

SCHOOL CULTURE:
A SURVEY OF TWO EASTERN KENTUCKY MIDDLE SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT OF APPLIED PROJECT

An applied project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Education Specialist at Morehead State University

by

John D. Goble

Committee Chairman: Dr. Sam Wright

Associate Professor of Education

Morehead, Kentucky

December 13, 2013

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Director of Applied Project: Dr. Sam Wright

The purpose of this study was to assess the current school climate/culture of two eastern Kentucky middle schools and serve as a reference point for future studies. This study centered on one particular research question: What will the school culture and climate teacher survey results for two middle schools (both of which are similar but in different counties) reveal? Teachers responded to a set of 25 questions to assess their current attitudes, conditions, and practices of the school (School culture and climate teacher survey, n.d.).

The independent *t*-test was used to test the four hypotheses. The population for this study included all teacher respondents from School A and School B for the 2006 and 2009 school years, respectively. No statistically significant difference on the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey was found between School A and School B for the four concepts investigated in the school culture and climate survey.

Accepted by: Dr. Sam Wright, Chair

Dr. Victor Ballesteros

Dr. David Barnett

APPLIED PROJECT

John D. Goble, MA School Administration

Graduate School

Morehead State University

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Accepted by the graduate faculty of the College of Education,
Morehead State University, in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Education Specialist Degree in Instructional Leadership

Dr. Sam Wright
Director of Applied Project

Applied Project Committee:

Dr. Sam Wright , Chair

Dr. Victor Balletero

Dr. David Barnett

December 13, 2013
DATE

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This study studied the culture of two middle schools in eastern Kentucky. Many parents love to compare the school children attend with similar schools. Whether it is comparing the elementary, middle, or high schools of a particular county or school district, many people still compare schools on which one may be best as far as highest academic achievement. I have often times wondered myself at which school to send my own children when they begin school. Thoughts that came to mind were, “What would be the best environment for my child?” and “Which school would my child enjoy being in the most?”

A parent must consider these types of issues because deciding which school to send your child can be a major decision. Sometimes, parents do not have much choice based on geography and the distance to certain schools. It would appear that no parent would want to send their child to a school that exhibits a negative school culture. Most people would want to move their child from a school that had a bad school culture. Although this study may not determine which school would be the better of the two middle schools, it does present comparisons between the school cultures. It also shows the ways teachers think and responded in the two schools.

Background of the Study

If students and teachers were satisfied with the school culture, then one would likely see enhanced student achievement and teacher morale. Students would have great respect for both their peers and teachers. Teachers would also work well with

their co-workers and would go the extra mile even when the principal may not require it. Bad school cultures produce teacher dissatisfaction and lower student achievement, which cause problems for the school. Before a principal could change the culture of a school, he or she must first understand the history of the culture of a school.

Statement of the Problem

The goal of this project was to compare school culture as measured by a school climate survey for two middle schools—both of which are in different counties. This provided an opportunity to study how teachers in both buildings felt about other teachers and administrators by specifically allowing the teachers to give their opinions on school culture and climate in each building. The source of data used in this study was the school culture and climate survey, which contained a total of 25 questions. All teachers were asked to respond. At both School A and School B the return rate was 100%.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research question answered in this study was:

1. How did teachers at School A who taught at an eastern Kentucky middle school scores compare on the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey to teachers at School B?

The following five null hypotheses related to the research question was:

Ho1: *There was no overall significant difference between teacher empowerment index score for School A and School B as measured by the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

Ho2: *There was no overall significant difference between parent empowerment index score for School A and School B as measured by the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

Ho3: *There was no overall significant difference between teacher unity index score for School A and School B as measured by the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

Ho4: *There was no overall significant difference between district influence index score for School A and School B as measured by the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

Ho5: *There was no overall significant difference between overall index score for School A and School B on the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

Definition of Major Terms

The following terms were used within the study. Definitions of these terms were offered to provide clarity to the study.

Climate - “is made up of the beliefs and values that constitute an organization’s culture” (Schneider, Brief, & Guzzo, 1996, p. 9).

District influence – the impact and influence the school district and administrators of the district have on both the decisions that are made and the attainment and recognition of goals

Parent empowerment – the power and autonomy parents have in a school district as it would relate to their own children and the overall student population in general

Safe harbor- according to NCLB, “occurs if a subpopulation does not meet its Annual Measurable Objective” (Kentucky Department of Education, 2011).

School culture - consisted of “the attitudes and behaviors that characterize a school” (Phillips, 1996, p. 1).

Teacher empowerment – the power and autonomy teachers have in a school district as it would relate to the overall student population, their co-workers, and as employees of the school district

Teacher unity – the collaboration and collegiality of teachers in a school district that would together allow them to plan, obtain professional development, and work in the attainment of the goal of maximum student achievement

Significance of Study

This study was to identify characteristics of the school climate in two eastern Kentucky middle schools. Comparing the two schools provided insight into their culture. This research sought to investigate culture of the two schools as measured by

the four constructs related to school culture. This research is an exploratory study of the two middle schools using a single survey instrument.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. Any teacher who missed the faculty meeting where data were gathered at both schools would not have been involved in this study. There would have been an inability to change or modify the statements from the survey.
2. The teachers answered the statements as they were listed in the survey. If a teacher did not want to take the time to answer the questions appropriately, the teacher could circle any of the five possible responses, thus making the response invalid. There was no attempt by the researcher to ensure that all responses were reliable.
3. The survey only had 25 statements that measured the constructs related to school culture and climate. Respondents taking this survey only had five choices for each question. The study was also limited by the survey itself. No additional statements were added nor was the survey modified in any way.
4. The study was further delimited in the generalization of the results to other middle schools. The study investigated two middle schools in eastern Kentucky, thus the findings of the study are only applicable to those two schools.

Conclusion

As far as school culture and its' role in education, one could assume that issues such as school safety, cleanliness of the school building, and school resources would almost be as important as school culture. These three topics would also be considered to be part of the school culture. It seems likely that students and teachers alike would not have a great deal of pride about a building that was run down and never maintained. Finally, school resources would affect the school culture because both parents and teachers would want students to be able to have access to the latest and most up-to-date innovations in the world of education.

All of the aforementioned would have an impact on the Review of Literature section. The review of literature examined ideas on various topics related to school culture. The areas of District Influence, Teacher Unity, Parent Empowerment, and Teacher Empowerment are the four constructs this study considered as constituting school culture. Culture cannot be viewed as a single entity but rather a broad and sometimes complicated topic. The review of literature will therefore examine school culture in terms of the related constructs.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The goal of this project was to compare school culture as measured by a culture and climate survey completed by the schools' teachers. The two middle schools—had similar student demographics but were in different counties. This study was to identify characteristics of the school culture in two eastern Kentucky middle schools. The information obtained from this study could also be used to serve as a reference point for future study. The review of literature offered background information about various topics and themes related to school culture. The four areas of culture identified in this study were District Influence, Teacher Unity, Parent Empowerment, and Teacher Empowerment.

The first section (District Influence) featured two newspaper articles from Eastern Kentucky newspapers. These newspaper articles described the 2011 scores for County A and County B. The third article from this section (School culture may be more important than school size) compared attributes of a school located out in California to the two local middle schools discussed in this study.

The second section on Teacher Unity focused on the topic itself. The first article (Big picture learning: School culture) listed many different characteristics any school would want if it wanted to display an effective school culture. The second article in this section (WestEd: Cultural diversity and environmental education) focused on both how teachers needed to learn their students and how to work with other teachers. The last article (Exploring the principal's contribution to school

effectiveness) looked at how the principal could directly effect the perceptions and opinions of students, teachers, and parents.

The third section (Parent Empowerment) featured the first article (The school leader's tool for assessing and improving school culture) that described the "School Culture Triage Survey" that could be compared to the survey used in this study. The second article (Coming to know a school culture) featured how parents were involved in the major decision-making that occurred in schools. The last article (Commentary: The dominance of sports in high school culture) focused on how communities in America placed a great amount of emphasis on high school sports.

The fourth section (Teacher Empowerment) featured an article (The relationship between principal and teacher perceptions of principal instructional management behavior and student achievement) that focused on how teachers viewed the instructional management of the principal and how this directly impacted student achievement. The last two articles (School culture and change: an examination of the effects of school culture on the process of change and The effects of school culture and climate on student achievement) lent more support to the idea of teacher empowerment and what made teachers stay at schools for a long period of time.

District Influence

NCLB results released. County A's newspaper, the *Big Sandy News*, featured an article by Tony Fyffe. Schools in County A that were meeting yearly progress requirements included County A's elementary school and School A (Fyffe, 2011). County B's schools meeting academic progress included all three elementary

schools, School B, and county B's high school. According to Fyffe, "Tuesday's results show that 489 of Kentucky's 1,148 accountable public schools made adequate yearly progress under NCLB's requirements" (2011, p. 3). Fyffe also stated, "Progress is based primarily on the Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT) results in reading and mathematics" (2011, p. 3). Fyffe later mentioned, "Schools are required to have specific percentages of students reaching proficiency or distinguished in those two subject areas each year and to meet other criteria in order to make adequate yearly progress" (2011, p. 3).

Both of these schools met No Child Left Behind requirements for the 2011 school year. School A, however, was listed as being in "Safe Harbor" in reading and mathematics for the areas of "All Students", "White (Non-Hispanic)", and "Free/Reduced Lunch". "Safe Harbor" according to NCLB, "occurs if a subpopulation does not meet its Annual Measurable Objective" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2011, p. 1). According to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) website, "A school that has not met the reading or mathematics Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) is considered to have met the objective in reading and mathematics if the school reduces its percent of total students or subpopulation(s) (whichever group(s) did not meet the reading or mathematics annual measurable objective) scoring below proficient by 10%" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2011, p. 2). School B received a score of "Yes" in the areas of "All Students" and "White (Non-Hispanic)" in reading and mathematics. The only area of

“Safe Harbor” for School B was in reading for “Free/Reduced”, but School B received a score of “Yes” in mathematics for “Free/Reduced”.

Academic performance. County B’s newspaper, *The Mountain Citizen*, featured an article by Ronnie Hickman. According to Hickman, “No Child Left Behind test results brought plenty of smiles to administrators, teachers, students, and members of the County B Board of Education yesterday morning” (2011, p.1). Hickman (2011) mentioned, “Of the state’s 174 school districts, County B was one of the 22 school districts to meet 100 percent of their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals of No Child Left Behind” (p. 1). Hickman (2011) also stated, “All three county elementary schools met all their required goals” (p. 8). According to Hickman (2011), School B’s principal was very pleased with his school’s scores - the highest in the district – with 74.83 in reading, 71.81 in math, 68.18 in science, 53.66 in social studies and 43.9 in on-demand writing.

Hickman (2011) also mentioned that of the 1,148 schools statewide, 659 did not meet their AYP goals. Hickman mentioned what County B’s school district assessment director stated; “Overall, the district showed an 8.85 percent gain in reading and a 7.61 percent gain in all students at or above proficiency on the state required tests” (p. 8). This meant that the district had a specific percentage of students that reached proficiency or distinguished in reading and math, but other criteria were also met in order to make adequate yearly progress. Hickman also reported that the superintendent stated, “That was a proud moment for the entire

school district and I would like to congratulate all the faculty, staff, and students for their hard work” (p. 8).

In summary, School A and School B compared in academic achievement as measured by NCLB. Both schools met 10 out of 10 target goals. Also, besides meeting their AMO, both schools met or scored “Yes” in their “Participation Rate” and “Other Academic Indicator”. Under the AMO, School A had 6 out of 6 areas in “Safe Harbor”, while School B had only 1 out of 6 areas in “Safe Harbor”. This could be interpreted as School B outscoring School A because School B had 5 out of 6 of their areas score a “Yes” for the “Annual Measurable Objective”.

School culture and school size. In another study linking culture and student achievement, Kyauka (2011) noted the school culture of the school might actually be more important than the size of the school. Lazear Elementary School of the Oakland Unified School District was the focus of this study. For the 2009-2010 school year Lazear Elementary had 191 students; Kyauka (2011) noted, “Only 68 Hispanics, 63 English language learners, and 66 socioeconomically disadvantaged, and one student with disabilities scored proficient in mathematics” (p. 1). Kyauka also mentioned, “In summary for Lazear Elementary School, there were 182 Hispanics, 167 English language learners, 12 students with disabilities, and 172 socioeconomically disadvantaged children” (p. 1). Kyauka (2011) stated, “In addition, the school’s Academic Performance Index (API) was only 687 points” (p. 1). Kyauka (2011) summarized, “The school’s performance seems to suggest the school’s size may not be a limiting factor in improving academic performance” (p. 1). Finally, Kyauka

(2011) mentioned, “Most likely what matters most is the school culture and not size” (p. 1).

While School A and School B were not directly similar to the school in the Oakland District, one could look at a few interesting comparisons between the two Eastern Kentucky schools and the school out in California. What demonstrated the difference between a school located in Oakland and two middle schools located in Eastern Kentucky? For the school in Oakland, 68 out of 182 (37.4%) Hispanics scored proficient in mathematics (Kyauka , 2011). School A from Eastern Kentucky only had one Hispanic, while School B did not have any Hispanic students. As Kyauka (2011) noted, 63 of 167 (37.7%) English language learners scored proficient in math in the Oakland School District whereas the two middle schools in Eastern Kentucky did not have any English language learners. The Oakland District had 172 socioeconomically disadvantaged children, while School A had 203 students on free/reduced lunch and School B had 209 students on free/reduced lunch. Finally, the Oakland Unified School District had 12 students with disabilities, while School A and School B had 41 and 42 students with a disability, respectively (Kyauka , 2011).

Teacher Unity

Big picture learning: School culture. The article from the Big Picture Learning website stated that “school culture is not a means to an end, but an end in itself” (2011, p.1). Also noted, “Big Picture learning schools are small and personalized learning communities where students are encouraged to be leaders and school leaders are encouraged to be visionaries” (Big Picture Learning, 2011, p.1).

At the Big Picture schools, “a culture of respect and equality exists between students and adults, among students, and among adults” (Big Picture Learning, 2011, p.1). Respect and equality among adults and students would increase communication and “interaction with adults” (Big Picture Learning, 2011, p.1). The Big Picture author stated, “teamwork is a defining aspect of the culture” and “principals must create regular opportunities for staff development and life-long learning” (Big Picture Learning, 2011, p.1). Finally, to help in fostering collaboration and collegiality among staff members, one must look at “sharing ideas and reflecting regularly by means of verbal and written communication” (Big Picture Learning, 2011, p.1).

Some of the Essential Elements of School Culture according to Big Picture Learning included: “an intense focus on school culture, being comfortable in talking with adults about personal and academic issues, rituals (like with alumni, student orientation, and international students), the formal time when each day begins, inter-grade and across-grade student groupings, democratic governance, respect, celebrated and recognized diversity, known expectations and policies for behavior, high attendance, graduation, and college acceptance rates, low dropout rates, and having fun” (2011, p.1). The last part of the previous sentence seemed to impact students greatly, which would include having fun. Students should be leaders for others while at the same time enjoying themselves. Principals and school leaders are expected to be visionaries and not authoritarians that may believe in the “top-down” approach. Respect, equality, teamwork, life-long learning, professional development,

collaboration, sharing ideas, and reflection are all attributes of a positive school culture and climate of any school.

Cultural diversity and environmental education. In *WestEd: Cultural Diversity and Environmental Education*, Madfes (2004), a science and mathematics educator described how she used case studies in much of her work with teachers and professional developers. Madfes (2004) stated,

To better communicate with one another and with students, environmental educators – like all teachers – need opportunities to discuss their work, reflect about issues of diversity, and develop new ways of working that will create a more inclusive field. Using case methods is a way of doing that. (2004, p. 1)

Madfes (2004) continued, “The real value of cases is that they give you a specific context to discuss difficult issues without the discussion becoming a gripe session or overly personal” (p. 1). Additionally, she stated, “It’s important for teachers to learn about their students’ personal and academic backgrounds, cultures and learning style, so that appropriate instruction can take place” (Madfes, 2004, p. 2). Madfes (2004) concluded, “The importance of respecting attitudes and beliefs that are different from your own, while still teaching what you need to teach. Instead, these cases instigate conversation and help teachers find their own solutions, solutions that can help them bridge the gap with students – and each other” (p. 2).

Madfes (2004) emphasized how teachers and administrators alike must recognize the differences in student attitudes and beliefs and make necessary changes to maximize student achievement. The School Culture Survey included item 12 -,

“My colleagues are valuable resources” – and 13 - “I meet with other teachers to develop new curriculum” - (p. 1). If one could get all teachers to realize that their colleagues were valuable resources, then schools would probably stand a better chance at improving school climate. Also, allowing teachers a chance to meet with other teachers to develop new curriculum would probably help both experienced and beginning teachers. Teachers could better educate students if the teachers were given time to review instructional approaches with other teachers. Also, learning about different students’ backgrounds might help the teacher in better understanding students’ problems. This might help the students to succeed both personally and academically.

Principals and school effectiveness. Hallinger (1998) stated that “the bulk of research, policy and practice in education have assumed the stance that principals make an important difference in school effectiveness” (p. 185). This would have to be true, as principals have had a huge impact on student achievement. Hallinger mentioned, “The general pattern of results drawn from this review supports the belief that principals exercise a measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement” (1998, p. 186). Even though principals’ may not be the students’ regular classroom teachers, they still could have a huge impact on schools’ that may not even be noticed by many. Hallinger noted, while this indirect effect was relatively small, it was statistically significant and meaningful. This had even become evident with our principal in the building I work in. These concern the means by which principals achieved an impact on school outcomes as well as the

interplay with contextual forces that influenced the exercise of school leadership. This would be one of the areas where our principal excelled because he constantly made himself aware of the social interactions and situations going on between staff members at our school.

Hallinger stated, “This review revealed several paths that begin to describe the means by which principal leadership influences student learning outcomes” (1998, p. 187). According to Hallinger, “These included school goals, school structure and social networks, people, and organizational culture” (1998, p. 187). All of the aforementioned come to mind in describing our principal and any effective principal, as most of them would have several goals they set out to accomplish. Hallinger’s (1998) work suggests that effective principals believe in a sophisticated school structure and constant social networking to make their organization the best it could possibly be. They know only the best people make this happen in any building and this would be why principals’ try to recruit the best people possible for their buildings. Any successful principal considers any and all of these ideas if they want the best organizational culture possible.

There seems to be no question that the principal has a major impact on school and student achievement, and schools must choose wisely when selecting a principal. The choice will impact student achievement, teacher morale, and community support. The wrong choice could negatively impact the students in ways that could be devastating to the school and community. While many individuals may have principal certification, some individuals could probably fulfill the responsibilities of

principal more effectively than others. Additionally, principals must personally learn the staff in their buildings. Any disconnect between principal and staff could cause the school to suffer, so it is imperative that the right person is chosen as principal.

Parent Empowerment

Assessing and improving school culture. Wagner (2006) utilized an 18 question School Culture Triage Survey that was similar to the 25 question School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey used in this study. The School Culture Triage Survey was divided into three themes and these were “Professional Collaboration”, “Affiliative Collegiality”, and “Self- Determination/Efficacy”. The scores on this survey were 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), and 5 (Always or Almost Always). A score of 18 to 90 was possible on this survey. Scores from 17 to 40 were said to require “critical and immediate attention” (Wagner, 2006, p. 43) whereas scores from 41 to 59 represented “necessary modifications and improvements” (Wagner, 2006, p. 43). A score of 60 to 75 required one to “monitor and maintain making positive adjustments” (Wagner, 2006, p. 43) whereas scores of 76 to 85 represented “amazing” (Wagner, 2006, p. 43). Wagner mentioned, “Once thought of as a soft approach to school improvement efforts, school culture has finally amassed the depth of research necessary to qualify as a mainstay in a school leader’s annual improvement plans” (2006, p. 41). Wagner emphasized, “And school culture may be the missing link—a link that has much more to do with the culture of the school than it does with elaborate curriculum alignment projects, scrimmage tests, and the latest buzz –word reform efforts--in the school improvement conundrum”

(Hall-O'Phalen, 1998, p. 41). Phillips described, "connections between school culture and staff member satisfaction, parent engagement, and community support" (1996, p. 42). Wagner mentioned, "Relational vitality with students, parents, the community, and especially with one another is the foundation for a healthy school culture and maximizing student learning" (2006, p. 44).

The last part of the first paragraph includes a description of how we as educators should empower parents. Nearly any parent engagement would make parents feel they had power with regard to their own children. I have noticed this in parent-teacher conferences and parent-teacher meetings at school. Parents want to feel assured that a situation had been resolved or closed when they walked out of that school. It was not so much that they wanted to control the school and its practices, but that they wanted the very best for their own individual child. Wagner mentioned, "School culture is the shared experiences both in school and out of school (traditions and celebrations) that create a sense of community, family, and team membership. People in any healthy organization must have agreement on how to do things and what is worth doing. Staff stability and common goals permeate the school. Common agreement on curricular and instructional components, as well as order and discipline, are established through consensus. Open and honest communication is encouraged and there is an abundance of humor and trust. Tangible support from leaders at the school and district levels is also present" (2006, p. 41). All of the aforementioned would not only empower teachers, but parents as well. This would come by way of consensus, order, honesty, and trust when dealing with students.

Coming to know a school culture. Colley (1999) stressed,

The purpose of this study was to identify specific cultural elements within one elementary school to provide information about the school's identity and functioning. These elements included values, beliefs, play, rituals, ceremonies, and cultural objects. The culture of each school building drives the daily happenings. The culture either enhances or stifles growth. This study uncovered evidence to demonstrate that the awareness of stakeholders of a school's culture influences how the culture works. Interviews, artifact collection, digital photographs, meeting analysis, and fieldnotes from observations comprise the data. The interviews were conducted with educators, staff, and parents to ascertain their perceptions of their culture. (1999, p. ii)

Colley (1999) further stated, "I became interested in school culture because it is what schools and schooling are primarily about. The culture of each building shapes what happens from day to day" (p.4). Colley (1999) went on to explain

The culture of a school is a composite of the conditions that are specific to the students, teachers, administrators, and parents of a school building. Although there may be people from many cultural groups within a building, the day-to-day interactions of the people who live and breath there embody that distinct culture. (p. 12).

Regarding parent empowerment Colley (1999) stated, “Through the use of interviews, I learned about the culture at Castle Elementary from a random sampling of the members who became my cultural experts” (p. 24). Colley (1999) concluded

One study consisted of parent involvement activities within a specified community whose children attended Castle. Parents to be interviewed were selected via recommendation of the fifth-grade teachers. Basically, she asked for parents who were involved in the school and familiar with the classrooms. She asked for each of the four fifth grade teachers to recommend two parents who had children at Castle since it opened and two who were new to Castle that year. Eight parents participated in interviews. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed into text. (p. 25)

Colley (1999) noted, “In an attempt to grasp the values of the members of the Castle culture, I searched for key words, phrases and themes that I observed to accurately describe what the Castle culture valued” (1999, p. 31). Colley explained, “Parents were often sought out to join in the decision-making process regarding specific issues and representatives from the community were also asked for input” (1999, p. 32). Colley stated, “The money decisions were made through representatives from each grade level on the shared decision-making committee (C.I.T.E). Parents and a business partner from the community also sat on this committee” (1999, p. 34). Colley stated,

Parents were involved in decision-making in some areas of the Castle culture; however, they knew the weighty issues like budget, curriculum and instruction

were in the teachers' and administrator's ballcourt the majority of the time.

The existence of the shared decision-making team made some parents feel that there was a forum for their "voice". The issues in which parents felt they had some input were afterschool programs, recreational programs, school safety and individualizing instruction for their own children. (1999, p. 35).

Colley continued,

The existence of the CITE team helped assure some parents that they had input in decision-making because there were parent representatives on the team. Parents who were interviewed thought they were included in the school decision-making and input for their own children's education at Castle.

Furthermore, these parents were comfortable that the daily decisions were made by the Castle faculty. (1999, p. 36)

Colley concluded, "Help was the second value that the culture of Castle embraced. Those being helped or offering help included teachers, parents, students and community members, along with the building administrator" (1999, p. 37).

Colley also stated, "Castle was seen as a school that welcomed parents with open arms to come in and participate" (1999, p. 63).

Sports and school culture. Schrader discussed the influence of high school sports on many small rural high schools. Schrader contended, "The math geek might turn out to be the CEO of a huge company and the crazy band kids might be playing in a band with the next top singer or with a world-renowned symphony" (2011, p. 1). This statement confirmed the fact that just because one might be an excellent athlete

in high school would not mean that they would automatically be successful in after high-school life unless they demonstrated the hard work required. Playing basketball in high school and then concentrating on academics in college were challenging tasks. Parents have many times went overboard in putting too much pressure on their children when playing sports. The power or ego had sometimes went to their head and they no longer would think rationally when it came to their child playing sports.

Many students have stayed in school and graduated because of sports. As a personal example, an uncle of mine once told me that he stayed in school just so that he could play basketball for the high school team. Another personal example would have been my best friend I graduated with. He grew up without a father figure and would tell you today that sports gave him an avenue to a better life. Sports could have, however, resembled a job for many student-athletes in college because of classes, study-time, practices, and games. While it could be a great thing for parents to enjoy with their children, parents should back off and let their children have fun playing ball. Unfortunately, this would not be the reality of it in many cases, as parents would become more involved in sports than their children. This had many times led to hard feelings among other parents and friends that otherwise would not have been there.

Teacher Empowerment

Management and student achievement. O'Day stated, "the study tested two models which hypothesize positive relationships between principal role behavior and student achievement: The School Effectiveness Program Model of Instructional

Leadership and The School Culture Model” (1984, p. 1). O’Day mentioned how the study also addressed two methodological deficiencies of the effective schools research: use of aggregated achievement data that failed to control ability or previous achievement and focused on urban poor students. To test these models and address these methodological issues, this study investigated the relationships between principal and teacher perceptions of principal instructional management behavior, as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), and student achievement. The sample included 19 principals, 137 teachers and 760 students from 19 schools in a single suburban, middle class elementary school district. The discrepancy between actual and expected achievement test scores, predicted by students' previous ability and achievement test scores was determined. Positive discrepancy scores were defined as overachievement; negative discrepancy scores were defined as underachievement. Although the findings of the study were not definitive, three conclusions were drawn based on the nature of the correlations that obtained: (1) higher principal self-ratings were associated with underachievement; (2) higher median teacher perceptions of principal behavior were related to overachievement; and (3) congruence between principal and median teacher ratings was related to overachievement (1984, p. 1).

The sample size of principals, teachers, and students from the 19 schools in the district seemed large enough to provide accurate results for this study. Most principals would typically rate themselves high, and many teachers would give principals high ratings as well. Some teachers, however, may have rated a principal

low just because they did not have a high opinion of the principal. Both teachers and principals should remain objective when rating or evaluating the other because this would be the only way to see how truly effective these studies would be. Everyone would want to be rated or scored high, but it must be conducted accurately and fairly.

School culture and change. Hinde mentioned, “Just as water surrounds and envelopes fish shaping their perspectives and determining their courses of action, culture surrounds and envelopes teachers forming their perspectives and influencing their decisions and actions” (2002, p. 1). Hinde explained, “Culture influences all aspects of schools, including such things as how the staff dresses (Peterson & Deal, 1998), what staff talk about in the teachers’ lounge (Kottler, 1997), how teachers decorate their classrooms, their emphasis on certain aspects of the curriculum, and teachers’ willingness to change (Hargreaves, 1997)”(2002, p. 1). In describing culture, Peterson and Deal said it was, “Where staff have a shared sense of purpose, where they pour their hearts into teaching; where rituals and traditions celebrate student accomplishment, teacher innovation, and parental commitment” (1998, p. 3). Peterson and Deal also mentioned, “Schools that are conducted in a culture exhibiting these positive qualities have teachers and staff members who are willing to take risks and enact reforms” (1998, p. 3).

Hinde stated,

Teachers and other school workers are not culturally void when they enter a school. Their personal experiences, values, norms, and prior education all influence their views of curriculum, pedagogy, and change even before they

step foot into a classroom. Any change that is proposed that runs counter to the teacher's already- developed culture and philosophy will be resisted.

Teachers who contentedly stay in a school for a number of years do so because it is a place where the underlying stream of values and norms (the school culture) coincides with their own. On the other hand, a conflict of cultures may provide the impetus for teachers to leave” (2002 p. 4).

Teachers who took risks and had their own philosophy would have to have felt empowered. Also, teachers not working in a culture conducive to their style could cause them to leave. The fact of being able to leave to teach somewhere else would have to give way to the democratic idea of teacher empowerment. Hinde stated,

In other words, the culture of most schools does not support democratic procedures despite rhetoric that may seem otherwise. In schools where the governance structure is such that the principal makes most decisions and the staff and parents are not involved are less likely to embrace change.

However, when the opposite is in effect – teachers and community members are involved in decision-making – then reforms such as Accelerated Schools, Slavin's Success For All (Weiler, 1998), and many other types of reform at the whole school level and at a smaller level would be more likely to be implemented successfully (2002, p. 5).

Hinde mentioned, “In the case of the assumption concerning best practices, one must ascertain what methods teachers frequently use and is endorsed by the

leadership. Do the teachers apply methods that are in the students' educational best interests or to maintain order and discipline?" (2002, p. 6).

School culture on student achievement. Macneil, Prater, & Busch (2009) mentioned, "The findings of this study suggest that students achieve higher scores on standardized tests in schools with healthy learning environments (p. 73). Macneil, Prater, and Busch continued, "Organizational theorists have long reported that paying attention to culture is the most important action that a leader can perform" (2009, p. 73). Hallinger and Heck explained, "Educational theorists have likewise reported that the principals' impact on learning is mediated through the climate and culture of the school and is not a direct effect" (1998, p. 73). Watson stated, "If the culture is not hospitable to learning then student achievement can suffer" (2001, p. 73). Fink and Resnick mentioned, "That school principals are responsible for establishing a pervasive culture of teaching and learning in each school" (2001, p. 73).

As far as teacher empowerment, "Freiberg and Stein (1999) described school climate as the heart and soul of the school and the essence of the school that draws teachers and students to love the school and to want to be a part of it" (p. 75). Hoy and Tarter (1997) mentioned,

Unhealthy schools are deterred in their mission and goals by parental and public demands. Unhealthy schools lack an effective leader and the teachers are generally unhappy with their jobs and colleagues. In addition, neither teachers nor students are academically motivated in poor schools and academic achievement is not highly valued. The overwhelming majority of

studies on school climate in the past have focused on teachers and leader-teacher relations and subsequent issues of job satisfaction. (p. 75)

Macneil, Prater, and Busch mentioned, “Strong school cultures have better motivated teachers. Highly motivated teachers have greater success in terms of student performance and student outcomes (2009, p. 78). School principals seeking to improve student performance should focus on improving the school’s culture by getting the relationships right between themselves, their teachers, students and parents” (2009, p. 79).

Conclusions

After reviewing several articles and other research related to school culture, it was apparent that a positive school culture in every educational setting was vital to the success of every school. There could be many ways of looking at culture in every district, school, and classroom in the United States. Culture in education could always be a factor. It would become one of the responsibilities of educators to ensure that positive school cultures existed so that every child who took part in public education could be guaranteed the best experience possible. Positive school culture could ensure high academic achievement that could occur anywhere in the United States even though diversity and differing public opinions and perceptions might be prevalent.

CHAPTER III

Method

Design of the Study

This was a descriptive research study designed to consider the attitudes of teacher within two middle schools in eastern Kentucky. The teachers were given the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey. In this section, the origin and participants of this study are discussed first. Following this is the procedure of the study as well as a description of the statements on the instrument. Next, is a section on the demographic data for each school. Finally, the section that described the data analysis is featured.

Context

School A was built in 1997 and was one of three schools in the county with grades 6 through 8. It usually had around 350 students per year. School B was built in 1993 and was one of two schools in the county with grades 6 through 8. It usually had around 315 to 320 students per year. Both School A and B mainly featured a Caucasian student population. Both schools featured a principal and assistant principal. The two schools also both featured nearly two-thirds of their student population on free and reduced lunch.

Table 1

Demographic Data for the Schools – School A (2006) – School B (2009)

Demographic	School A	School B
Principal's Experience	5 years	4 years
Students Count	350	318
White Students	345	315
African-American Students	1	3
Hispanic Students	1	0
Asian Students	2	0
Disadvantage Students	203	209
Students with a Disability	41	42
# of 6 th Grade Students	124 (53 F / 71 M)	111 (59 F / 52 M)
# of 7 th Grade Students	114 (47 F / 67 M)	115 (50 F / 65 M)
# of 8 th Grade Students	112 (59 F / 53 M)	92 (42 F / 50 M)

Participants: Collection of Data

This study actually began around 6 years ago when the researcher was a teacher at School A. This survey was given to the teachers in an after-school teachers' meeting. The researcher used the information from these 24 surveys to complete a practicum course for my principalship. The researcher kept all of the data for a 3-year period until the researcher accepted a position at School B.

The researcher was working on his Rank I and another project for a graduate course. Since the researcher still had the old information from the surveys from 3 years earlier, it was decided to have the teachers at School B complete the same

survey. There were not as many respondents taking the survey ($N = 18$) this time, but the researcher felt it would be an interesting study to compare the two schools. Again, the goal of this project was to compare school culture and climate teacher survey results for two middle schools--both of which were similar, but in different counties. The survey indicated that its' purpose was to identify the current school climate and to serve as a reference point for future study.

Procedure: Instrument

To gather data relative to the culture of the two middle schools, a previously developed school culture survey was used (School culture and climate teacher survey, n.d.) (See Appendix A). The purpose of this survey was to assess the current school climate/culture of both middle schools and serve as a reference point for future study. Teachers were presented a set of 25 statements to assess their current attitudes, conditions, and practices of the school. Each of the 25 questions was on a five point Likert type scale with five being Strongly Agree to one being Strongly Disagree. These surveys were completed during after-school teachers' meetings at School A and School B.

The chart located in the Appendix B provided a summary of the collected data for the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey. Each of the total responses for School A and School B along with the associated percentage are provided. The mean and standard deviation were calculated for each of the 25 statements for each school and presented in Table 2

Data Analysis

To respond to the research question, the statements on the survey were grouped according to each of the four constructs being investigated. The mean and standard deviation for the constructs were calculated and then submitted for analysis. An independent *t* test was selected to test for statistically significant differences for each of the constructs. Johnson mentioned, “The purpose of a *t*-test is to statistically test for differences between two sets of data” (1989, p. 306). Johnson also stated, “An independent *t*-test was appropriate when dealing with two distinct groups of subjects (1989, p. 306). In this study, the two distinct groups of data were the scores from the teachers from School A and School B.

Cohen’s *d* was calculated to report the effect size. This statistic was calculated by dividing the mean difference of the two groups by the average standard deviation of the groups. The 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association required the reporting of the effect size in addition to statistical significance as the number of participants could often artificially inflate the latter. Cohen’s *d* could be interpreted as: an effect size small ($d < .2$), medium ($.2 < d < .5$), and large ($d > .5$) (Cohen, 1988).

CHAPTER IV

Results

For School B, the median score (or middle number) of the data was 74 (add the 2 middle numbers of 74 and 75 and divide by 2) whereas School A's median was a 74. Between the 2 schools, this was a difference of 0.50. The researcher hypothesized there would be statistical significance between the two middle schools based on how close the scores were for both the mean and median.

The findings explained in this chapter were related to the research question and associated hypotheses stated in Chapter 1. The research question for this study was:

1. How did teachers at School A that taught at an eastern Kentucky middle school scores compare on the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey to teachers at School B?

Teacher Empowerment

H₀₁: *There was no overall significant difference between teacher empowerment index score for School A and School B as measured by the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

An independent *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the two schools on the teacher empowerment construct. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference in the teacher empowerment construct between School A ($M = 19.58$, $SD = 2.21$) and School B (M

= 19.61, SD = 4.42). Based on the findings, the acceptance of H₀ 1 was warranted, $t(40) = 0.27, p > 0.05$.

Table 2

Independent t-test on Teacher Empowerment

School	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t	df	p
A	24	19.58	2.21	0.45	0.03	40	0.98
B	18	19.61	4.42	1.04			

Parent Empowerment

H₀2: *There was no overall significant difference between parent empowerment index score for School A and School B as measured by the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

An independent *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the two schools on the parent empowerment construct. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference in the power empowerment construct between School A (M = 15.67, SD = 3.21) and School B (M = 14.61, SD = 5.18). Based on the findings, the acceptance of H₀ 1 was warranted, $t(40) = 0.81, p > 0.05$.

Table 3

Independent t-test on Parent Empowerment

School	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t	df	p
A	24	15.67	3.21	0.66	0.81	40	0.42
B	18	14.61	5.18	1.22			

Teacher Unity

H_{o3}: *There was no overall significant difference between teacher unity index score for School A and School B as measured by the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

An independent *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the two schools on the teacher unity. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference in the teacher unity construct between School A (M = 30.67, SD = 6.20) and School B (M = 32.56, SD = 6.30). Based on the findings, the acceptance of H_o 1 was warranted, $t(40) = 0.97$, $p > 0.05$.

Table 4

Independent t-test on Teacher Unity

School	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t	df	p
A	24	30.67	6.20	1.27	0.97	40	0.34
B	18	32.56	6.30	1.48			

District Influence

H₀4: *There was no overall significant difference between district influence index score for School A and School B as measured by the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

An independent *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the two schools on the district influence construct. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference in the district influence construct between School A (M = 25.46, SD = 5.93) and School B (M = 22.22, SD = 8.86). Based on the findings, the acceptance of H₀ 1 was warranted, $t(40) = 1.42, p > 0.05$.

Table 5

Independent t-test on District Influence

School	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t	df	p
A	24	25.46	5.93	1.21	1.42	40	0.16
B	18	22.22	8.86	2.09			

Complete Survey

H₀5: *There was no overall significant difference between overall index score for School A and School B on the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.*

The results of comparing the overall index score for School A and B are presented in Table 6. The mean for School A was 91.38 (SD = 13.50) while the mean for School B was 89.00 (SD = 21.70). The results, $t(40) = 0.436, p > 0.05$, supported the acceptance of H₀ 5.

Table 6

Independent t-test Results of the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey

School	N	M	SD	SE of Mean	t	df	p
A	24	91.38	13.50	2.76	0.44	40	0.67
B	18	89.00	21.70	5.11			

The effect size, measured by Cohen's d , of 0.135 was small. Thus, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and the answer to research question one in that there was not a statistically significant difference between the scores of School A and School B on the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.

CHAPTER V

Findings and Conclusions: Reporting and Evaluating Research

The score range on the culture survey ranged from 25 to 125 points. The 25 questions from the survey were grouped into 4 overall themes. Those themes centered on Teacher Empowerment, Parent Empowerment, Teacher Unity, and District Influence. Teacher Empowerment and Parent Empowerment could actually be considered to be a self-directing concept. The areas of Teacher Unity and District Influence could be viewed as a collaboration concept.

Teacher Empowerment

For the first concept on self-directing, these lent to the school culture theme of Teacher Empowerment. In other words, teachers' opinions and actions gave way to the idea that they had much power as teachers. For the 5 areas of the survey of Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, and Strongly Agree, the area of Somewhat Agree won nearly every time for both Schools A and B. The only questions it did not were for School B on question 1 and question 5. On question 1 for School B, the areas of Somewhat Agree and Strongly Agree both tied with a score of 7. On question 5 for School B, the area of Strongly Agree outscored Somewhat Agree by a score of 9 to 7.

The five statements related to teacher empowerment from the survey were:

1. Teachers are involved in making important decisions at this school.
2. My point of view matters in this school.
3. Teacher input at this school guides curriculum changes.

4. Teacher input at this school guides policy changes.
5. Teachers with new ideas are encouraged.

Table 7

Teacher Empowerment – Teacher Responses

Survey Statement	School	Mean	SD
1	A	4.17	0.64
	B	3.94	1.16
2	A	3.63	1.01
	B	4.17	0.71
3	A	3.92	0.97
	B	3.61	1.09
4	A	3.75	0.99
	B	3.61	1.09
5	A	4.13	0.80
	B	4.28	0.96

Parent Empowerment

For the second concept on self-directing, these lent to the school culture theme of Parent Empowerment. In other words, parents' opinions and actions gave way to the idea that they had much power as parents. For the 4 areas of the survey of Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, and Strongly Agree, the area of Somewhat Agree won nearly every time for both Schools A and B. The only question it did not for School A was on question 6. On question 6 for School A, the area of Somewhat Disagree outscored Somewhat Agree by a score of 16 to 6. On question 8 for School B, the area of Somewhat Disagree outscored Somewhat Agree

by a score of 8 to 5. On question 9 for School B, the area of Somewhat Disagree outscored Somewhat Agree by a score of 10 to 6.

The five statements related to parent empowerment from the survey were:

6. Parents in this community are involved in their children's school experience.
7. Parents respect what teachers do.
8. Parents have a voice in curriculum change.
9. Parents have a voice in school policy change.
10. I contact parents to solve students' problems.

Table 8

Parent Empowerment – Based on Teacher Responses

Survey Statement	School	Mean	SD
6	A	2.42	0.97
	B	3.00	1.46
7	A	2.75	1.22
	B	2.94	1.26
8	A	3.13	1.12
	B	2.44	1.20
9	A	3.75	0.74
	B	2.56	1.10
10	A	3.63	1.24
	B	3.67	1.14

Teacher Unity

For the third concept on collaboration, these lent to the school culture theme of Teacher Unity. In other words, collaboration and collegiality should be of the utmost importance to any staff. For the 4 areas of the survey of Strongly Disagree,

Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, and Strongly Agree, the area of Somewhat Agree won nearly every time for School A. For School B, however, on question 11, Strongly Agree outscored Somewhat Agree 10 to 8. This also happened on question 12 as Strongly Agree outscored Somewhat Agree 12 to 6. On question 13 for School B, Strongly Agree outscored Somewhat Agree 8 to 6. There was a tie of 10 to 10 between Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree for School A question 13. This also happened on question 14 for School B as Strongly Agree outscored Somewhat Agree 9 to 7. There was a tie of 6 to 6 between Somewhat Agree and Strongly Agree on question 16 for School B. For question 17, Strongly Agree outscored Somewhat Agree 11 to 8 for School A. Finally for question 18, Strongly Agree outscored Somewhat Agree 8 to 6 for School B. From these showings it appeared that both schools, but especially School B, placed a great amount of emphasis on Teacher Unity.

The eight statements related to teacher unity from the survey were:

11. My colleagues support what I do.
12. My colleagues are valuable resources.
13. I meet with other teachers to develop new curriculum.
14. I think that most teachers in this school have a “can do” disposition.
15. When students are having problems, all their teachers meet together to seek solutions.
16. Teachers at this school work together to develop a school wide set of goals.

17. Faculty members at this school meet regularly (minimum of once a month) to discuss mutual concerns.

18. Disagreements among faculty and/or administration are handled to build consensus and minimize ill feelings.

Table 9

Teacher Unity – Based on Teacher Responses

Survey Statement	School	Mean	SD
11	A	3.88	1.08
	B	4.56	0.51
12	A	4.25	0.74
	B	4.67	0.49
13	A	4.04	1.16
	B	4.00	1.19
14	A	3.87	1.12
	B	4.28	0.96
15	A	3.62	1.24
	B	4.11	0.96
16	A	3.67	1.37
	B	3.61	1.38
17	A	4.00	1.25
	B	3.33	1.41
18	A	3.33	1.20
	B	4.00	1.19

District Influence

For the fourth concept on collaboration, these lent to the school culture theme of District Influence. The answers to these questions would reveal how well the district leadership was in touch with how well the teachers viewed their leadership.

For the 4 areas of the survey of Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, and Strongly Agree, the area of Somewhat Agree won nearly every time for School A and School B. As a matter of fact, the only times where Somewhat Agree was not ahead occurred for School B on questions 19, 21, and 23. Somewhat Agree was tied with Strongly Agree with a score of 6 to 6 on question 19. Somewhat Disagree outsourced Somewhat Agree 7 to 5 on question 21. Somewhat Disagree outsourced Somewhat Agree 6 to 5 on question 23. Overall, this could be interpreted as a good score for the district leadership in both school districts.

The seven statements related to district influence from the survey were:

19. The school district values teacher knowledge and experience.
20. This school district is committed to hiring and nurturing visionary, innovative leaders.
21. Before initiating policy change, district leaders consider the needs of teachers and students.
22. Information about policy change is communicated clearly in a timely fashion.
23. After initiating change, district leaders obtain teacher input to evaluate its effectiveness.
24. Difficult/challenging events at my school are acknowledged appropriately by district leaders.
25. Difficult/challenging events at my school are remedied by a responsive strategic plan.

Table 10

District Influence – Based on Teacher Responses

Survey Statement	School	Mean	SD
19	A	3.29	1.20
	B	3.56	1.46
20	A	3.67	1.05
	B	3.33	1.41
21	A	3.83	1.05
	B	3.00	1.37
22	A	3.54	1.06
	B	3.39	1.33
23	A	3.37	1.06
	B	2.83	1.50
24	A	3.75	0.99
	B	2.94	1.39
25	A	4.00	0.88
	B	3.17	1.38

CHAPTER VI

Discussion

The research in this study did not reveal a statistically significant difference between School A ($M = 91.38$, $SD = 13.50$) and School B ($M = 89.00$, $SD = 21.70$) in survey scores ($t = 0.44$, $df = 40$, $p = 0.67$, $d = 0.135$). The null hypothesis said there was no significant difference between teacher survey scores for School A and School B on the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey. The small effect size was obtained using Cohen's d ($d = 0.135$). Thus, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded there was not a statistically significant difference between the survey scores of School A and School B on the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey.

Recommendations

Suggestions for further research that include

1. One could give this school culture survey to a class or group of students and compare student and teacher opinions in each school.
2. One could also see if there might be a difference on this survey between the way elementary and middle school teachers might answer the statements to this survey.
3. One could also ask if age level made a difference in the answering of these statements on the school culture survey.
4. Another question one may ask might be, "What caused the teachers to answer the statements the way they did with regard to the school culture survey"?
Could it have been their current job assignment or dealing with difficult

parents? Could it have been working with other teachers and administrators, or could it have been all of the above?

5. Another question might be, “Has anyone ever studied the culture of the other schools in County A and County B”?
6. From section 5 (Reporting and Evaluating Research) of this project one might ask, “Could the teacher scores from this survey have been a little better from this study as it was conducted”? Of course, they probably could have been.
7. Another question might be, “How the 12 articles in the “Review of Literature” section were tied to additional actions at these two middle schools? Did some of the articles apply more directly to the School Culture Survey of this study”?

The 11 prior questions (especially if one considered the extra questions embedded within the 7 main questions) could have been asked or suggested for further research.

Overall, the responses from both schools were similar with a few differences noted. At School A, 24 teachers took the School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey. The top total score possible was again 125 points since the 25 questions had a score value ranging from one to five. The overall rating of each school was based on our current grading system in schools (9 or above was excellent, 8 was above average, 7 was average, 6 was poor, and 5 or below was failing).

For the School Culture and Climate Survey for School A, the majority of the teachers at School A had an average (or a grade of “C”) attitude toward the leadership in the school. Four teachers out of the 24 surveyed felt the new leadership was

demonstrating an above average performance, while 13 teachers indicated the new leadership was demonstrating an average performance. Five reported the new leadership was demonstrating poor performance and two teachers who indicated the new and current administration was failing. Approximately 8% of the teachers surveyed (2 of 24) in this School Culture and Climate Survey felt the current administration was demonstrating failing performance.

Based on the School Culture and Climate Survey for School B, the majority of teachers at School B also had an average (or a grade of “C”) attitude toward the leadership of the school. Two teachers of the 18 surveyed felt the school leadership was demonstrating excellent performance, while five teachers felt the school leadership was demonstrating an above average performance. Also, three teachers of the 18 surveyed felt the school leadership was demonstrating average performance, while two teachers felt the current administration was demonstrating poor performance. Finally, six teachers surveyed considered the administration to be demonstrating failing performance. Approximately 33% of the teachers surveyed (6 of 18) in this School Culture and Climate Survey for School B felt the current administration was demonstrating failing performance. This appeared to be significant because basically one-third of the teachers felt the administration was failing.

In conclusion, this School Culture and Climate Survey reflected opinions and attitudes of teachers of both School A and School B. The Suggestions for Further Research provided additional ways to modify or add to this study. The results of this

survey could be used to develop strategies to boost the morale of all teachers at both schools. This could be done with the recognition or celebration of teacher and student accomplishments (such as improvement in KPREP scores as well as inclusion of all stakeholders and staff in the decision-making process at School A and School B. This would take work, requiring the current administration at both schools to have the skill and desire to see that was accomplished.

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Appendices

Appendix A

School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey

School Culture and Climate Teacher Survey					
The purpose of this study is to identify the current school climate and serve as a reference point for future study. Please answer the questions according to <i>current</i> attitudes, conditions, and practices. SA: Strongly Agree; A: Somewhat Agree; N: Neutral; D: Somewhat Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree					
Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Teachers are involved in making important decisions at this school.	5	4	3	2	1
2. My point of view matters in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Teacher input at this school guides curriculum changes.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Teacher input at this school guides policy changes.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Teachers with new ideas are encouraged.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Parents in this community are involved in their children's school experience.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Parents respect what teachers do.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Parents have a voice in curriculum change.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Parents have a voice in school policy change.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I contact parents to solve students' problems.	5	4	3	2	1
11. My colleagues support what I do.	5	4	3	2	1
12. My colleagues are valuable resources.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I meet with other teachers to develop new curriculum.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I think that most teachers in this school have a "can do" disposition.	5	4	3	2	1
15. When students are having problems, all their teachers meet together to seek solutions.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Teachers at this school work together to develop a schoolwide set of goals.	5	4	3	2	1
17. Faculty members at this school meet regularly (minimum of once a month) to discuss mutual concerns.	5	4	3	2	1
18. Disagreements among faculty and/or administration are handled to build consensus and minimize ill feelings.	5	4	3	2	1
19. This school district values teacher knowledge and experience.	5	4	3	2	1
20. This school district is committed to hiring and nurturing visionary, innovative leaders.	5	4	3	2	1
21. Before initiating policy change, district leaders consider the needs of teachers and students.	5	4	3	2	1
22. Information about policy change is communicated clearly in a timely fashion.	5	4	3	2	1
23. After initiating change, district leaders obtain teacher input to evaluate its effectiveness.	5	4	3	2	1
24. Difficult/challenging events at my school are acknowledged appropriately by district leaders.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Difficult/challenging events at my school are remedied by a responsive strategic plan.	5	4	3	2	1