Teacher, Dr. Morrison. She saw a need for such a document at another magnet school and shared her work with MHS. (D110)

## **2)Positive Staff Agents**

- The handbook addition was done for the teachers so they would have a written copy of the policies being discussed. During meeting, several teachers asked for clarification on certain policies. Some voiced that certain policies would not work, but the faculty agreed to try it.
- Once Dr. Prin finished, several teachers voiced that it would take everyone working together to make this work. A new set of policies or one or two people could not turn MHS around. It was going to take everyone on the same page to move forward. Several teachers talked about creating working relationships with kids...kids have to know that you care about them before they will begin to work for you.
- As school year progressed, the morale of teachers improved
- At end of 05-06 and beginning of 06-07 teachers are beginning to accept changes and embracing changes. Teachers seeing positive outcomes for changes
- Many teachers began making commitments for the next year in early spring
- Several teachers accepted new responsibilities at the school
- Need commitment to change from staff
- 2<sup>nd</sup> semester faculty buy-in of change process improved – more involved with changes
- Climate improved 2<sup>nd</sup> semester – teachers more at ease and following expectations more – felt more comfortable with new administration
- Teachers are the agent of change here since they serve on the Action Groups and they complete the Unit Templates. (D104)
- This document certainly represents teachers as change agents. As mentioned in the Change process box, teachers are the ones who, for the most part, will implement the items on the list. Their success in implementing the items will determine the success of MHS. Their success directly impacts whether or not MHS achieves the 2 goals that were stated. Very powerful! (D108)
- Several groups will be instrumental in these changes. Teachers and students with artistic talent can be used for painting of murals, etc. in the building. They can also help with the planning and design of interior and exterior spaces. The leadership team at MHS will be charged with finding the resources to make many of these changes happen. Also, coordinating teachers, students and maintenance personnel will be important. School system maintenance personnel will be involved with some of the larger task like painting the building, remove trees and bushes, etc. (D109)

## **3)Negative Staff Agents**

- One teacher, PE, abruptly stopped the meeting by standing up and proclaiming that he thought this meeting was about taking back our school. He said these policies being discussed are things teachers should already be doing. There was nothing new, nothing to take back the school. Several teachers then voiced that the handbook addition was beneficial and they wanted Dr. Prin to continue.
- Teachers need and demand time for planning, understanding of vision for school and being able to communicate and implement that vision. This was a problem during 1<sup>st</sup> semester. Teachers made loud

complaints about these 3 issues and stopped change from progressing.

- Several teachers got together and planned a sabotage of a faculty meeting with principal. Principal allowed teachers to vent during planning period meeting. Evidently, several teachers banded together and “planted” teachers in 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> period meetings to make complaints. They sabotaged others who had true concerns for the school. These teachers who attempted to take over the meetings are derailing any change processes in place. Principal learned that public venting forum did not work and will not occur again
- Some teachers demonstrated real resistance to change – they do not see the big picture. Possible cause is lack of true vision from leadership or a true resistance by some people. Some teachers may not understand how the changes can benefit them. Some are too quick to dismiss opportunities.
- Towards end of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, big deal made about all the teachers that were leaving. Many who were leaving needed to...they were negative sources on the faculty and attempted to derail the change process. These people feared change and thus needed to find other places of employment.
- The negative teachers submitted their resignations, which was positive for MHS
- Teachers at school complain that requirements of grant are new to them and they had no voice in the process – but they did. Teachers involved with attaining grant and knew what was required. With money comes accountability.

#### NOTES:

Observation Data includes my researcher journal. I consider my journal entries to be a type of observation.

Interview data includes all transcripts from the interviews conducted. It also includes my responses to the interview protocols.

Appendix B – Observation / Document Analysis Protocol

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>VISION OF CHANGE</b>
<b>STAFF DEVELOPMENT (and Evaluation)</b>	<b>POWER OF CHANGE</b>
<b>CHANGE PROCESS</b>	<b>AGENTS OF CHANGE</b>
<b>PROBLEMS OF CHANGE</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
<b>NOTES</b>	<b>FOLLOW UP / ADDITIONAL INFO NEEDED</b>

*Collection/Analysis Info*

Observation entered: \_\_\_\_\_ File Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reflection on observation: \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no File name / date: \_\_\_\_\_

Analysis completed on: \_\_\_\_\_ File name: \_\_\_\_\_