IDENTIFYING THE MORAL TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP
BEHAVIORS AND ACTIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL PRINCIPAL THAT
POSITIVELY INFLUENCED A SCHOOL CULTURE

A Dissertation

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

In

Educational Leadership

By

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2016
SIGNATURE PAGE

DOCTORATE: IDENTIFYING THE MORAL TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND ACTIONS OF A SUCCESSFUL PRINCIPAL THAT POSITIVELY INFLUENCED A SCHOOL CULTURE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Betty Alford, for providing support to me throughout these past three years. As my chair, Dr. Alford spent countless hours reviewing my dissertation, offering feedback and sharing her knowledge about the relevant literature that pertained to my study. Her kindness and delicate nature helped motivate me to reach every milestone of this doctoral program. She has been my mentor and my compass through this journey, and for that I am forever grateful.

I would also like to thank Dr. Dorothy MacNevin and Dr. Tami Pearson. They both graciously accepted being part of my dissertation committee. Their knowledge and expertise has helped me develop a study that I am proud to share with others.

Lastly, I would like to thank my cohort colleagues. June, Rosa, Kevin and Mikara- we did it! We were able to successfully complete our dissertations because we developed a solid foundation of friendship and trust, and persevered through the most difficult challenges together. During the past three years we created a lifelong friendship, and I am so proud to call you my doctor friends.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation, with all my heart and love, to my amazing family. I worked all my life to make you proud and to be a positive role model for our family members. This doctorate is a symbol of our family’s strength and support, after all… it did take a village!

Mom, you have been a constant source of motivation for me. As a young girl, I experienced watching you fulfill your dreams while raising three children. Despite your workload and schooling, you always managed to put your family first. As a young girl, and now a mom myself, I am in constant awe of you. Thank you for moving to be with me and watching our baby Calvin. I honestly could not have reached this milestone without you by my side.

Dad, thank you for always taking the time to show pride of your children and instilling in us the confidence we needed to be successful. You are a genuine source of inspiration and you provided me with the guidance to grow as an educational leader. Your motto of leading by example motivated me to work hard in my profession every single day to truly make a difference.

Sister, together we developed lifelong dreams and ambitions as young girls. The most exciting part of our lives right now is that these dreams are now a reality for both of us! Thank you for inspiring me to reach for the stars and go above and beyond even my greatest dreams. Having you by my side has made this journey such a celebration.

Brother and Esther, thank you for modeling what it takes to be in a marriage and work as a team. Your love and sacrifices helped guide Art and me to make the right
decisions that are best for our growing family. Thank you for encouraging me to finish
my program and for cheering me on through it all.

Arthur, you are my best friend and my favorite dissertation editor. I know the
past three years have altered your life, and I thank you for taking this leap of faith in me.
I spent many long days at school and weekends away from you and Calvin, and you
always supported me through every step of the way. Thank you for encouraging me to
reach the finish line and editing my work. Thank you for making sure Calvin always
experienced laughter and adventure, having dinner ready every night, giving me time to
nap when I should have been helping around the house, and making the 100 percent
commitment to help me graduate. I had many hard days these past three years, but you
have always made them better and brighter. I love you.

Calvin and Lukas- my boys! Mama wants you to remember that anything is
possible! The delicate combination of determination, love, and support, will help you
make all your dreams a reality. Mama loves you and wants all the happiness in the world
to shower over you.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the moral transformative actions and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influenced a school culture in a high needs middle school. The following research questions helped frame the purpose of the study. These research questions assisted in fully exploring the topic of moral transformative leadership and the relationship to school culture: (1) What moral transformative beliefs of a successful principal influenced a positive school culture? and (2) What key leadership practices of a moral transformative principal influence a positive school culture? For this study, the method selected was a qualitative case study. The researcher analyzed data to determine if there were patterns or trends in answer to the research questions. A culture survey, interviews, and focus groups were also conducted in order to identify patterns or trends.

This research is important for any administrator or teacher who is interested in leading a high needs middle school, while positively influencing the school culture. In particular, the leaders who will benefit the most from this research are middle school leaders who want to move a school forward and improve the belief system and rituals of the current staff, in order to improve the academic and behavioral success of all of their students. This study will add to existing literature regarding moral transformative leadership.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Background to the Problem

Schools have an obligation to provide exemplary school leadership to children in our country. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) stressed that strengthening principal leadership capacity can dramatically improve school and organizational structure, as well as build a culture of collaboration. Leadership has a direct effect on learning, as their research shows that “of all the factors that contribute to what students learn at school, present evidence leads to the conclusion that leadership is second in strength only to classroom instruction” (p. 1). The continuous improvement of school leadership skills and traits proves to enhance student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004). Additionally, Leithwood, Aitken, and Jantzi (2006) asserted that good leadership can positively influence school culture, which fosters a sense of professional community. This idea is illustrated when Leithwood, Aitken and Jantzi (2006) asserted that “an implicit source of direction is to be found in the norms, values, beliefs and assumptions shared by members of the organization” (p. 67) that contribute to a significant positive affect to the quality of teaching and learning.

In addition, Louis and Wahlstrom (2013) believed that principal leadership has a direct effect on school culture. The central, and most difficult job of school leaders, is to ensure that a school culture focuses primarily on student learning and the improvement of classroom practices (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2013). The more positive changes that occur in the classroom, the more that change can positively affect instruction as “changes in culture have a strong relationship with instructional effectiveness in the classroom” (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2013, p. 56).
According to Muhammad (2009), it takes a strong ethical leader to positively influence a school culture. Muhammad (2009) asserted that transforming a school culture is not something that happens by luck. Rather, leaders have a direct effect on transforming a toxic school culture into a healthy school culture. In addition, McKenzie (2014), asserted the primary transmitters of school culture are those in leadership positions at the school site. Both Muhammad (2009) and McKenzie (2014) agreed that the behaviors of a school leader have a direct effect on school culture.

Noddings (2010) illuminated the idea that ethics, particularly the ethics of care, can ensure that the goals of moral education are met in classrooms and schools. From the perspective of care ethics, the primary aim of moral education is to produce people who will care for those in need and care about those who suffer (Noddings, 2012). In order for people to understand the ethics of care, there must be positive models that teach virtue and moral reasoning in schools (Noddings, 2012).

Similarly, Sergiovanni (2006) illuminated the idea that values and morals play a critical role in school leadership. Values consist of a careful combination of both mind and heart (Sergiovanni, 1992). A leader’s values are the basis of effective leadership, and effective leaders are always aware of values and morals at all times (Sergiovanni, 1992). This idea is illustrated when Sergiovanni (2006) stated:

Here the leader focuses on arousing awareness and consciousness that elevate school goals and purposes to the level of a shared covenant that binds together leader and follower in a moral commitment. Leadership by binding responds to such intrinsic human needs as a desire for purpose, meaning, and significance in what one does. (p. 165)
Adding a moral dimension to leadership that centers on a purpose, values and beliefs can ultimately make schools great, despite what may influence a child at home (Sergiovanni, 2006).

In addition, Fullan (2003) agreed that school teaching and leadership are moral endeavors. When Fullan (2003) describes moral endeavors, there is not one single definition, rather moral endeavors means that schools must prioritize moral conditions in order for students to gain a good education. These moral conditions include the development of personal, social, vocational, and academic attributes, as well as equity, fairness, care and civil interpersonal relationships (Fullan, 2003). Thus, it is up to the school leaders to ensure that this moral imperative is fulfilled in schools so that all students have the opportunity and access to succeed (Fullan, 2003).

In both past and present societies, the need for moral leaders is urgent. Society, and educational systems, need moral leaders to inspire us, help shape us morally, and motivate purposeful action (Coles, 2000). Coles (2000) illustrated that moral leaders follow up their words, with actions. Moral leaders demonstrate leadership by their actions. This means moral leaders focus on wanting the best for all people, but most importantly moral leaders teach by example. This is called the living of leadership (Coles, 2000).

The problem being addressed in this study was that moral transformational exemplars are needed to fully understand beliefs and actions of successful school principals who influence a school culture for a productive learning environment for all (Babo & Villaverde, 2013). This study identified the moral transformative leadership behaviors and actions of successful principals that positively influence a school culture.
Purpose of the Study

Strong leadership skills are needed to meet the demands of high need schools. According to Bader, Horman, and Lapointe’s study (2010), transformative leadership enables students to be successful in high needs schools. Quality principals are needed to reach teaching and learning goals, especially in low-income multicultural neighborhoods (Bader, Horman, & Lapointe, 2010). Principals must develop and refine leadership skills in order to better serve their changing demographics of student populations. In addition, Kearney (2005) stressed that principal leadership has a direct effect on student success. Likewise, Hoy, and Miskel (2008) believed that strong leaders have integrity. Integrity means to be honest, ethical, responsible and trustworthy.

The purpose of this study was to identify the moral transformative actions and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influenced a school culture. A literature review will highlight research that focuses on the most critical leadership and research based practices related to moral and transformational leadership that, with full implementation by effective principals, can positively affect a school culture and consequently improve the quality of education all students receive in schools.

Finally, the outcomes of this study serve to inform policymakers about the effectiveness of current principal evaluations in California, through a moral, transformative lens. Many of the themes that emerge in this study may be used as a component to the current principal evaluations. An understanding of the history of the policy will help guide the next steps for improving principal evaluations.

This research is important for any administrator or teacher that is interested in leading a high needs school, while positively influencing the school culture. In
particular, the leaders who will benefit the most from this research are middle school leaders who want to move a school forward and improve the belief system and rituals of the current staff in order to improve the academic and behavioral success of all of their students. This study will add to existing literature regarding moral transformative leadership.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions help frame the purpose of the study. These research questions assist in fully exploring the topic of moral transformative leadership and the relationship to school culture.

1. What moral transformative beliefs of a successful principal influenced a positive school culture?

2. What key leadership practices of a moral transformative principal influence a positive school culture?

In order to answer these research questions, data were collected by focus groups of teachers, parents and classified staff. Next, individual interviews of the school principal, assistant principal and counselor were conducted. Lastly, the researcher collected data by giving a school culture survey to the staff of the school that was being researched.

**Definition of Terms**

The key terms used throughout the study are briefly defined in this section. A more detailed explanation of each term is presented within this study.

**American Association of School Administrators (AASA):** Largest professional organization for school leaders in the Nation.
California Department of Education (CDE): An agency within the state of California that oversees public education.

California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL): Professional standards that all principals must meet each year, as part of their yearly evaluation. Using the key components of the ISSLC standards, the CPSEL have condensed the eleven foundational principals of the ISSLC standards to six CPSEL standards.

Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC): The CTC is responsible for setting the standards for educator preparation and accrediting the programs that offer educator preparation.

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO): Is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions.

Ethical Leadership: Starratt (1994) defines what it means to be a truly ethical person. Starratt believes that a truly ethical person has “habitual tendencies to tell the truth, to respect each person for who they are, to be fair and to be objective” (p. 29).

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards: The ISLLC standards were put in place so that there were a clear set of established standard of skills defined for effective leaders (Educational Leadership Standards: ISLLC 2008).

Moral Imperative: Fullan (2003) states that the moral imperative of schools involves the transformation of school culture. A deep cultural shift that is supported by the principal, teachers, parents and students will improve the learning of all students, while at the same time ensure a large scale sustainable change will reform the school. (p. 41).
Moral Leadership: Burns (1978) definition of moral leadership focused on key words such as mutual needs, values, change, aspirations, social change and authentic needs. Moral leadership was a means for a leader to genuinely help his or her followers, while at the same time bring about the necessary changes to help make an organization successful.

Moral Purpose: According to Fullan (2003), moral purpose is “having a system where all students learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens and workers in a morally based knowledge society” (p. 6).

National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA): In 2015, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders document, which does not include references to ISLLC, focuses more on students and instruction.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act, which supports standards based education reform.

Organizational Culture: a primary influence on a school setting. Owens (2004) states that organization, also known as a social system, “includes how the school is organized, they ways in which decisions are made and who is involved in making them…” (p. 179).

Professional Ethics: According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2014), professional ethics is a dynamic process in which administrators must develop their own personal and professional codes. These codes, however, are left up to the experiences and life stories of the principal. They are not codes that can be taught and learned, rather administrators must “grapple’ with these codes.

Race to the Top Initiative: United States Department of Education grant created rewards and spurred innovation and reforms in K-12 education.
**School Culture:** School culture can be defined as “a set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the ‘persona’ of the school” (Cromwell, 2002, p. 4). School culture is composed of the norms and beliefs of all stakeholders of the school community, including students, teachers, parents, and community members.

**Senate Bill Number 1292:** Requires the superintendent to “provide instruction and training to school administrators in various areas, including, among others, school financial and personnel management, instructional leadership and management strategies, and the use of state and local pupil assessments (California Legislative Information, 2015).

**Transformational Leadership:** Burns (1978) defines transformational leadership as “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 134).

**Assumptions**

Several assumptions underlie this study:

- When surveys, interviews and focus groups were conducted, the researcher assumed that all accounts regarding the school principal and the culture of the school were truthfully depicted.
- Participants were informed that all data gathered would remain confidential. It was assumed that participants would be willing to share information on a confidential basis.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The following limitations, which focus on the methodology, apply to this study:
1. Qualitative case studies are limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator (Merriam, 2009).

2. In this study, the research was limited to one school and the leadership practices of one school principal in an urban school District.

3. The findings of the study were limited on the reliability and validity of the instruments and the researcher.

4. The findings of the study were limited to the data that was collected.

5. Results were limited to describing the phenomenon on the study, rather than predicting future behavior.

The following delimitations, which focus on the study parameters, apply to this study:

1. Only one school district was used in this study.

2. Only one school, grade 6-8 was included in this study.

3. Only one school principal was included in this study.

**Significance of the Study**

Effective school leadership can positively influence staff, students, and parents. Strong leaders can shape the vision of the school, close achievement gaps, build relationships with all stakeholders, increase test scores, and create positive school cultures while at the same time manage a school efficiently. A lack of morality in education simply threatens the success of school age children. A case study that identifies the moral transformative actions and behaviors of successful principals who positively influence a school culture can give leaders data and knowledge regarding the extent they can grow as moral leaders. The results of this study will help inform principals about successful moral transformative leadership behaviors.
Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction and background of the study, the purpose of the study, the research questions, definition of terms, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, the significance of the study and organization of the study. Chapter 2 presents an introduction of the chapter, the theoretical frameworks, an in depth review of the literature as it relates to moral and transformative leadership behaviors and school culture, and a summary of the chapter. Chapter 3 provides a description of the methodology used for this research. The chapter begins with an overview of the research study, a rationale for selection of the research method, the setting of the study, data sources, data collection, provisions of trustworthiness, and the role of the researcher, limitations and a summary of the chapter. Chapter 4 presents the study’s findings. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the research, as well as conclusions, implications and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Leadership is the catalyst for making schools smarter (Leithwood, Aitken, & Jantzi, 2006). Without good leadership, schools can fail to produce quality work and successful students (Leithwood et al., 2006). For example, according to Leithwood et al (2006), “without good leadership, the potential contributions of other important people and conditions in schools and districts remain untapped, muted, or just plain fail to materialize” (p. 59). Thus, successful schools are highly dependent on successful principals.

The purpose of this study was to identify the moral transformative beliefs and practices of successful principals that positively influence a school culture. A literature review highlighted research that focused on the key leadership and research based practices related to moral and transformational leadership that, with full implementation by effective principals, can influence a school culture and consequently improve the quality of education all students receive in schools.

Finally, the outcomes of this study informs policymakers about the effectiveness of current principal evaluations in California, through a moral and transformational lens. Many of the themes that emerged in this study may be used as a component to the current principal evaluations. An understanding of the importance of moral transformative leadership could influence policymakers in guiding the next steps for improving principal evaluations.

In this chapter, the theoretical frameworks that best support the purpose of the study will first be discussed to frame the research. Next, a detailed review of literature
will support highlight both past and current research related to the topic of this study.

Finally, a discussion of the policy related to moral transformative leadership is analyzed.

Theoretical Frameworks

A theoretical framework is an integral part of a research study because a theoretical framework is “the underlying structure, the scaffolding or frame of your study” (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam (2009), theoretical frameworks are used in research studies because they support and inform research. In this study, two theoretical frameworks will be analyzed in order to frame the questions being asked in regards to moral transformative leadership and positively transforming a school culture. The two theoretical frameworks are transformational leadership theory and moral leadership theory. A discussion of Bolman and Deal’s (2008) human resource frame will also be discussed to illustrate how leadership practices are highly influenced by developing strong relationships with people.

Transformational leadership theory. This study focuses on the transformational leadership theory first presented by Burns (1978). The most influential characteristics of a moral leader can be tied to the theoretical framework of Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978). Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 134). According to Burns (1978), this type of transformational leader is considered a moral leader. Burns (1978) goes further to state that moral leadership can raise the level of conduct of a system, thus improving the overall ethical beliefs of the system as well. The reoccurring theme is that transformational leadership focuses on creating a positive change for each individual of
an organization, as well as the caring for the overall well-being of the organization as a whole. In addition, according to transformational leadership theory, leaders use inspiration and idealized influence to gain trust and respect from members of an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The limitation of this theory is that more research needs to be done to define clearly how and why transformational leadership makes a difference in organizations.

According to Warrilow (2009), there are four types of leadership components to transformational leadership theory, which are:

1. Charisma or idealized influence - the degree to which the leader behaves in admirable ways and displays convictions and takes stands that cause followers to identify with the leader who has a clear set of values and acts as a role model for the followers.

2. Inspirational motivation - the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing to and inspires the followers with optimism about future goals, and offers meaning for the current tasks in hand.

3. Intellectual stimulation - the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, stimulates and encourages creativity in the followers - by providing a framework for followers to see how they connect [to the leader, the organization, each other, and the goal] they can creatively overcome any obstacles in the way of the mission.

4. Personal and individual attention - the degree to which the leader attends to each individual follower's needs and acts as a mentor or coach and gives respect to and appreciation of the individual's contribution to the team. (p. 10)
In addition to the work of Burns, Bernard Bass (1985) illuminated the idea that transformational leadership can be measured by a leader's influence on the followers and the leader’s success in seeking new ways for working. This definition takes transformational leadership one step further as organizations are able to apply the measure to their own leaders.

Bass and Aviolo (1994) discussed that transformational leadership is when “leaders motivate other to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve at higher performances” (p. 136). In addition, Bass and Aviolo stress that in order to be a transformational leader you must have a high moral development in order to make a strong impact. Transformational leaders focus on the higher-order, intrinsic, and moral motives (Sergiovanni, 2006).

**Moral leadership theory.** In the process of defining transformational leadership, the work of both Burns and Bass led to the development of an even higher level of leadership, called moral leadership (Owens, 2004). Moral leadership theory is a direct product of the Transformational Leadership Theory. According to Owens (2004), Moral leadership is made up of three related ideas:

1. The relationship between a leader and followers is a direct result of a genuine sharing of mutual needs, aspirations and values
2. The led have informed choices to make as to whom to follow and why
3. Moral leader’s goal is to address the wants, needs, values and aspirations of his or her followers. (p. 270)
The human resource frame. Both moral leadership and transformational leadership are best understood under the human resource frame. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), “the human resource frame centers on what organizations and people do to and for one another” (p. 113). The human resource frame juxtaposed by moral transformative leadership puts people first. The human resource frame stresses that:

- Organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the converse
- People and organizations need each other. Organizations need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries and opportunities.
- When the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer. Individuals are exploited or exploit the organization—or both become victims.
- A good fit benefits both. Individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed. (p. 117)

If human needs are first met (through the human resource frame), then moral and transformative leadership are possible to execute in an organization. Without the human resource frame present, being visionary, being a servant leader, upholding ethics, and upholding values (the reoccurring themes found in moral and transformational leadership), would not be possible. If a leader desires to truly transform a school culture, then they must develop a relationship with people first and meet their basic needs (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Organization of the Literature Review

This literature review first focuses on the definitions of the pertinent topics of the problem including school leadership, moral leadership, transformational leadership,
school culture, the culture of care, ethical leadership, high needs schools and middle school leadership. Next, a history of principal leadership and principal evaluation standards will be discussed. Finally, conclusions of the literature will be shared in order to summarize the literature findings.

School leadership. Louis and Wahlstrom (2013) stressed that school leadership has the greatest influence on learning, second only to the influence of teachers. School leadership, intertwined with an instructional focus, has a positive impact on student learning (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2013). Louis and Wahlstrom (2013) discussed the usefulness of describing leadership in terms of two general functions, which is clarifying focus and exerting influence. Positive school leadership sets a focus for the school and as a result, that leadership influences the school to move in a positive direction. As an instructional leader, the principal functions as the central figure, who exerts direct influence on individual teachers to positively influence the quality of teaching and learning (Louis and Wahlstrom, 2013).

Moral leadership. It is important to compare and contrast the definitions from both past and present researchers to gain a complete understanding of moral leadership. Moral leadership simultaneously emerged in both business and education. Both business and educational perspectives are shared to give a richer context of the development of moral leadership.

Moral leadership from a business perspective. Burns (1978) first defined moral leadership when discussing leadership studies in political and business leadership. Burns (1978) stated:
This last concept, *moral leadership*, concerns me the most. By this term I mean,
first, that leaders and led have a relationship not only of power but of mutual
needs, aspirations, and values: second, that in responding to leaders, followers
have adequate knowledge of alternative leaders and programs and the capacity to
choose among those alternatives; and, third, that leaders take responsibility for
their commitments if they promise certain kinds of economic, social, and political
change, they assume leadership in the bringing about of that change. Moral
leadership is not mere preaching, or the uttering of pieties, or the insistence on
social conformity. Moral leadership emerges from, and always returns to, the
fundamental wants and needs, aspirations, and values of the followers. I mean the
kind of leadership that will produce social change that will satisfy followers'
authentic needs. (p. 4)

Burns’ (1978) definition of moral leadership focused on key words such as mutual
needs, values, change, aspirations, social change and authentic needs. Moral leadership
was a means for a leader to genuinely help his or her followers, while at the same time
bring about the necessary changes to help make an organization successful. One of the
limitations of this definition of moral leadership is that the definition is not clear. The
definition encompasses many different views of moral leadership, without using one
definition to concretely say what moral leadership means in education.

Erickson and Reller’s (1979) research also focused on defining moral leadership.
Like Burns (1978), Erickson and Reller (1979) attempt to define moral leadership from
many different lenses. Most notable, moral leadership was defined as these four ideas:
1. A moral agent must base his decisions on principles that apply to classes of situations, not on a whim of the moment or a predilection for one particular kind of situation. These principles must be meant for all human beings; they should not benefit or burden any group or class within society. The principles must also be impartial, or, stated another way, the effect must be reversible. This means that an actor must be willing to adhere to the principles even if his role in the moral situation were to be reversed and he was the one to whom the principle was being applied.

2. A moral agent should consider the welfare and interests of all who stand to be affected by his decision or action, including himself.

3. A moral agent has the obligation to base his decision on the most complete information relative to the decision that he can obtain.

4. A conscientious moral agent's moral judgements are prescriptive. He must acknowledge that, when he has fully examined a situation calling for his decision and reached a conclusion, he has thereby answered the question: What ought I to do? If he acts otherwise, it is through weakness of will or through failure to take the moral obligation seriously. (p. 208-209)

Erikson and Reller’s (1979) definition of moral leadership focuses on key words such as welfare, interest, and obligation. Their definition of moral leadership focuses on doing what is best for all human beings. One of the limitations of this definition of moral leadership, similar to Burns (1978) is that the definition encompasses a wide range of views and does not focus on one area in particular.
Moral leadership from an educational perspective. The following researchers have illuminated the historical shift of moral leadership from business to education. Kohlberg and Hersh (1977) illuminated the idea that moral leadership can be directly applied to the practice of teaching. Kohlberg and Hersh (1977) asserted that there is no denying the fact that morals play an integral part of education, however schools are not considered “legitimate institutions of moral education” (p. 53), as that has been reserved for the family and/or church. Kohlberg and Hersh (1977) established the stages of moral development to organize this thought of moral education. The six stages of moral development stress that all people, most importantly children, have the capability and the “psychological capacity to progress to higher (and therefore more adequate) stages of moral reasoning” (Kohlberg & Hersh, p. 55). Thus, according to Kohlberg and Hersh, “the aim of education ought to be the personal development of students toward more complex ways of reasoning” (p. 55). Despite this understanding, Kohlberg and Hersh illuminated the fact that many schools are not moral institutions, rather relationships are often built from authority rather than justice or democracy.

Sergiovanni (1992) explained moral leadership as a set of values that are either innate or non-existent in school leaders. According to Sergiovanni, a person’s “values play an important part in constructing an administrator’s mindscape and in determining leadership practice” (p. 9). Possessing value systems, in conjunction with management skills and leadership practices, enable principals to “account for a new kind of leadership-one based on moral authority” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 16). It is this kind of leadership that can create a sense of community within a school and transform a school culture. Sergiovanni (1992) stressed that “the heart of the school as moral community is its
covenant of shared values. This covenant provides a basis for determining [the school’s] morality” (p. 108). Sergiovanni explained his perspective of moral leadership when he stated:

The management values now considered legitimate are biased toward rationality, logic, and objectivity, the importance of self-interest, explicitness, individuality, and detachment. Emphasizing these values causes us to neglect emotions, the importance of group membership, sense and meaning, morality, self-sacrifice, duty, and obligation as additional values. Furthermore, the bases of authority for today’s leadership practice rely heavily on bureaucracy, psychological knowledge or skill, and the technical rationality that emerges from theory and research. Emphasizing these three bases causes us to neglect professional and moral authority as additional bases for leadership practice. What we need is an expanded theoretical and operational foundation for leadership practice that will give balance to the full range of values and authority. I refer to this expanded foundation as the moral dimension in leadership. (p. xiii)

Sergiovanni’s (1992) definition of moral leadership focused on key words such as values, moral authority and shared values. Sergiovanni’s definition illuminated the importance of having common values within a school community. Sergiovanni’s definition of moral leadership stressed that shared values determines a school’s overall morality. His definition of moral leadership directly tied to the organization of the school.

Additionally, Starratt (1994) stressed how moral leadership has shifted into the realm of education. Starratt (2004) described how following the three ethical leadership
virtues in schools—responsibility, authenticity and presence—all improve teacher capacity, student learning outcomes and positively transform school cultures. Starratt stressed that the three ethical leadership virtues energize and motivate both school workers and school leaders.

First, the ethical virtue of responsibility requires that school leaders value both leadership and learning (Starratt, 2004). This means that building teacher capacity must take priority through the means of professional development and the evaluation of professional development. Second, Starratt (2004) illustrated that the ethic of authenticity always puts students and teachers first. This idea is illuminated when Starratt (2011) states, authentic leadership is about “attending authentically to the good of the communal work of teaching and learning. The authentic educator lives with the daily challenge of effecting that good, despite institutional and personal limitations” (p. 92). Third, the ethical virtue of presence requires a school leader to treat all people with dignity and worth and has the capability to share talents, good ideas and enrich the school community (Starratt, 2011). To sum up, the exercise of the moral virtues of responsibility, authenticity and presence all shape and improve the actions and behaviors of a moral leader (Starratt, 2011).

Michael Fullan (2003) defined moral leadership as having a system where all students can learn (p.10). Fullan (2003) illuminated this idea: “Moral purpose at the highest order is having a system where all students can learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens and workers in a morally based knowledge society” (p. 8). Fullan
(2003) further stated that moral leaders demonstrate high levels of integrity towards both teachers and students and share both mutual trust and respect.

Fullan’s definition of moral leadership focused on key words such as learn, performance, successful, integrity, trust and respect. Like Sergiovanni (1992) and Starratt (2004), Fullan (2003) illuminated the importance of having common values within a school community so that all students are successful. Fullan’s (2003) definition of moral leadership stresses that shared values determine a school’s overall morality. His definition of moral leadership directly ties to the organization of the school and highlights the idea that integrity in a leader can positively influence a school.

Dantley and Tillman (2010) articulated the importance of moral transformative leadership in schools. Moral transformative leadership has three characteristics:

1. Moral transformative leadership focuses on the use as well as the abuse of power in institutional settings

2. Moral transformational leadership deconstructs the work of school administration in order to unearth how leadership practices generate and perpetuate inequities and the marginalization of members of the learning community who are outside the school culture

3. Moral transformative leadership sees schools as sites that not only engage in academic pursuits, but also as locations that help to create activists to bring out the democratic reconstruction of society. (p. 19)

Taylor (2011) spoke of the lack of morality in schools today and asserted that there is an increasing moral crisis in school leadership. Additionally, Taylor (2011) defined moral leadership as a leader who “is visionary and encourages others to be visionary and
engages in empowering educational activities, both as student as a teacher” (p. 8). Taylor (2011) highlighted the moral dilemma that schools face without moral leaders running effective schools. Taylor’s (2011) complete definition of moral leadership stated:

1. Be visionary and encourage others to be visionary
2. Engage in empowering educational activities, both as student and as teacher
3. Encourage others and to bring joy to their hearts
4. Build unity while cultivating diversity
5. Oppose one’s self-centered tendencies by turning towards one’s higher purpose, for existence
6. Understand relationships of dominance and be able to facilitate their transformation into relationships of inter-dependence, reciprocity, and service.

Taylor’s (2011) definition of moral leadership focused on key words such as vision, engage, and empower, unity, diversity and higher purpose. Taylor stressed that leadership is focused around service to others. Taylor’s definition of moral leadership explained the importance of having moral leaders run effective schools. His definition tied in aspects of visionary leadership, servant leadership and transformational leadership.

Future work that could be done with Taylor’s research, like his predecessors before him, is developing a solitary concrete definition of what it means to be a moral leader in schools today.

**Moral leadership themes.** The following themes emerged in the literature discussing moral leadership practices in school principals. These themes illuminated the types of practices principals can partake in to create effective schools and successful students.
Although the following literature is dated, it provides a foundation to moral leadership. Harmin (1988) asserted that moral leaders advance moral values within their teachers and staff. He stated, “While I do not recommend that we promote one personal value over another, I wholeheartedly recommend that we promote our heritage of moral values” (p. 26). According to Harmin (1988), a moral principal must take the time to revisit what it takes to be a moral leader in schools today. Harmin (1988) goes on to describe key areas that principals can focus on to foster moral heritage in schools. These areas include encouraging teachers and staff to state their personal positions, encourage teachers to thoroughly explain rules to students so they are part of the learning process, ask teachers to speak forthrightly for their values, and increase the amount of moral experiences teachers and staff experience by asking them to model their own behavior (Harmin, 1988).

Moral leaders encourage value directed learning in all students: Moral values can be advanced by encouraging value directed learning in students (Harmin, 1988). Value directed learning is a process in which moral skills are refined so that student’s carry on the beliefs of their moral leaders. According to Harmin (1988), morals refer to those values that have a good or right associated with them. Value directed skills include:

- Opening our minds and being receptive to other’s points of view
- Anticipate consequences and think before you act
- Sense your inner guidance or intuition
- Make informed decisions and choices
- Act on your ideas
- Persist
Harmin (1988) believed that leaders must foster and encourage moral values in children, so that each child realizes and reaches their highest potential to succeed.

According to Taylor (2011), moral leaders empower teachers to become change agents to overcome inequities. Teachers must reaffirm their power as change agents to provide authentic learning environments for their students. Taylor (2011) also asserted that “the present accountability mandates that quality teachers are facing in today’s classrooms has diminished the teaching morale to a lesser degree” (p. 6), thus causing teachers to be less motivated to go above and beyond their job description. Despite the pressure that accountability systems put on even the most highly qualified teachers, these teachers must rise above the criticisms and scrutiny to provide the most authentic type of learning for their students. According to Taylor (2011), principals must encourage their teachers to serve as change agents. Change agents seek out ways to be innovative and effective at maximizing student’s potential and performance, despite any hardships they may face (Taylor, 2011).

The culture of care. Beck (1994) illuminated the idea that care in central education administration. According to Beck (1994), leaders can create a culture of care by focusing on the personal development of individuals, while at the same time focusing on what is best for the school community. With the right beliefs and actions in place, Beck (1994) believed that social problems could be eliminated and academic performance improved. Beck (1994) discussed leadership as moral endeavor, which enables a school leader to daily reflect on how both ethics and justice influences their school community.
Likewise, the belief that schools have both an ethical and social responsibility is evident in the work of Nel Noddings (2012). Noddings (2012) described the ethics of care as an important part of a leader’s life. Care ethics focuses on empathizing with people and treating people with respect and dignity, while being attentive to their needs. (Nodding, 2012). Nodding (2012) asserted that “the words care, attention, empathy, response, reciprocity, and receptivity all have special meaning in care ethics, and caring—far more than a fuzzy feeling— is a moral way of life” (p. 56).

**School culture.** School culture can be defined as “a set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the ‘persona’ of the school” (Cromwell, 2002, p. 4). School culture is composed of the norms and beliefs of all stakeholders of the school community, including students, teachers, parents, and community members. Positive school culture is where “there’s an informal network of heroes and heroines and an informal grapevine that passes along information about what’s going on in a school…[a] set of values that supports professional development of teachers, a sense of responsibility for student learning, and a positive, caring atmosphere” (Cromwell, 2002, p. 15). On the contrary, a toxic school culture is one where “teacher relations are often conflictual, the staff does not believe in the ability of the students to succeed and a generally negative attitude prevails” (Cromwell, 2002, p. 18).

Muhammad (2009) stressed that it takes a strong leader to change a negative, or toxic school culture, into a positive school culture. Muhammad (2009) asserted, “Transforming a toxic school culture marked by significant staff division into a healthy one does not happen by luck. Skillful leadership and a focus on key areas of school operation are critical to this process” (p. 115).
According to McKenzie (2014), the primary transmitters of school culture are those in leadership positions at the school site. This idea is illuminated when McKenzie (2014) asserted, “How we as leaders act and react sets a cultural tone. That tone rings out and is heard at a deep and often unconscious level by the rest of the staff. More times than not, they begin humming along to the tune that we have been playing” (p. 23). Therefore, it is the school leaders who can influence a school culture the most, as principal positions are key in the area of transforming school culture (McKenzie, 2014).

Balzack (2010) defined culture as “the frame within which we operate and the lens through which we view the organization” (p. 1). Everything within a school culture is ultimately affected by school culture. Balzack (2010) goes on to say that culture “is successful if it is in harmony with its environment and unsuccessful if it is unable to function in its environment” (p. 3). This definition is similar to Muhammad’s (2009) idea of a positive versus toxic school culture. In addition, Balzack asserted that culture teaches people in an organization how to behave, live and be happy. Therefore, culture can be extremely hard to change because it would mean changing people’s “fundamental view of the world” (Balzack, 2010, p. 2).

Similar to McKenzie (2014), Balzack (2010) stressed that leaders have tremendous power to shape culture through various means. Leaders are supposed to lead by example, and this can be a primary influence on school culture. In addition, “what a leader pays attention to and how a leader responds to a crisis, deals with disagreements, treats those around him, and behaves in general will all feed into the culture of the organization” (Balzack, 2010, p. 4). Balzack (2010) asserted that “culture is the biggest, most powerful, and least understood piece of organizational development. It is often
Turan and Bektas (2013) defined school culture as “a complex process that involves many variables, such as socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology and influence” (p. 156). Every school has a distinct and unique culture that is shaped by the people that make up the organization. According to Turan and Bektas (2013), the principal’s main task is to create a positive school culture that will in turn create a strong school culture. Once the principal is able to create a positive school culture, then all stakeholders will be able to take pride and ownership over their school. In addition, Turan and Bektas (2013) asserted that “good leaders have the power to change organizations, while better leaders have the power to change people” because “human beings are at the heart of organizations” (p. 157). Investing time in people can help transform a school culture (Turan & Bektas, 2013).

Owens (2004) defined organizational culture as a primary influence on a school setting. Owens (2004) stated that organization, also known as a social system, “includes how the school is organized, the ways in which decisions are made and who is involved in making them…” (p. 179). Owens (2004) expressed that school culture is:

a system of shared values and beliefs that interact with an organization’s people, organizational structures and control systems to produce behavioral norms. In practical terms, shared values means “what is important”; beliefs mean “what we think is true”; and behavioral norms means “how we do things around here”. (p. 183)
Organizational culture gives an encompassing definition of a school and what influences the culture of the school. Owens (2004) goes further to state that organizational culture has the following elements:

1. It is a body of solutions to external and internal problems that has worked consistently for a group and that is therefore taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think about, and feel in relation to those problems.

2. These eventually come to be assumptions about the nature of reality, truth, time, space, human nature, human activity and human relationships.

3. Over time, these assumptions come to be taken for granted and finally drop out of awareness. Indeed, the power of culture lies in the fact that it operates as a set if unconscious, unexamined assumptions that are taken for granted. (p. 185)

Louis and Wahlstrom (2013) asserted that school culture matters. Not only is school culture a critical element to effective leadership, but culture is strongly shaped by the leader himself (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2013). Louis and Wahlstrom (2013) defined school culture by describing what school culture is not. Louis and Wahlstrom (2013) believed a weaker culture has a single leader who directs the work of others and is an authority figure. Thus, schools are greatly influenced by leaders that cooperatively work with others to benefit mutually agreed upon ideas.

The limitation to all of the definitions that focus on school culture is that they encompass various aspects of the culture of an organization. However, one reoccurring theme throughout the various definitions is that organizational culture is vital, as “the power of values and culture in these corporations…provides the glue that holds them together, stimulates commitment to a common mission, and galvanizes the creativity and
energy of the participants” (Owens, 2004, p. 182). Culture has the ability to simultaneously halt or catapult change within a school (Owens, 2004).

**Ethical leadership.** In education, ethics means that there are basic values in which schools should uphold. The historical context of ethics is best understood by the works of John Dewey (1938/2009) in his discussion pertaining to the concepts of democracy in education. Dewey (1938/2009) stressed that democracy is the key to a successful education. Dewey (1938/2009) made an early connection to schools and morality stating, “The learning in school should be continuous with that out of the school. There should be free interplay between the two” (p. 52). Dewey (1938/2009) recognized that schools should uphold the same moral and ethical responsibility for children as we would expect for them as members of society.

According to Lickona (1989), the two most basic values schools need are respect and responsibility. People should respect each other, as well as their reputation and property. Likewise, people should respect themselves. Respect “is the root principle behind many ethical ‘don’ts’” (Lickona, 1989, p. 44). Responsibility means caring for each other. Lickona (1989) emphasized the importance of respect and responsibility when he stated:

A responsibility urges us to think of others, to help others in need, to honor a contract with another person, to be loyal and trustworthy. Whereas the virtue of respect counsels us not to engage in stereotyping, the virtue of responsibility counsels us to build community with all people. Not only am I obliged not to hurt someone; I am obliged to care for them. (p. 44-45)
Similarly, Starratt (1994) defined what it means to be a truly ethical person. Starratt believed that a truly ethical person has “habitual tendencies to tell the truth, to respect each person for who they are, to be fair and to be objective” (p. 29). Additionally, Starratt (1994) asserted that:

I believe a truly ethical person acts as an autonomous agent, acts within the supports and constraints of relationships, and acts in ways that transcend immediate self-interest. In other words, the ethical person has developed relatively mature qualities of autonomy, connectedness and transcendence. (p. 30)

To explain further, Starratt (2004) explained that an autonomous person is independent and does what is right. Having a quality of connectedness means a person is connected and invested to each individual relationship. Transcendence means that an ethical person will go above and beyond what is expected, and always seeking excellence in every situation.

**Critical ethical perspective.** According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2014), professional ethics is a dynamic process in which administrators must develop their own personal and professional codes. These codes, however, are left up to the experiences and life stories of the principal (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2014). They are not codes that can be taught and learned, rather administrators must “grapple” with these codes (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2014). Shapiro and Stefkovich (2014) stressed that “by grappling, we meant that these educational leaders have struggled over issues of justice, critique, and care related to the education of youth” and have made “ethical decisions in light of their best professional judgment, a judgment that places the vest interests of the student at the
center” (p. 23). Many of the decisions that principals make are due to their own beliefs and judgement.

In order to address the dynamic process of professional ethics, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2014) highlighted the importance of accountability versus responsibility. When it comes to analyzing principal leadership, especially through a moral transformative leadership lens, both concepts are equally important. For example, the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) are the standards of the profession in which all administrators are asked to follow to meet the best interests of the student. This is called educational accountability. However, in order to follow the standards of the profession, a principal must have their own personal and professional code of ethics. This is called ethical leadership and educational responsibility. Both accountability and responsibility ensure that the best interest of all students is met.

**High needs schools.** It is imperative that effective moral transformative leaders are placed in high need schools (Bader et al., 2010). According to Bader et al.’s (2010) study, transformative leadership enables students to be successful in high needs schools. Quality principals are needed to reach teaching and learning goals, especially in low-income multicultural neighborhoods (Bader et al., 2010). Principals must develop and refine leadership skills in order to better serve their students most in need.

In addition, moral leaders must hire high performing and highly qualified teachers in order to meet high need school’s expectations (Glazerman & Max, 2011). Students from low-income and minority backgrounds have less access to teacher quality (Glazerman & Max, 2011). According to Glazerman and Max (2011), “overall trends indicate that low-income and minority students have unequal access, on average, to the
highest performing teachers” (p. 6). Additional inequities include less teacher experience, lower test scores, less than qualified post-baccalaureate coursework and insufficient certification.

Next, moral leaders should focus on increasing the engagement and motivation in all students (Farris, 2011). Engagement and motivation in students must be increased so that each student will achieve their highest potential (Farris, 2011). Student engagement represents the effort, both in time and energy, students commit to educational activities (Kuh, 2001). The more students are engaged, the more likely that they will develop a personal connection to school and increase their sense of self-worth. According to Farris (2011), a student’s lack of achievement is not always related to his or her ability to learn. Rather, there have been inadequate opportunities for minority students to use their strengths, skills and experiences in certain classroom environments (Farris, 2011).

Last, moral leaders should create inclusive and equitable schools. Strong leaders who create inclusive and equitable schools proactively serve all students and their families with honor (Bader et al., 2010). According to Bader et al. (2010), schools should be centered on a vision of social justice, equity and action for emancipation. The reason being is that principals should take into account that power and privilege affect student achievement outcomes. In addition, Reeves and Tuyle (2014) asserted that in order for students to feel welcomed to as school, the school must proactively serve all students and their families with equity and honor, and advocate on their behalf. Advocacy, honor and equity will ensure that every student has the same opportunity to learn and thrive in the classroom (Reeves & Tuyle, 2014).
Middle school leadership. Middle schools are faced with the task of maximizing student achievement, while carefully navigating through the dilemmas of middle school. Jackson and Davis (2000) explained “The main purpose of middle grades education is to promote young adolescents’ intellectual development” (p. 10). However, this purpose may simply be harder to achieve than other grades.

Middle school leaders have experienced changing roles over the years as their role has gradually shifted from task managers to instructional leaders (Valentine, Maher, Quinn, & Irvin, 1999). Middle school leaders are asked to move beyond solitary leadership practices to a shared leadership role that involves all stakeholders (Leithwood et al., 2004). Shared leadership roles promote the involvement of the entire school community in a shared decision making process (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Jackson and Davis (2000) stressed that balancing academic rigor and developmentally appropriate practices is a key issue for the middle schools. Successful middle schools balance developmental needs and intertwine those needs with academic and curricular needs (Jackson & Davis, 2000). According to Jackson and Davis (2000), characteristics of successful middle schools include: an supportive and safe environment that focuses on health and wellness, teachers and staff who value working with and are prepared to teach to adolescents with multiple teaching and learning needs, an adult who advocates for all students, school/family/community partnerships, and assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning.

Equity to education is also a concern in the middle schools. Lower-income communities and students with special needs tend to have the most difficulty in achieving academic success (Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, & Petzko, 2004). All school leaders
should be aware that “students do not have access to the same material and culture capital outside school” (Bader et al., 2011, p. 26).

**Principal Evaluation Standards and Policy**

The key policy that directly relates to principal leadership and evaluation are the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL). In order to understand the CPSEL current policy, the history of the CPSEL must be clearly understood. Below is a description of the CPSEL’s, and the relationship to principal evaluation policy.

In 1996, the Council of Chief State School officers adopted a national policy for school leaders called the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). The ISLLC standards were put in place so that there were a clear set of established standard of skills defined for effective leaders (Educational Leadership Standards: ISLLC 2008). In 2004, CPSEL were “adopted as part of the standards based program for the Administrative Services Clear Credential which licenses a broad range of education leaders” (California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders: CPSEL 2014). After this adoption, many local districts, moved forward with including the CPSEL in their principal evaluation process. As a result, Senate Bill Number 1292 included the CPSEL as part of the principal evaluation bill, which gave CPSEL even more importance in California (CLI, 2015).

The events that have triggered this policy activity and change have been the research done regarding principal effectiveness and the relationship between effective principals and effective schools. According to Kearney (2005), it is without question that leadership really does matter because “highly accomplished principals are key levers for
district and school improvement and increased student achievement” (p. 18). Thus, high quality principals can help schools reach student success. However, Kearney (2005) asserts that there is a downfall when it comes to leadership evaluation and development in schools, because “outdated administrator policies and practices fall far down the list of district priorities” (p. 18). For these reasons, it is important that principal leadership and evaluation policies be improved.

Consequently, these research findings, as well as the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), has fueled the entire education system to re-evaluate the current policies in place to evaluate principals. Babo and Villaverde (2013) developed the idea that:

This all-encompassing new focus then begs for not just an equitable and comprehensive system of principal evaluation but also, more importantly, a fully developed, logical, fair platform for continued professional development and growth if the country’s principals are going to reach their full potential as superior instructional leaders. (p. 93)

**Current Policy and Context**

The following research discusses the current policy regarding principal evaluation that the context in which principal evaluations are currently utilized in schools. The standards below pertain specifically to moral transformative leaders.

**Interstate school leaders licensure consortium standards.** The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards were created in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration by the Council of Chief
State School Officers (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium [ISLLC], 2014). According to the 2014 ISLLC standards introduction,

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public. (p. 1)

The CCSSO created the standards in hopes to encapsulate the expectations they had for all school administrators. The standards are foundational principles that focus on student achievement. According to the 2014 brief, the biggest difference between the 1996 version and the 2014 version, are the leadership domains that focus on instructional leadership, also known as “leadership for learning” (ISLLC, 2014). The 2014 ISSLC standards that are pertinent to moral transformative leadership are as follows:

1. An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a child-centered vision of quality schooling that is shared by all members of the school community.

2. An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by promoting the development of an inclusive school climate characterized by supportive relationships and a personalized culture of care.
3. An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by promoting communities of engagement for families and other stakeholders.

4. An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring effective and efficient management of the school or district to promote student social and academic learning.

5. An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by adhering to ethical principles and professional norms.

6. An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring the development of an equitable and culturally responsive school.

7. An educational leader promotes the success and well-being of every student by ensuring the development of a culture of continuous school improvement.

**California professional standards for educational leadership.** Since 2001, the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) have played a part in California’s educational leadership preparation programs (California Department of Education [CDE], 2011). Using the key components of the ISSLC standards, the CPSEL have condensed the eleven foundational principals of the ISSLC standards to six CSPEL standards. All six CPSEL standards are pertinent to moral transformative leadership, which are as follows:

1. Education leaders facilitate the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning and growth for all students.

2. Education leaders shape a collaborative culture of teaching and learning informed by professional standards and focused on student and professional growth.
3. Education leaders manage the organization to cultivate a safe and productive learning and working environment.

4. Education leaders collaborate with families and other stakeholders to address diverse student and community interests and mobilize community resources.

5. Education leaders make decisions, model, and behave in ways that demonstrate professionalism, ethics, integrity, justice, and equity and hold staff to the same standard.

6. Education leaders influence political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts affecting education to improve education policies and practice.

Clearly, the state and national standards hold principals accountable for ethical leadership. Key themes emerge that directly relate to the literature regarding ethics and moral transformative leadership. These themes from both the ISLLC and CPSEL’s include student well-being, culture of care, ethical principles, equitable and cultural responsibility, collaborative culture, safe and productive learning environment, diversity, ethics, integrity and equity.

2015 Professional standards for educational leaders. In 2015, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders document, which does not include references to ISLLC, focused more on students and instruction (National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2015). The 2015 standards listed ten standards, which is four more than the 2008 standards. The reason why the 2015 Standards were updated was because the National Policy Board for Educational Administration recognized that the world, including the educational world, has changed dramatically in the past couple of
years. In order to address the changes seen in the global economy, the standards had to change.

The 2015 Standards were developed through an extensive process that included stakeholders such as The National Association of Elementary School Principals, The National Association of Secondary Principals, and the American Association of School Administrators (NPBEA, 2015). In addition, the public was asked to share their contribution. The 2015 Standards apply to all levels of educational leadership, including principals and assistant principals. The 2015 Standards have a more holistic view,

The standards recognize the central importance of human relationships not only in leadership work but in teaching and student learning. They stress the importance of both academic rigor and press as well as the support and care required for students to excel. The standards reflect a positive approach to leadership that is optimistic, emphasizes development and strengths, and focuses on human potential.

The 2015 Standards adopt a future-oriented perspective. While they are grounded in the present, they are aspirational, recognizing that the changing world in which educational leaders work today will continue to transform—and the demands and expectations for educational leaders along with it. The 2015 Standards envision those future challenges and opportunities so educational leaders can succeed in the future. (NPBEA, 2015, p. 18).

These practices are as follows:

1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

2. Ethics and Professional Norms
The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders that most pertain to moral and transformational leadership are:

1. Standard 1: Mission, Vision and Core Values. Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

2. Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms. Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

3. Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness. Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

4. Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students. Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.
5. Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel. Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

6. Standard 9: Operations and Management. Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

7. Standard 10: School Improvement. Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student’s academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 18).

**Summary and Conclusions from the Literature**

This research outlines the relationship between moral leadership, transformative leadership and school culture. By defining moral leadership, transformational leadership and school culture there is a better understanding of what strong leadership skills are needed to meet the expectations and needs of our changing society. High quality principals with strong morals and ethics can better serve their growing demographics of student populations (Dantley & Tillman, 2010) Leadership at a school is imperative because the needs of all stakeholders must be met in order to maximize student success at a school and create sustainable change (Kaser & Halbert, 2009). The findings in this literature review address how school cultures can be transformed and sustain the reform with proper moral transformative leadership actions and behaviors for the 21st century. Kaser and Halbert (2009) illuminated this idea well when they stress that with a combination of leader’s own values and moral purpose, as well as courage and perseverance, school cultures can endure sustainable change.
Chapter 3: Research Methods

Overview of the Study

The primary goal of this study was to explore research questions that identify the moral transformative leadership beliefs and practices of a successful principal that positively influenced a school culture. Research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. What moral transformative beliefs of a successful principal influenced a positive school culture?
2. What key leadership practices of a moral transformative principal influenced a positive school culture?

The remainder of this chapter will describe the rationale for the selection of the method, the setting of the study, data sources, data collection, provisions of trustworthiness, the role of the researcher and a summary of the chapter.

Rationale for the Selection of the Method

For this study, the method selected was a qualitative case study. The researcher analyzed data to determine if there were patterns or trends in answer to the research questions. A culture survey, interviews, and focus groups were also conducted in order to identify patterns or trends.

Qualitative study. Qualitative studies were implemented when the researcher gathered information directly from people and coded this information from patterns and themes. Creswell (2012) defined qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning
individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under a study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns and themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of the participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action. (p. 37)

Lichtman (2014) identified common elements found in various definitions of qualitative studies to create a concise definition of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is a way to study the social interactions of humans in naturally occurring situations. The researcher plays a critical role in the process by gathering data and making sense of or interpreting the phenomena that are observed and revealed. (p. 12)

Merriam (2009) described qualitative studies in a similar fashion to Creswell and Lichtman. Merriam (2009) stated that a basic qualitative study focuses on both meaning and understanding. For this study, the researcher chose a purposeful sample and collected data through interviews, focus groups and survey results. Once the data were collected and analyzed, descriptive findings were presented showing the key themes from the data. Merriam (2009) stressed that “a central characteristic of qualitative research is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds” (p. 13). This means that qualitative researchers are interested in how people understand their experiences, how people socially construct the world around them, and what meaning they give to their experiences (Merriam, 2009).
Qualitative case study. This qualitative study was conducted as a case study. Merriam (2009) described qualitative case studies as “in-depth analysis of a bounded system” (p. 38). A “bounded system” is defined as a unit in which there are boundaries around the study (Merriam, 2009). Examples include communities, programs, groups or institutions (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative case studies search for both meaning and understanding, and according to Merriam (2009), the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection. Qualitative case studies require an inductive investigative strategy, and the end product is richly descriptive (Merriam, 2009).

Research Setting

Participants in this study were identified using predetermined criteria. Using predetermined criteria allowed for an exemplary model to be chosen for the study. According to Lichtman (2012), exemplary models illustrate people, places or organizations that describe the best or most outstanding system. The setting of this case study was chosen based on the following criteria:

- One middle school
- High percentage of Latino/Hispanic students (90% or above)
- High percentage of low socio-economic students (75% or above)
- High percentage of highly qualified teachers (90% or above)
- Principal in position for two years or more

Snowball and purposeful sampling. The main criteria used to determine the school that would be studied for this research was identified through snowball sampling, also known as purposeful sampling. According to Creswell (2012), the researcher asks others to identify participants of the study or creates a criteria for
participants. Creswell (2012) illuminated that snowball sampling is a type of purposeful sampling that allows the researcher to identify participants through other members of the system (p. 209). Likewise, Lichtman (2014) stated that a “purposeful sample is chosen in which participants meet the criteria you have identified as part of your sample” (p. 250).

**Research setting selected for the study.** The research setting chosen for this study was a middle school, named Green Valley Middle School, which included sixth, seventh and eighth grade students, in Southern California. During the 2014-15 school year, the school served five hundred and three students in grades six through eight. The enrollment for sixth grade students was one hundred and thirty four, seventh grade students was one hundred and fifty nine students, and the enrollment for eighth grade students was two hundred and ten students. The principal of the school was at the school site for two school calendar years.

According to the school’s website, the school’s mission is to develop highly educated, well-rounded students who are excited about learning. In pursuit of this mission, the school is dedicated to:

- Provide meaningful experiences
- Engaging instruction
- Create a positive learning environment to promote students’ academic and social success.

In addition, it is the mission of the school to provide quality educational opportunities and learning success for all students. To address this mission, the school is dedicated to:
• Through collaboration and standards-based instruction, Green Valley Middle School teaching staff provide an education focused on student achievement utilizing standards-based interim assessments and common assessments monthly to develop prescriptive intervention and support.

• The teachers are working diligently on incorporating the Common Core State Standards in their curriculum and preparing the students for the Smarter Balanced assessment.

• Teachers work in Professional Learning Communities within their departments and grade level to provide a rigorous program using interdisciplinary instructional approach.

• Students are recognized for academic achievement through our school rally recognition which consists of honor society, honor roll, most improved, perfect attendance, scholar athlete, and academic all-star.

Lastly, the schools vision focused on putting students first. The school’s vision stated that “students will be well rounded individuals who exemplify respect, take responsibility for their choices/actions and understand the value of hard work and integrity.”

Data Sources

Participants were selected based on the predetermined criteria and purposeful sampling (Lichtman, 2012). The criteria were given to the District and recommendations on which school to study were given to the researcher. Focus groups, interviews, and a school culture survey were the instruments that were used to gather data. Due to the
nature of qualitative case studies, the researcher was the primary instrument when collecting qualitative data (Creswell, 2012).

**Focus groups.** According to Lichtman (2014), focus groups bring together diverse groups of people. Focus groups consist of a group of people, who gather for about an hour, to discuss key issues and answer predetermined set of questions (Lichtman, 2014). The purpose of the researcher was to be the facilitator, while the members discussed a specific topic (Lichtman, 2014). Likewise, focus groups are most successful when all members equally contribute to the discussion and take turns responding to questions (Creswell, 2012). For this study, three focus groups were conducted (See Appendices B and C) and the focus groups were then transcribed (See Appendices P-R). The first focus group consisted of five teachers who taught at the site for longer than ten years. The second focus group was made up of three classified staff. And the final focus group was comprised of three parents of students that attend the school.

**Interviews.** According to Creswell (2012), interviews are when “researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. The researcher then transcribes and types the data into a computer file for analysis” (p. 217). Researchers rely on interviews to find out information that cannot be directly observed, such as feelings, thoughts and intentions (Merriam, 2009). The purpose of utilizing interviewing in research studies is to allow the researcher to enter into another person’s perspective (Merriam, 2009). According to Lichtman (2014), qualitative interviewing is one of the primary techniques researches use to gather data. For this research study, Interviews were conducted with three members of the staff, with predetermined questions
(See Appendices A and B) and the interviews were then transcribed (See Appendices M-O). The staff members included the school principal, the school assistant principal and the school counselor

**Questionnaire.** Creswell (2012) defined questionnaires as, “a form used in a survey design that participants complete and return to the researcher. The participants choose answers to questions and supplies basic personal or demographic information” (p. 382). Creswell (2012) also stressed the importance of a researcher seeking out a survey instrument that is already available and has been used before to conduct similar research. For this research study, Leithwood’s School Culture and Community Survey was given to the entire school staff to identify aspects of school culture (Leithwood et al., 2006). Of the twenty teachers on campus, eighteen completed the survey with a response rate of ninety percent.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

I conducted a qualitative case study that analyzed the beliefs and practices of one school and one school principal. I gathered participants based on predetermined criteria. Once I determined the school to study, I sent out a school culture survey, scheduled focus groups and interviews with the participants. After each focus group and interviews were concluded, I transcribed all the focus group and interviews and looked for common themes that emerged from the information gathered. Six common themes emerged from the data for each research question. This study’s research, discussions and conclusion highlight the key moral transformative actions and beliefs needed to positively influence a school culture. Schools could benefit from this research, as principal leadership has a direct effect on student achievement (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2013).
Data collection methods and procedures. The following is a description of how data were collected and the procedures that were followed during the research study. On a volunteer basis, the school staff was given a culture survey through google docs. The staff completed the culture survey anonymously. I used this data to add context to the study, in regards to this school having a positive school culture.

Then I proceeded to conduct the interviews and focus groups. First, I conducted a focus group of five teachers based on predetermined criteria. The focus group was less than thirty minutes. Second, I conducted a focus group of three classified staff based on predetermined criteria. The focus group was less than thirty minutes. Third, I conducted a focus group of three parents based on predetermined criteria. The focus group was less than thirty minutes. Fourth, I conducted a one-on-one interview with the school principal. The interview was less than sixty minutes. Fifth, I conducted a one on one interview with the assistant principal. The interview was less than sixty minutes. Lastly, I conducted a one on one interview with the school counselor. The interview was less than sixty minutes.

Interviews were conducted by myself, the researcher, with semi-structured questions. The interviews occurred during a time that was best for the individual participants. Each question was open ended to allow the participants to elaborate on the questions as needed.

Focus groups, interviews, and a school culture questionnaire were the instruments that were used to gather data. Once the data were gathered, the data were coded and analyzed. According to Saldana (2009), “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing,
and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). The codes allowed the researcher to find themes and base recommendations from the themes that emerged throughout the study. Creswell (2012) articulated the importance of coding. There are many steps to coding a document; however, you do not need to follow these steps in any order. The steps that Creswell (2012) encouraged and that are most pertinent to this research study included:

- Get a general sense of the data: explore the data by reading the transcripts several times, adding memos when needed.
- Pick one document at a time to analyze
- Code documents: by setting/context, perspectives, participant’s way of thinking, processes, activities, strategies, and social structures
- After coding all the text, make a list of all of the code words and narrow down to 25 to 30 codes.
- Reduce the codes to themes. (p. 244)

Creswell (2012) stressed the importance of coding for themes. Creswell (2012) asserted that “the identification of themes provides the complexity of a story and adds depth to the insight about understanding individual experiences” (p. 511). After the completion of coding the data, Creswell (2012) encouraged that the researcher choose 5-7 themes for each research question to tell the story.

**Ethical considerations.** In order to adhere to all of the ethical considerations for conducting academic research with human subjects, the researcher submitted an application regarding the nature and purpose of this study to the International Review Board (IRB) at California Polytechnic University of Pomona. After receiving IRB
approval, a consent form was signed by the superintendent of the school involved in the case study.

In addition, following the ethical guidelines outlined by Creswell (2012), the researcher was careful to:

- Gain permission before entering the school site
- Disturb the school site as little as possible during the study
- The researcher is considered a guest and will respect the rules and procedures of the school site. (p. 382)

Likewise, Creswell (2012) encouraged the researcher to preface all interactions with participants by:

- Informing all participants of the purpose of the study
- Refraining from any deceptive practices
- Sharing information with participants (including the role of the researcher)
- Using ethical research practices
- Collaborating with participants. (p. 382)

Provisions of Trustworthiness

Steps were taken to protect the confidentiality of all participants throughout all phases of the study. The rights of the participants were protected by keeping all information of the study confidential. The names of all staff members, teachers, principals and parents were changed to protect the participants and pseudonyms were provided.

All efforts were made to keep the data collected for this research study confidential by not including any personal information, except as needed for the consent
forms. The consent forms signed by the participants were stored in a secure location in which only the researcher will have access. The consent forms were saved and will be destroyed when the appropriate time has passed after the conclusion of the study. The research findings and data were stored electronically on the researcher’s computer with a secured password and on the researcher’s external hard drive. No other person, besides the researcher, has access to the researcher’s computer or external hard drive.

Role of the Researcher

I conducted a qualitative case study which included interviews, focus groups, and a questionnaire at one school, based on predetermined criteria. I identified key beliefs and actions of moral transformative school principals that positively influence school culture. Once I determined the research study criteria, I scheduled surveys, focus groups, and interviews with the participants. I then transcribed all data and analyzed for common themes that emerged from the information gathered.

I am currently an assistant principal at a school in the same District as the school participating in this study. In addition, I have worked at the school site and have working relationships with some of the participants. The advantage of having worked at a site in which I conducted my research was that I established a high level of trust with many of the participants. The participants may have been more willing to be candid and open with their answers, feelings and beliefs. A disadvantage may be that I carry my own internal bias, so it was imperative that I disconnect myself as a former member of the community and set clear guidelines and provisions as the educational researcher. I have disconnected myself from the community by being diligent with being professional and following the ethical guidelines established for research,
Assumptions

Several assumptions underlie this study:

- When surveys, interviews and focus groups were conducted, the researcher assumed that all accounts regarding the school principal and the culture of the school were truthfully depicted.

- Participants were informed that all data gathered would remain confidential. It was assumed that participants would be willing to share information on a confidential basis.

Summary

This chapter described an overview of the research study, the rationale for the selection of the method, the setting of the study, data sources, data collection, data analysis, provisions of trustworthiness, the role of the researcher, assumptions and a summary of the chapter. The research data collected illuminated the key beliefs and practices of moral transformative leaders that positively influence school culture. From the analysis, the researcher was able to make further recommendations of what key beliefs and practices of moral transformative leaders can positively transform school culture. In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the findings from the data collection and data analysis from the study.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the moral transformative beliefs and actions of a successful principal that positively influenced a school culture in a high needs school. A literature review highlighted research that focused on the most critical leadership and research based practices related to moral and transformational leadership that, with full implementation by effective principals, can positively affect a school culture and consequently improve the quality of education that all students receive in schools.

The outcomes of this study served to inform policymakers about the effectiveness of current principal evaluations in California, through a moral transformative lens. Many of the themes that emerged in this study may be used as a component to the current principal evaluations. An understanding of the history of the policy will help guide the next steps for improving principal evaluations.

This research is important for any administrator or teacher that is interested in leading a high needs school, while positively influencing the school culture. In particular, the leaders who will benefit the most from this research are leaders who want to move a school forward and improve the belief system and rituals of the current staff in order to improve the academic and behavioral success of all of their students.

Research Questions

The following research questions framed the purpose of the study. These research questions explored the topic of moral transformative leadership and the relationship to influencing school culture.
1. What moral transformative beliefs of a successful principal influenced a positive school culture?

2. What key leadership practices of a moral transformative principal influence a positive school culture?

Participants

Participants were selected based on predetermined criteria and purposeful sampling (Lichtman, 2012). Focus groups, interviews and a school culture survey were the instruments used to gather data. Due to the nature of qualitative case studies, the researcher was the primary instrument when collecting qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). Focus groups were conducted on a voluntary basis. Five teachers volunteered to participate in the focus group, which included three female teachers and two male teachers. Three classified staff participated in an additional focus group, which included two females and one male. Three parents volunteered to be a part of the final focus group, which included three females. In addition, one principal, one counselor and one assistant principal were interviewed. Eighteen of twenty teachers completed the school culture survey.

Context of the School

Leithwood’s School Culture and Community Survey was given to the entire school staff to identify features of the school culture (Leithwood et al., 2006). Of the twenty teachers on campus, eighteen completed the survey with a response rate of 90%. Below you will find the results of the survey questions that were most pertinent to this study. For every question that was asked, there was a very high response rate that demonstrated the principal was highly respected and the school culture was positive.
Even though the ratings were mostly strong, there is room for improvement as some respondents disagreed with the majority.

Table 1 illustrates the survey findings for section one, which focused on the school vision. This table demonstrates that the majority of teachers strongly agree or agree that there is a focused vision at Green Valley Middle School.

Table 1

*School Culture Survey, Section One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Vision</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA or Don't Know</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most teachers in our school share a similar set of values, beliefs and attitudes related to teaching and learning.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have close working relationships with colleagues in my school.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is ongoing, collaborative work among teachers in our school or department.</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our school principal shares teachers' values, beliefs, and attitudes related to teaching and learning.</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a strong, positive relationship between students and staff in our school.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our school celebrates the achievements of staff and students.</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 illustrates the survey findings for section two, which focused on communication at Green Valley Middle School. This table demonstrates that the majority of teachers strongly agree or agree that the school has effective communication.

Table 2

*School Culture Survey, Section Two*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA or Don't Know</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have frequent conversations about teaching practices with colleagues in our school.</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I frequently work with colleague(s) in our school to prepare unit outlines and/or instructional materials.</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 illustrates the survey findings for section three, which focused on a safe and orderly campus at Green Valley Middle School. This table demonstrates that the majority of teachers strongly agree or agree that the school has a safe and orderly campus.

Table 3

*School Culture Survey, Section Three*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safe and Orderly Campus</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA or Don't Know</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this school, teachers and the school principal are in close agreement on school discipline policy.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe in our school.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students feel safe in our school.</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable interacting with the students in our school.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 illustrates the survey findings for section four, which focused on a positive school culture at Green Valley Middle School. This table demonstrates that the majority of teachers strongly agree or agree that the school has a positive school culture.

Table 4

*School Culture Survey, Section Four*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive School Culture</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA or Don't Know</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our principal emphasizes creating a positive atmosphere for our students</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our staff praise and reward student's exemplary efforts and behavior.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our principal makes an effort to get to know students and staff.</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our principal is visible and accessible to students and staff.</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our principal promotes an atmosphere of caring and trust amongst the staff.</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 illustrates the survey findings for section five, which focused on student centered beliefs at Green Valley Middle School. This table demonstrates that the majority of teachers strongly agree or agree that the school has strong student-centered beliefs.

Table 5

*School Culture Survey, Section Five*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Centered Beliefs</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA or Don't Know</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students in our school need to meet or exceed clearly defined expectations.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hold high expectations for individual student and learning behavior.</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I model life-long learning for my students</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal recognizes teachers who are exemplary in their classroom and schoolwide practices. The principal acts in the best interests of the individual students.</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 illustrates the survey findings for section six, which focused on learning for all students at Green Valley Middle School. This table demonstrates that the majority of teachers strongly agree or agree that the school promotes learning for all students.

Table 6

*School Culture Survey, Section Six*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning for All Students</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA or Don't Know</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning for and helping students learn is my most important work. My principal protects my classroom instructional time.</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 illustrates the survey findings for section seven, which focused on a professional work environment at Green Valley Middle School. This table demonstrates that the majority of teachers strongly agree or agree that there is a professional work environment at the school.

**Table 7**

*School Culture Survey, Section Seven*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Work Environment</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA or Don’t Know</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong, positive relationships between staff and the school principal facilitate implementation of new programs.</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my job.</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel supported by my principal in terms of professional development and for my contribution to the school.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 illustrates the survey findings for section three, which focused on a shared sense of purpose at Green Valley Middle School. This table demonstrates that the majority of teachers strongly agree or agree that there is a shared sense of purpose at the school.

Table 8

*School Culture Survey, Section Eight*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Sense of Purpose</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>NA or Don't Know</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our school goals and priorities are clear.</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal has high expectations for teachers and students.</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leithwood’s School Culture and Community Survey was given to the entire school staff to measure the school culture (Leithwood et al., 2006). Of the twenty teachers on campus, eighteen completed the survey with a response rate of 90%. As you can see, the majority of teachers agree that there is a positive school culture that exists at Green Valley Middle School. The next section describes the effective leadership beliefs and actions observed at the school site.

**Emergent Themes in Study**

Data collection for this part of the study came from one on one interviews and three focus groups. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the principal, the assistant principal, and the counselor. One focus group was held with five teachers, an
additional focus group was conducted with three classified staff, and the final focus group was held with three parents. Once the interviews and the focus group were concluded, the information was transcribed and coded. After coding concluded, emergent themes were discerned from the study. The themes are separated according to each research question. The first research question pertained to the beliefs of successful principals. The themes include putting students first, holding high and clear expectations, being trustworthy, being supportive, being genuine and being humanistic. The second research question pertained to key practices of successful principals. The themes include promoting hard work, creating a culture of caring, being a hands on leader, creating a culture of collaboration, being an effective communicator, and showing appreciation.

Findings for Research Question One

The first research question asked: What moral transformative beliefs of a successful principal influenced a positive school culture? The six themes, support that leaders should have the belief of putting students first, the belief of holding high and clear expectations, the belief of being trustworthy, the belief of being supportive, the belief of being genuine and the belief of being humanistic. Each theme is explained using examples from the data in detail below.

The belief of putting students first. Ella, the school principal, shared the importance of her belief that putting students first was priority. The motto of “students first” was best reached by developing a school vision. The development of a school vision was held in such a high regard because it symbolized the commitment that teachers work together around a common goal: putting students first. This belief was evident in Ella’s comments:
I do put a very high importance on vision. I think anytime you move to a different school, I was seven years at one location and then moving up to this location, it didn’t take me very long to develop my own vision for the school. However, I hesitate saying my vision because it’s not my vision. . . . I feel that everybody has a vested interest in the vision. . . . I don’t know how else to say it but it’s not something where I sat down at home and I thought, “Okay my vision for this school is”, but it just kind of comes together all at once after talking with everyone and taking time to observe and to just knowing that your focus is on the students and on what’s best for them and preparing them.

Likewise, the belief of the principal in putting students first was also observed by Gabriel, a social studies teacher. He recalled that one of the first things Ella did when arriving to the school was create structures so that students received a fair and equal education:

[In our] PLC (Professional Learning Community) time, whether it's grade level or cross-departments, cohesiveness [was developed] with the grading structures and planning, so [that we were] on the same page as part as what our expectations are for our students. So that's been helpful versus being very independent and varying scores across the border.

Gabriel recognized that before Ella came, many of the departments developed their own type of grading and planned lessons for students differently. Ella, on the other hand, recognized the importance of team planning and common grading structures. The refinement of these two areas ensured that student’s needs were put first.
Brad, a parent of a sixth and eighth grade Green Valley student, shared the importance of Ella’s belief that putting students first was priority. He recalled that one of the first experiences he had with Ella was so positive because she was open and willing to listen to individual parents about the needs of their children. Brad recalled:

I had the chance to meet [Ella] on many occasions. I met her at meetings and Back to School nights she is very open to ideas and listens to my needs for my kids. It was a very positive experience.

In addition, Carla, a parent of an eighth grade student observed that Ella had such a high belief in putting students first that she made it a priority to talk to individual parents about the successes of their children. Carla shared an example:

My relationship with Ella is very professional. She does make it more personal when speaking about my daughter, who is a student at Green Valley. On a personal level, Ella was always positive about my daughter. It was nice to always hear what positives she saw out of my daughter. She always went out of her way to make sure we knew the positives she saw in our kids.

Linda, a classified staff member, also observed that one of Ella’s strongest beliefs is to always put students first. Students are her top priority because their education will allow them to be successful citizens. Linda shared that Ella “is so awesome, I don’t even know where to begin. The students are her number one priority. She makes sure that students get the highest level of education. That is her top priority.”

The belief of holding high and clear expectations. The second theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illuminated that an important principal belief is to hold high and clear expectations. Ella explained that high and clear
expectations should be a mutual belief amongst principals, teachers and students. This idea was illuminated when she asserted, “We’re in it together so we need to have high expectations for each other. They should have high expectations for me and I do for them and for the students as well.” Students, especially, need to have high expectations because once you hold them to this high standard, they can accomplish so much more.

Additionally, high and clear expectations can drive curriculum to be more effective. Ella made the decision to implement school-wide professional development that focused on student engagement and collaboration. Creating the consistency amongst all grade levels allowed students to learn more effectively. Ella illuminates this idea when she explains the process of implementing school-wide Kagan strategies:

For an example, we decided to go with Kagan this year. Over the past two years, we really took it on as a need that we needed to do something for student engagement, and this seemed to be the one that was kind of out there, and Sierra Vista was using it. So, we did get a full day [of training], and we had the entire staff trained. And then I monitored [Kagan strategies] and I asked teachers whether the expectations were clear about what they need to put into place in their classrooms. I think that was the beauty of it because the students going from class to class, they knew the expectations of cooperative learning, and they knew what round robin was, and they knew their shoulder partners. And so, it made it easier after a while because the students knew what was expected of them, and so it wasn’t like this one lone teacher was trying to teach these structures.

The belief of the principal holding high expectations was evident from the lens of Mark, the assistant principal. Mark, on the other hand, witnessed Ella’s belief of holding
high and clear expectations for others, but he also saw that was a belief she had for herself. She modeled expectations, so that people could see what standards of teaching and behaving are important. Mark explained:

She did have high expectations. And the change for us was that it was no different than what she would expect for herself and was regularly modeling that for us. So, she would never ask anything of anyone else that she was not willing to do herself, from taking classes to substituting. . . . So, that leadership style through modeling really had a massive impact.

The school counselor and teachers also saw Ella’s belief of holding high and clear expectations. Both the school counselor and teachers stated that high expectations were held to a high regard; however, they were also given the flexibility to use their strengths to reach these expectations. Barbara, the school counselor, explained:

Yes, she definitely does have high expectations. I think part of it is that she gives the staff the freedom and the expectation that we are professionals in our respective fields, and she makes us feel like we are the specialists in our own areas.

Sandra, a math and science teacher, observed Ella upholding this belief as well: “Yes, she does have high expectations. For us as teachers, I think she has found our strengths and expects us to meet them and work at our strengths.”

Marissa, a classified staff member, experienced first-hand the belief that Ella had high expectations for all of her employees. Marissa gave the perspective of working in the front office,
For [Ella], it is very important that we have great customer service towards our parents and our students. The main reason to have great customer service is because we, in the office, represent the school. The customer service you give shares a lot about the school…. I think she expects the best from everyone, not just classified. She treats us all as equals.

Likewise, Juan shared that Ella’s belief in holding high expectations came from the fact that she really believed in the capacity of her staff and their capability and ability to do their jobs well. Juan illuminated this idea when he shared, “I think that she expects that when I have to step in I will take care of the work. She knows that I am capable of taking care of business.

**The belief of being trustworthy.** The third theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illuminated that an important principal belief is the importance of being trustworthy. Ella began her role as principal three years ago. Ella stressed that one of the most important beliefs she had as a new principal was the importance of establishing trust with her staff and school community. Ella reflected:

I think that when you’re new to a position or when you’re new to a school, I think the most important thing is to establish trust and the way I like to do that is I never promise anything I don’t deliver on. Teachers know that if I don’t know the answer, I will find out and I will get back to them. I support them in what they are doing.

Ella understands that her word can take her a long way, and as long as she is honest she has the opportunity to build trust.
Similarly, Claire, a language arts teacher, states that she observed Ella holding the belief that establishing trust with the staff is important; however, from Claire’s perspective she believed that Ella was successful at building trust because she took the time to build relationships first and she was a model of being a hard worker. Claire shared:

She does work really hard to develop relationships beyond the sort of "I'm your boss and you work for me," and "I'm the principal" attitude. She does go out of her way to be one of us when it's appropriate. So, that it builds that trusting comfort and safety to talk to her.

In addition, Carla, also observed that developing trust with all stakeholders was a strong belief that Ella followed through with on a daily basis. Carla shared that this trust was developed over time, but it was a lasting relationship because Ella always followed through with her word. Carla shared:

I think we trust her because she always had great ideas and she always followed through. If she said something, we always knew she would follow through and make it happen. I emailed her one time, and she always kept a concern confidential. I always knew she would keep certain concern confidential, which helped establish trust between us.

**The belief of being supportive.** The fourth theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illuminated the importance of being supportive. Ella asserted that she made it her priority to support teachers in what they are doing. Ella recalled a time when a principal approached her to purchase a set of Apple computers. She knew that the request would cost a large amount of money, and the District would not support the
upkeep of the computers; however, she took the time to listen to the teacher’s request, reviewed his technology plan, and used the majority of a Visual and Performing Arts grant towards his request. In return, Ella asked the teacher to adjust his curriculum to make it stronger for the program. He agreed. Ella recalled the experience:

I was asking him to completely redo his whole curriculum and the things he had never taught before and he didn’t know much about. I gave him the training, I gave him the equipment, I supported him along the way, and he’s more excited than I am now... And they’re doing amazing things down there. It’s really exciting... And he thanks me all the time for supporting him.

Ella illuminated the fact that by listening to teachers and by supporting them at what they are good at can truly benefit the whole school. The key is to listen.

Mark, the assistant principal, shared a different perspective of how Ella’s belief to support her staff affected him. Mark recalled that he felt most supported by Ella than any other principal he has worked for in his administrative career. This feeling of support came from the way that Ella made him feel. He explained:

I think I learned a lot more from her through her modeling and just, sort of, how she did things... Knowing that there was someone above you who had your back and would go to bat for me because we knew each other and we knew that [was important]... We built that trust and that time to do that, and vice versa. But, at the same time, if I had done something wrong, she'd go to bat for me, and then call me out and say, “Yeah, don't ever do that again.”

Likewise, Barbara, the school counselor, accounted that she felt Ella had a belief of supporting her as well. Barbara shared that Ella pushed her to try new things and
motivated her to implement new ideas if it means it is best for the students. This idea was illuminated when Barbara stated:

[If] I have an idea of something new that I want to try, she's so willing to try it. In fact, she kind of pushes me to, “okay let's try it and let's try it now.” Where for me, I'm more like I need to plan it out, hold on and let me think about it first. She's like, "Let's do it." Then, when I do it, I surprise myself, so she motivates me when I have an idea to go for it. For example, a training came up that I was invited to, it's a seminar on autism and she said, "Yeah, go for it. It's work-related so you can go. It's definitely something that's important." She's totally supportive of new ideas and things that we have going for the students.

Additionally, three of the five teachers shared their experiences of Ella holding the belief that supporting teachers inside and outside of the classroom is important.

Claire shared that Ella’s support came from getting teachers the resources they need and always saying yes when they asked for these resources. Claire shared, “She’ll do anything she can to get us the things we need, get us time if that’s what we are needing, resources or professional development. . . . She’s really great at being responsive to the things we think would make [teaching] better.” Samantha shared that she also observed that supporting teachers was an important belief of Ella’s. This support stemmed from the fact that Ella is also a good listener. Samantha illustrated this idea when she said, “She's very supportive of all the different departments on campus. I believe she listens to our concerns. She addresses our needs. . . . She really values our opinion, and she wants to hear the positive and the negative.” Lastly, Sandra explained that she feels supported by Ella when it comes to observing other teachers. Sandra shared that Ella has “allocated
time to provide subs to help us. For those who may not have common preps or who wish to observe at a different time in the day, she made it available”.

Brad and Carla, parents, witnessed Ella’s belief that parents and communities were important and must be supported. Both parents gave examples of how Ella directly involved parents with school based decisions. Brad elaborated:

A clear example [of Ella supporting parents] is how she works with the Parent Teacher Association. Another example is how she runs the morning operations. The parents are involved directly on campus as volunteers because Ella recruits parents to help. Parents also volunteer in the computer lab and in the office, for example, and she is always trying to build those connections.

Carla gave evidence of Ella’s belief of showing support to parents and communities:

[Ella] was granted money for the school, and it was a large amount of money. She made sure this money was spent as team base decision, so that parents were part of the process of allocating the money. When we were going through the Gold Ribbon process she made sure that Board members and community members were invited, and that the parents were involved. She also was able to get money raised from the community for the students and school, which demonstrated her support.

Linda, a classified staff member, shared that Ella’s support rippled out to everyone including students, teachers, staff and parents. Linda explained, “The hours she puts in and being there to support teacher and students. She attends almost every
function that students participate in. She goes out of her way to attend games and events to show she cares.”

**The belief of being genuine.** The fifth theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illuminated that an important principal belief is to recognize the importance of genuine. Ella recalled that in her role as a principal it is important to her that her staff understands she is transparent and honest. Ella tried her best to keep her staff informed and not fall into the politics of education. Ella explained:

I try to be very transparent, and I try to tell everybody everything that I possibly can as long as I’m not going against confidences or something like that, but I keep saying I’m not a game player, I’m not a politician and I will err on the side of telling you too much than keeping things to myself. So, people know that when they ask me a question if I can possibly, I will answer it, and I will answer it honestly as much as I know or as much as I can share at that time. But, as soon as it becomes available that I can share things with them, I will, but I’ll do it one on one, face to face.

Similarly, Mark, the assistant principal, shared that much of what Ella believed in was not for show, rather it is because she was genuine. He appreciated that she praised people publicly for what they did because she really meant it and wanted to recognize all the hard workers at her site. Mark recalled:

She was the first to recognize anyone and everyone for what they had done. It didn't matter what your title was. Title was not important to her either which is something that I really valued in her. So, if somebody did something, whoever that somebody was, they were thanked and thanked publicly and/or personally.
And it wasn't a show. It's just who she was. So, I think initially there was sort of that like, “Why are you thanking everyone? What are you doing? What's your agenda? What's your plan?” But really, what we learned is that it was actually very genuine.

Mark added that it was the way in which Ella spoke to people that showed her genuine, caring nature. She invested time in people because she truly wanted to get to know them and support them. Mark explained:

The simple day to day thank you notes and the acknowledgement of work and the praises, again both publicly and then privately, whatever that person needed [were most important]. That, to me, was far more genuine than any of the things that she did for people, because it came right down just to that immediate support and made you want to do better for her and made you want to come to work the next day and keep going. She would just talk with people, find out how your day was going, and it was genuine. It wasn't like, “Hey, how're you doing? Good, good, good, I got to go” and move on to the next thing. When she would talk to people, it was really digging into where they were and what they were doing and making them feel like they were important and part of the culture.

Coby, middle school teacher, expressed that Ella really held the belief of putting her school, the students and teachers first which made them feel valued. He gave an example of when Ella was asked to attend a two day training by the school District. This training was redundant and, in addition, the training was during a scheduled staff meeting. Ella told the staff that she would not go to the training to stay at the school site
for them. That was an admirable and genuine moment for Coby because he felt that Ella “was here [at the school] because she really wanted to be here.”

When Sandra, a middle school teacher was asked to describe Ella in one word, Sandra used the word “committed.” Similar to Mark and Coby’s experiences, Sandra believes that Ella is a principal because she genuinely wants to be at the school to support students and staff:

She is here because she, in her heart, this is where she belongs. This is what she loves to do, what she's passionate about, and she's committed to it. She shows it by her presence. She shows it by everything we've mentioned about her.

Marissa and Juan, classified staff members, both expressed that they witnessed Ella’s belief of being genuine and caring as part of her nature. Marissa expressed that Ella’s genuine nature was illuminated when she would give the school the gift of her time. She showed her staff, students and parents that she cared by dedicating endless amount of time towards the success of the students. Marissa expressed:

Towards the students she is always available. The safety and well-being of students is her number one priority. She will always stay after hours to address student problems or anything concerning the school. Even when the doors are closed, Ella always meets with the community if they are knocking on that door. She will help anyone that shows up to the school after hours.

Juan recalled that Ella’s genuine nature comes from her ability to relate to others. She makes lasting connections with people so that they feel open to talk about their own personal lives. Juan stated:
She is caring and genuine, that is just the way she is. Ella socializes with the teachers and relates to others. She talks about her grandchildren and relates to you when your children are sick. She doesn’t keep things quiet, she shares her personal stories to relate to others.

**The belief of being humanistic.** The sixth theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illuminated that an important principal belief is in the importance of being humanistic. Ella expressed that when it comes to communication she believed she must do her best to ensure that communication is provided in a fair manner, especially if the news that must be shared is not good news. When asked how she facilitates effective communication amongst her staff, Ella elaborated:

> I bring people in one on one. I don’t send them an email. . . . As a matter of fact, during the day, if I have something to tell people, I generally walk down to their classrooms, and I tell them one on one. I know if it is bad news, I don’t tell them in the morning. I will tell them in the afternoon, as I just try to humanize it a little bit. I try to understand that, what I’m telling them is really going to affect them and in what ways it’s going to affect them. As far as communication, when you make a decision that you think only involves a couple of people, you don’t realize that it does involve a lot of people. So, I try to be very transparent, and I try to tell everybody everything that I possibly can as long as I’m not going against confidences or something like that.

In addition, Ella shared that having the belief of being humanistic with the students is important. Ella explained that she showed her humanistic side by participating in non-academic events with the students. For example, she hosted a lunch.
with the principal date with students and participated in a dance contest. Ella recalled, “For the first time in my life, sixty-four years old, and I won a dance contest, and I think that was a pity vote.”

Claire, a middle school teacher, shared how Ella’s belief of being humanistic was evident in the way she showed compassion for others. Claire recalled when a student was misbehaving in class, and Ella came to the cover the class to give the teacher a break. Claire illuminated how accessible and reliable Ella was during a teacher’s moment of need:

. . . . How people are feeling about what's going on, whether it's personal, whether it's with. . . . She’ll come in and take over a class period if you had it with them. And you call her, she'll come down for 10 minutes. Like she just understands the feelings side of our job and the human side of our job very, very well.

Juan expressed how Ella’s belief of being humanistic was evident in the way she treated everyone like family. Juan explained, “Everybody feels comfortable at this school. She creates a family like atmosphere. Everyone feels comfortable working with each other, we are like one big family.”

Sally, a parent of an eighth grader, shared that Ella’s humanistic side is what helped start their positive relationship. Sally stated:

My relationship with the principal is positive. She is always smiling and saying hello, which makes me feel welcomed. Seeing her out with the students each morning, gives me confidence and relief to know that my child is in good hands. Being a mom and grandmother herself, I know that she truly gets what many of the families are going through during the middle school years.
Findings for Research Question Two

The second research question asked: What key leadership practices of a moral transformative principal influence a positive school culture? The six themes, support that leaders should model hard work, create a culture of caring, provide hands-on leadership, create a culture of collaboration, facilitate effective communication and show appreciation, are explained from the data in detail below.

Model hard work. The first theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to model hard work. When it comes to high expectations for her students and staff, Ella expected nothing less than what she is willing to do for the school. Ella believed that strong leadership modeling should come from herself first, which is evident in the fact that has not taken one sick day in the past twelve years. In addition, Ella believed that all staff members should contribute equally, herself included:

I believe I work very hard and I expect people to work as hard, maybe not as hard as I do, but I expect it because I think we’re all on this together, and it’s not just me, and it’s not just them. We’re in it together, so we need to have high expectations for each other.

Mark, the assistant principal, recalled that by Ella modeling hard work for others, she inspired people to work harder. When it comes to high expectations, Mark shared that Ella was definitely a true model of hard work:

Immediately, what comes to mind is that she did have high expectations. The change for us was that it was no different than what she would expect for herself and was regularly modeling that for us. So, she would never ask anything of
anyone else that she was not willing to do herself; from taking classes, substituting when we were. . . . There was a period of time, right when she came in, that there was a shortage of subs in the district. She was probably the first principal that I knew that was willing to say, “Yeah, I'll take this class, Can you take this one?” She goes through the process of really sharing that load as opposed to just pushing it onto someone else and making it someone else's responsibility. So, that leadership style through modelling really had a massive impact.

Marissa and Juan, classified staff members, shared that Ella is a true exemplar of hard work. Through her actions, she inspires others to work hard. Marissa provided this insight:

She is always at school. Her attendance is a model for others to be at school every day and on time. She resolves any problems that come up at the school on the spot. She is always available for her employees, students and parents.

Juan shared a similar sentiment about Ella. He explained that he often sees Ella in all areas of the school, all day long. When she is at work, Juan says that Ella uses her time efficiently and effectively:

That lady is always on the run. You never see her stopping. She is always writing something down on her little notebook so she does not forget requests from students or staff members. She never sits down. She is constantly watching over the classrooms and watching students. She is very busy.

**Create a culture of caring.** The second theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to create a
culture of caring. Ella explained that an important way to establish trust is by showing people that you care, and truly meaning it by your actions:

I think that getting here early in the morning, working as hard as everybody else, if not harder, showing up for their sports things, their performances, just being there for them and showing and when they come in with a question, you listen and again, you can’t always give the answer that they want, but they know that you can considered it and that you’ve listened.

In addition, Ella believes another practice that shows she cares is getting to really know her staff and their personal lives. In fact, Ella shares that if “people are ill, I’ll go down to the hospital and see them or I try to go to funerals whenever I can… I don’t do it because it is the right thing to do. I do it because I truly care.”

Barbara, the school counselor, believes that Ella is a model of caring and trust. Barbara recalled many instances in which Ella puts others before herself and truly empathizes with people and what they are going through:

She's a model and is a model for caring and trust. I think…she always has the other person's best interest in mind. She's sensitive to difficult situations. She deals with students directly and with parents directly. You can tell that she's a person who cares and that is like something that's so important about her.

Samantha and Claire, middle school teachers, also value the way in which Ella creates a culture of care. Samantha believes that Ella’s constant support, as well as her ability to facilitate team building skills with the staff, has helped the school grow in the right direction. Samantha illuminated that Ella is “very supportive of all the different departments on campus” and “listens to all of our concerns”, as well as “values our
opinions.” In addition, Samantha believes that Ella shows she cares by going one step further and inviting her staff to her home:

She has really worked hard to bring us together in more of a relaxed, social atmosphere by opening up her home on numerous occasions throughout the year, to kind of bring a family-type atmosphere. I think, with her going through that process that trust is built when we're here at work. And so, I think her generosity and her willingness to have us come together in a different atmosphere has been beneficial for us considering what we were prior to her arrival.

Claire saw a similar benefit to Ella’s compassion. Claire feels that Ella is “compassionate because her leadership is strong…I know she takes it home with her and really cares. So if we are not happy or content, she loses sleep over that and will fix that.” Both Samantha and Claire’s statements assert that through Ella’s time, effort and commitment to the school, she creates a culture of caring.

Marissa, a classified staff member, shared that Ella best creates a culture of caring through her ability to empathize with others and understand what others are going through at different points in their lives. Marissa stressed: “Overall, she is a great person, and a great principal. She is very supportive and very understanding. If we have a difficult situation, she will support us.”

Carla, a Green Valley parent, explained that a positive school culture was established quickly one Carla’s daughter stepped foot on campus. Carla shared, “My daughter always knew and felt cared about because [Ella] always greeted them and was positive.”
Provide hands-on leadership. The third theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to provide hands-on leadership. Ella believes there is a strong correlation between being hands on and being visible and accessible:

I try to be a very hands-on principal, so I not only going down to the teachers and talking to them one on one instead of through emails, I try to be out. I’m out every day at lunchtime with the students. . . . I get out to classrooms as much as I can again at lunch, before school, and after school just to be visible and to be there, and it’s amazing. They tease me about that, but I have a little pen in here so as I’m walking around, teachers won’t think to come up to the office but they’ll say, “Oh by the way, my lights out over here”, and I’ll jot it down.

Barbara, the school counselor, believes that Ella is an effective principal because of her open door policy and her willingness to always help others. Barbara recounted times when Ella welcomes new students to the school, meets with parents to discuss their concerns, and helps to clean up trash:

Even when a new student checks in, she introduces herself. When she's out mingling at lunch time, any time she's out around the campus, she talks to students and gets to know them. She knows families from elementary where she was a principal at one of our elementary [schools]. And she makes time if a parent comes in without an appointment, she will make time to meet with them and I think that's very important because she has an open door policy as much her schedule permits. She knows how important it is to be visible. She's great, very approachable, and yes, she knows that that's very important, and it doesn't matter
what the situation or task is whether it's having to get a wheelchair over to a
classroom or help with anything, cleaning up trash. She's willing to get her hands
dirty and do it. She's not above any of that or gets someone else to do it and she's
hands-on.

**Create a culture of collaboration.** The fourth theme highlighted from the data
relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to
create a culture of collaboration. Ella believes that as a leader she cannot make decisions
for the school in isolation, rather it is a team effort. Ella illustrated this idea when she
stated, “it takes so much longer to get input from people but your buy-in is so much
greater.” In fact, she truly seeks people that will push her thinking so that greater results
are achieved:

I think when you select your leadership team and you select all people that you
know were going to agree with you, you’re not going to grow as a school or as a
person. So, I picked people that would push my thinking, and I’ve always
encouraged the AP’s, don’t be afraid to push my thinking. If we may decide to do
it, we may not but sometimes that idea, will trigger another idea and all of a
sudden, it morphs into something really good. So, I think that that’s really
important because you can get people around you that you know are just going to
okay, just kind of rubber-stamp everything, or you can get people around you that
are really going to push your thinking. I find that you’d grow so much more as a
school and as a person and I think the other side is I was willing to listen. But, I
think the wisdom is in everybody’s opinion. It’s not just one person, and I think
that that has helped me, too, because I think people really feel that I value their
opinions, and I value what they do for the school and together, it’s really truly
teamwork.

Mark, the assistant principal, recalled that when Ella first came to the school, the
staff had low morale and the culture was not very positive. That changed the moment
Ella placed collaboration to the forefront of teacher’s minds. Mark explained:

We were in kind of a rough spot when she came in. Just as a staff, low morale,
low self-esteem as a group, kind of coming off feeling like we've beaten up for a
few years. So, when she came onboard, it was just this immediate impact with
regard to very collaborative, first looking at the vision and the mission of the
school, getting feedback from the teachers, and really making ... I think the most
immediate impact that comes to mind is really making the leadership team just
that, an actual leadership team, not a body that would just sit and kind of filter
things out, but really a team that gives input and drives the direction of the school.

Additionally, Mark also valued that Ella collaborated with him when it came to
leading the school. Past principals made him feel inferior to their leadership status, while
Ella treated him like an equal:

Ella very much valued my participation and input in everything. So, she regularly
referred to our time together as co-leaders or co-principals which was new and
different. And, again, I didn't feel like she was saying it just to make me feel
good. I think she actually valued my strengths which were very different from her
own. I think we very well complemented each other and had different strengths in
different areas. Each other's weaknesses were the other's strength. So it worked
out really well.
Barbara, the school counselor, also saw how Ella valued all teachers’ input when it came to decision making. Barbara asserted that Ella’s decisions are never dictated or derived from a hidden agenda. Rather, whenever Ella made decisions she asked for input from the staff:

She encouraged collaboration among teachers, staff members, and whoever might have like interest in whatever topic we're talking about. I think by encouraging, like having our schedule the way it is where there's time to collaborate for teacher collaboration, like having late start, PLC meetings grade level, subject level meetings, and leadership team through all of these groups and teams. She really does place importance on making decisions after people have given their input.

Brad, Carla, and Sally, Green Valley parents, expressed that Ella continuously worked on creating a culture of collaboration with all parents and stakeholders. She made parent communication and parent involvement a top priority because with the prior principal, that communication and involvement was lost. Brad explained, “She is open and willing to have parents being involved in every educational process. She holds meetings at all hours of the day to be open to parent’s needs. She is open and always willing to talk.” Carla also stated:

She is definitely sensitive to the needs of families. When we first transferred there in sixth grade we did not have a Parent Teacher Association. She made it happen. She had a PTA going on right away because she wanted the parents to get more involved, to get the students in field trips and raise money for the school. She made PTA a priority.

Sally agreed with the other parents:
Yes. She always takes the time to listen to concerns that come from parents through different avenues. She invites us to participate in school site council, PTA and volunteer on campus. She creates a family type atmosphere at her school, so naturally parents are encouraged to be part of that family.

**Facilitate effective communication.** The fifth theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to facilitate effective communication. Ella believes that effective communication is one of the hardest things to do because even when you try your best, you still may not be reaching everyone effectively. To eliminate miscommunication, Ella’s main mode of communication is by telling them one on one, especially if it is important:

That is one of the hardest things to do. It really is, and even though you think in your head you’re communicating with everyone, you may or may not be and not only that you may or may not be communicating effectively. So, I have found out for instance working on the master schedule, I bring people in one on one. I don’t send them an email that I think you’re going to be teaching this. As a matter of fact during the day if I have something to tell people, I generally walk down to their classrooms and I tell them one on one.

Mark recalled, that in addition to meeting with teachers one on one, Ella practiced multiple avenues of effective communication. Having many different ways to communicate to the staff enabled Ella to be open and transparent:

I would say this whole age of transparency. She was very, very transparent via email, weekly bulletins, front-loading staff of what we were going to be working on at staff meetings, PDs, individual conversations. There was nothing that was
going on in the campus that people weren't aware of. And if they were, then they weren't checking their emails or reading the bulletin. Or, she tried to do ... She tried to front load everyone as best as possible.

Sandra, a middle school teacher, shared a similar sentiment to Mark. Sandra believes that Ella carefully balances how she communicates to the staff because Ella values the staff’s time. Sandra explained:

I think that her emails are very effective. There are many things that can be ... or information that can be passed on from her to us that does not require a face-to-face encounter and she does it very effectively through emails. She has something she calls the "Monday Memo." She has obviously the bulletin. But, as news comes in to her, it could be a day that's not scheduled for a meeting. It could be a Tuesday and it could be a Wednesday and she'll relay that information to us through that email. Of course, in our face-to-face encounters during our meetings, she does so as well. But I think that's very effective that she can just send over the information to us through an email.

Coby, a middle school teacher, asserted that Ella’s communication was so effective that she gave him confidence in her leadership. He illustrated this idea as he said, “With her open door policy, she is available. So it’s not just like she is the principal with the closed door policy sending emails. It is the best of both worlds.”

Marissa and Juan, classified employees, felt that Ella was a very effective communicator when it came to policies and procedures at the site. Marissa explained that Ella held weekly meetings to keep everyone current on upcoming events and tasks to be completed. Marissa shared, “One way she communicated well, was through the weekly
administrations meetings. She also held meetings with custodians, office staff, teachers and noon aides.” Juan also admired the way Ella quickly and efficiently communicated with the staff as he illustrated, “When she speaks to someone she is direct. When she wants to inform you about something, she is on it right away. She doesn’t let things go to address later, rather she addresses issues in the moment.”

Linda, a classified staff member, explained that Ella’s open door policy is what helped her be an effective communicator. Ella always has a welcoming persona and is willing to speak to anyone about the questions and concerns. Linda shared, “She definitely has an open door policy. She pretty much welcomes anyone into her office to talk to and she will always listen.”

Carla, a Green Valley parent, expressed that Ella’s communication with the parents was very important and appreciated. One of the highlights about Ella’s mode of communication was that feedback was always given in a prompt manner. Carla shared:

She would have weekly announcements faithfully, in English and Spanish. She would e-mail us back immediately whenever we had questions or concerns. She would not wait. One time, when my daughter was in sixth grade, I requested an appointment and I received one the very same day. The communication was absolutely great.

Show appreciation. The sixth theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to show appreciation. Mark, Barbara, and the teachers all shared how at one point Ella has made them feel appreciated. Mark recalled the times in which Ella hired a “latte lady” and hosted parties at her house in which she invited the whole staff. According to Mark,
showing appreciation boosted the school culture and she gave people the praise they deserved. Mark shared:

She would bring in a coffee lady once a year. . . . She was the latte lady. She would show up in the morning and have coffee and pastries, just as a thank you which we all knew cost quite a bit of money that this barista would come in during the morning for two hours and just make whatever kind of coffee or whatever kind of hot drink you wanted in the morning, to the parties that she would throw at her house without fee or cost.

Barbara, the school counselor, shared that it is not so much the “things” that made her feel appreciated, rather it is Ella’s words and actions. Barbara genuinely felt appreciated by Ella:

Ella values everyone's time and commitment that we each dedicate to our individual jobs. I just feel appreciated that she understands the work that we do, how hard we work and she's always mentioning how much she appreciates our hard work, and that I think is so important. It makes her stand out from other administrators in the past where oftentimes it seems like, "We're all in this together, We all work hard", but it's never mentioned and she seems to mention that often and constantly giving us praise and appreciation for what we do.

Claire, a middle school teacher, believes Ella’s ability to make connections and build relationships is what makes her such a successful school leader. These connections are not just made behind her office door. Rather, Claire stated that Ella shows her support in person:
If there's something that just pertains to me or what, she'll take the time in her walking to pop in and talk to you. So, it isn't just a lot of emails, so we don't have to see her or don't see her. She doesn't have to see us, I guess. So, she balances it all to make sure she still makes this connections with people throughout the day. She isn't just the principal who sends emails behind the door, that, you know, like the wizard and you don't get to see her. She also does pop in, she does an amazing amount of walkthroughs, and she's around, and supportive when she's in your room, of what you're doing and will acknowledge it. She's big on notes, and thank you notes and just those kind of things that connect everyone together.

Marissa, Juan, and Linda, classified staff, agreed that Ella showed her appreciation to them and to the staff in many different ways. Some praise was done in private, and some was in public. Either way, the appreciation they received from Ella made them feel that they worked hard. Marissa explained:

The principal shows appreciation in many ways. Any special days, birthdays administrative assistant days, she shows her appreciation with flowers, thank you cards, luncheons, a latte lady. I could go on and on about the many ways she shows appreciation to the staff. Even her attitude shows appreciation. Her great attitude shows her appreciation. She also tells people and lets them know how much she appreciates them and their work.

Juan recalled a time in which Ella publicly thanked him for his work and he felt very touched by her openness to share her thanks for his work in front of a large group of people. This made him feel special and proud. Juan shared:
This Monday when they had the promotion, she mentioned my name. It was special. She mentioned my name alone. All the students and parents started screaming and clapping. I was very touched. I didn’t cry but I was so touched. Anytime she has an event or something happens she always mentions the people that helped make the event successful.

Linda reminisced through her experiences with past principals and came to the conclusion that it is Ella who has shown her and the school the most appreciation. Linda elaborated on this when she said:

Out of all the principals I have worked with she has done the most. She has hosted dinners, barbeques, holiday events, given the staff chocolate fountains etc. She makes staff aware how important they are to her through the kind things she does for them.

Summary

This chapter summarized the results of the data collection and analysis. Five participants agreed to be a part of the teacher focus group, the school principal was interviewed, the assistant principal was interviewed, the counselor was interviewed and eighteen teachers, three parents and two staff completed the survey. Emergent themes were extrapolated from the data by the researcher to describe and analyze a complex picture of the moral transformative behaviors and practices of a successful principal.

The first research question asked: What moral transformative beliefs of a successful principal influenced a positive school culture? The six themes, which found that leaders should put students first, hold high and clear expectations, be trustworthy, be supportive, be genuine and be humanistic, were explained from the data.
The second research question asked: What key leadership practices of a moral transformative principal influence a positive school culture? The six themes, which found that leaders should model hard work, create a culture of caring, provide hands-on leadership, create a culture of collaboration, facilitate effective communication, and show appreciation, were explained from the data in detail. Chapter 5 will discuss conclusions and implications of the research questions.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary and Findings

This chapter is divided into four major sections: summary of the study, conclusions, implications, and concluding reflection. The first section, summary of the study, provides the restatement of the problem, a review of the procedures used in the study, and a restatement of the specific research questions. The second section, conclusions, includes the highlights of the major findings and addresses each of the research questions. The next section discusses the implications of the major findings. The final section illustrates the concluding reflection.

Statement of the problem. The problem addressed in this study was that moral transformational exemplars are needed to fully understand beliefs and actions of successful school principals who influence a school culture for a productive learning environment for all (Babo & Villaverde, 2013). This study identified the moral transformative leadership beliefs and actions of successful principals that positively influenced a school culture.

Statement of the procedures. I conducted a qualitative case study that analyzed the beliefs and practices of one school and one school principal. I gathered participants based on predetermined criteria. Once I determined the school to study, I scheduled three focus groups, interviews and a school culture survey with the participants. Participants were selected based on predetermined criteria and purposeful sampling (Lichtman, 2012). Due to the nature of qualitative case studies, the researcher was the primary instrument when collecting qualitative data (Creswell, 2012).
Each focus group was conducted on a voluntary basis. There are twenty teachers at Green Valley Middle School. Five teachers volunteered to participate in the focus group, which included three female teachers and two male teachers. Three parents participated in the parent focus group, which included one male and two females. Three classified members participated in the classified staff focus group, which was made up of one male and two females. In addition, one principal, one counselor, and one assistant principal agreed to be interviewed. Eighteen teachers completed the survey. I then transcribed all the focus group and interviews, coded for themes, and looked for common themes that emerged from the information gathered.

**The specific research questions.** The following research questions helped frame the purpose of the study. These research questions enabled the researcher to fully explore the topic of moral transformative leadership and the relationship to positively influencing school culture. The first research question asked: What moral transformative beliefs of a successful principal influenced a positive school culture? The six themes, supported that leaders should possess beliefs that put students first, hold high and clear expectations, be trustworthy, be supportive, be genuine, and be humanistic, were explained from the data.

The second research question asked: What key leadership practices of a moral transformative principal influence a positive school culture? The six themes, which found that leaders should display actions that model hard work, create a culture of caring, provide hands-on leadership, create a culture of collaboration, facilitate effective communication, and show appreciation, were explained from the data in detail.

The research questions were answered by themes that emerged from interview data, focus group data, a school culture survey, and were reported in Chapter 4.
Conclusions

The following conclusions review the main ideas found from the research study. Following the conclusions is the discussion section, which ties the themes back to the literature.

Develop Strong Relationships

The themes found for both question one and question two all directly related to one big idea: developing strong relationships. Ella’s success as a leader was due to carefully balancing many beliefs effectively, so that she was able to develop strong and lasting relationships with all stakeholders at Green Valley Middle School. The beliefs she held, which are described below, enabled Ella to positively influence her school culture.

When reviewing question one, and analyzing the beliefs that Ella hold in high regard, the following examples demonstrate the importance of developing strong relationships. First, her belief that students should come first allowed her to develop trusting relationships with her parents, and as a result built trust. According to the transformational leadership theory (Bolman & Deal, 2013), building trust and respects from members of the community is key. Second, the belief that holding high and clear expectations for her staff, enabled her staff to have confidence in her leadership, thus building trust and positive relationships.

Third, the belief that always following through with her word, and finding answers to questions that are posed to her, demonstrate her willingness to go above and beyond, thus developing strong relationships. Warrilow (2009) described that personal and individual attention shows appreciation and benefits the organization as a whole.
Fourth, the belief of being supportive of her parents, through avenues as the Parent Teacher Association, gave parents a place of belonging and self-worth when it came to being participants of the school. Warrilow (2009) calls this type of leadership “inspirational motivation,” as the leader “appeals to and inspires followers with optimism about future goals” (p. 10).

Fifth, the belief of being genuine with her actions, whether it was giving staff recognition or staying late at night to help solve a problem, built trust with the staff which led to a stronger development of relationships. This type of behavior is called “charisma,” as Ella acted in very admirable ways with her clear set of values and support for her stakeholders (Warrilow, 2009). And lastly, the belief of being humanistic, to share joys and sorrows, let all stakeholders know that Ella felt her role as a principal was more than a job, rather it was a calling for her in her life.

**Be Present and Be Authentic**

The themes found for both question one and question two all directly relate to an additional big idea: being present and being authentic. Starratt (2004) described how following the three ethical leadership virtues in schools- responsibility, authenticity and presence- all improve teacher capacity, student learning outcomes and positively transform school cultures. Starratt stressed that the three ethical leadership virtues energize and motivate both school workers and school leaders.

First, the ethical virtue of responsibility requires that school leaders value both leadership and learning (Starratt, 2004). Ella did not have hidden agendas or a hidden curriculum. Ella simply valued the education of her students and wanted nothing but the best for her staff and parents. Second, Starratt (2004) illustrated that the ethic of
authenticity always puts students and teachers first. Ella performed her day to day duties, not because they were part of a job description, but rather because they put students first. A common observation amongst her assistant principal, counselor, teachers, classified staff and parents was the Ella was always in the moment and present with them. When speaking to people, Ella took time to really listen and show she cared. When speaking to parents, she always made it a priority to share something great about their children.

Lastly, the ethical virtue of presence requires a school leader to treat all people with dignity and worth and has the capability to share talents, good ideas and enrich the school community (Starratt, 2011). Ella consistently showed her appreciation of her staff and students and made strong ties with her school community. To sum up, the exercise of the moral virtues of responsibility, authenticity and presence all shape and improve the actions and behaviors of a moral leader, like Ella (Starratt, 2011).

Showing Care Creates a Positive School Culture

The themes found for both question one and question two directly relate to a final big idea: that showing care creates a positive school culture. Ella’s success as a leader came from the fact that she carefully balanced many practices that she was able to truly care about all of the stakeholders of Green Valley Middle School. Showing she cared on a daily basis enabled Ella to create a lasting positive school culture. The practices enabled Ella to positively influence her school culture. When reviewing question two, and analyzing the beliefs that Ella hold in high regard, the following examples demonstrate the importance of showing care towards others.

First, by modeling hard work Ella was able to lead others by example. Her constant need to be on the go and never miss a day of work in twelve years, portrayed
that Ella truly followed the ethics of care, which emphasizes that leaders attend to the needs of their organization (Noddings, 2012). Second, creating an entire school culture of caring inspired others to want to do their best, and model life-long learning to their students. Taylor (2011) expressed that moral leadership is when you motivate others to do their best and invest in a common purpose. Parents felt confident that their children were being cared for and nurtured, and the staff often felt supported.

Third, by providing hands-on leadership and modeling positive behavior systems, the students felt welcomed and valued. Cromwell (2002) stressed that a shared set of values increases responsibility for student learning and creates a positive and caring atmosphere. Fourth, creating a culture of collaboration successfully united both the staff and parents. Ella consistently made it a priority to get feedback from all stakeholders whenever it came to student based decision making. By setting a cultural tone, Ella was able to get all stakeholders on the same page and driving towards the same goals (McKenzie, 2014).

Fifth, being an effective communicator, which meant staying organized and one step ahead of the teachers, demonstrated that Ella truly cared about the well-being of her school. Communication is key, as providing frameworks for people to follow can help overcome any obstacle (Warrilow, 2009). Finally, showing appreciation to the staff helped create a cohesive and positive school culture. Ella made it a priority to show appreciation through multiple avenues, which allowed everyone she encountered to feel valued and honored.
Discussions for Research Question One

The six themes from research question one are reviewed below with support from the literature. All six themes summarize how important Ella’s beliefs were for her whole school community.

**The belief of putting students first.** When Fullan (2003) describes moral endeavors, there is not one single definition, rather moral endeavors means that schools must prioritize moral conditions in order for students to gain a good education. These moral conditions include the development of personal, social, vocational, and academic attributes, as well as equity, fairness, care and civil interpersonal relationships (Fullan, 2003).

Ella so carefully balanced all of these moral conditions through the development of a school vision. The first theme that emerged from this study was putting students first. Ella, the school principal, shared the way in which she put students in the forefront was by developing a school vision. Likewise, the principal’s belief of putting students first was also observed by the school’s teachers, parents and classified staff. One teacher, Gabriel, recalled that one of the first things Ella created common policies and procedures that enables teachers to hold effective planning times and common grading policies. One parent, Brad, recalled that Ella was always willing to listen to the needs of parents. And classified staff member Linda shared that the students are always Ella’s number one priority.

**The belief of holding high and clear expectations.** Bass and Aviolo (1994) discussed that transformational leadership is when “leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more then they thought possible. They set
more challenging expectations and typically achieve to higher performances” (p. 136).
The second theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one showed that an important principal belief is to hold high and clear expectations. All stakeholders must have high expectations because once you hold them to this high standard they can accomplish so much more, especially when it comes to student engagement, collaboration and professional development.

The idea of high expectations was also seen from the lens of the Assistant Principal, the counselor, and the teachers. Mark explained that Ella’s leadership was to learn and show others by doing. Ella was always the exemplar model. In addition, the school counselor, the teachers and classified stated that high expectations were given to them, however they were also given the flexibility to use their strengths to reach these expectations. Ella truly believes in the capacity of her staff and their ability to do their jobs well.

**The belief of being trustworthy.** Hoy and Miskel (2008) believe that strong leaders have integrity. Integrity means to be honest, ethical, responsible and trustworthy (Miskel, 2008). The third theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illustrated that an important principal belief is to be trustworthy. Ella stressed that one of the most important beliefs she had as a new principal was to establish trust with her staff and school community. Similarly, the teachers and parents stated that Ella established trust with the staff and the community. It is believed Ella’s success at building trust was due to the fact that she built relationships first and she is a model of being a hard worker. One of the greatest qualities Ella possessed was the ability to establish trust in the most genuine manner, and her ability to follow through with questions or concerns.
The belief of being supportive. Burns (1978) defines transformational leadership as “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 134). Ella proved to be a transformational leader in the way in which she supported her students and staff. The fourth theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illuminated that an important principal belief is to be supportive.

Ella asserted that she made her priority to support teachers in what they are doing. The assistant principal, counselor, teachers, parents and classified staff all recalled times in which they felt supported by Ella. Ella equally tried to make others feel valued, motivated and appreciated. One teacher illustrated this idea when she said, “She's very supportive of all the different departments on campus. I believe she listens to our concerns. She addresses our needs…she really values our opinion and she wants to hear the positive and the negative.”

The belief of being genuine. When discussing moral leaders, Starratt stressed that authentic leadership is about “attending authentically to the good of the communal work of teaching and learning. The authentic educator lives with the daily challenge of effecting that good, despite institutional and personal limitations (p. 92). The fifth theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illuminated that an important principal belief is to be genuine, also known as authentic. Ella recalled that in her role as a principal it was important to her that her staff knows she is transparent and honest. Ella tried her best to keep her staff informed and not fall into the politics of education.

Similarly, the assistant principal, teachers and classified staff shared that much of what Ella did was not for show, rather it was because she is genuine. The way in which
Ella spoke to people that showed her genuine, caring nature. She invested time in people because she truly wanted to get to know them and support them. She spent time talking with all stakeholders to learn more about them personally and as a whole community. In addition, Ella always put her school, the students and teachers first which made them feel valued.

**The belief of being humanistic.** Farris (2011) found that moral leaders whom increase the engagement and motivation in all students so that each student reaches their highest potential. Student engagement represents the effort, both in time and energy, students commit to educational activities (Kuh, 2001). The more students are engaged, the more likely they will develop a personal connection to school and increase their self-worth.

The sixth theme highlighted from the data in regards to question one illuminated that an important principal belief is to be humanistic. Showing her humanistic side allowed Ella to communicate more fairly, and develop deep lasting relationships with her assistant principal, counselor, teachers, parents and classified staff. In addition, Ella shared that it was vital to show her humanistic side with the students by participating in non-academic events with the students, which included hosting student lunches and participating in dance competitions.

**Discussions for Research Question Two**

The six themes from research question one are reviewed below with support from the literature. All six themes summarize how important Ella’s actions were for her whole school community.
**Model hard work.** Society, and educational systems, need moral leaders to inspire us, help shape us morally, and motivate purposeful action (Coles, 2000). Coles (2000) illustrated that moral leaders follow up their words with actions. Moral leaders demonstrate leadership by their actions. This means they focus on doing wanting the best for all people, but most importantly moral leaders lead by example. This is called the living of leadership (Coles, 2000).

The first theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to model hard work. When it came to high expectations for her students and staff, Ella believed that strong leadership modeling should come from herself first, and all stakeholders should contribute equally. By Ella modeling hard work for others, she inspired people to work harder.

**Create a culture of caring.** Noddings (2010) illuminated the idea that ethics, particularly the ethics of care, can ensure that the goals of moral education are met in classrooms and in schools. From the perspective of care ethics, the primary aim of moral education is to produce people who will care for those in need and care for those who suffer (Noddings, 2012). Ella is a prime example of this idea.

The second theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to create a culture of caring. Ella showed she cared through getting to really know her staff and their personal lives. Ella was a model of caring and trust because she put others before herself and truly empathized with people and what they are going through. Giving her time, commitment and compassion all contributed to her success as a leader, and this was witnessed by her assistant counselor, parents and classified staff.
**Provide hands-on leadership.** According to Lickona (1989), the two most basic values schools need are respect and responsibility. Although this literature is dated, the idea of principals having respect is still true today. Respect is “the root principle behind many ethical don’ts” and responsibility means caring for each other (Lickona, 1989, p. 44). The virtues of respect and responsibility were highlighted when Ella provided her students and staff with hands-on leadership.

The third theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to provide hands-on leadership. Providing hands-on leadership enables Ella to demonstrate her respect and responsibility to all stakeholders. Ella was an effective principal because of her open door policy and her willingness to always help others. Ella would go above and beyond her duties, all to show that she would do anything for her students.

**Create a culture of collaboration.** Leithwood et al. (2004) stressed that principal leadership capacity can dramatically improve school and organizational structure, as well as build a culture of collaboration. The fourth theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to create a culture of collaboration. Ella believed that as a leader she could not make decisions for the school in isolation, rather it is a team effort. By improving the collaboration at her school, she was also able to effectively increase buy in from the staff and increase staff morale. In addition, creating a Parent Teacher Association helped improve the collaboration with families. Ella’s school based decisions always came with input from the staff and parents.
Facilitate effective communication. According to Warrilow (2009), leaders who provide inspirational motivation also serve as effective communicators. Inspirational motivation pertains to the degree to which the leader articulates goals and inspires followers with optimism about future goals, and offers meaning for the current task at hand (Warrilow, 2009, p. 10).

The fifth theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to facilitate effective communication. Ella practiced multiple avenues of effective communication with her assistant principal, teachers, classified staff and parents. Having many different ways to communicate to the staff enabled Ella to be open and transparent. One specific example was how Ella always had all school documents translated in multiple languages. Even though Ella was not bilingual, her caring translated into actions. Ella carefully balanced how she communicated all stakeholders because Ella truly valued their time and contribution to the school.

Show appreciation. According to Warrilow (2009), one of the four types of leadership components to the transformational leadership theory is to give personal and individual attention. Giving personal and individual attention is defined as the “degree to which the leader attends to each individual follower’s needs and acts as a mentor or coach and gives respect to and appreciation of the individual’s contribution to the team” (Warrilow, 2009, p. 10).

The sixth theme highlighted from the data relating to research question two illustrated that an important principal practice is to show appreciation. The assistant principal, counselor, teachers and classified staff all shared how at one point Ella has
made them feel appreciated. Showing appreciation boosted the school culture and gave people the praise they deserved. In addition, it was not so much the “things” that made the staff feel appreciated, rather it was Ella’s words and actions. Ella’s ability to make connections and build relationships is what made her such a successful school leader. Connections were not just made behind her office door, rather Ella showed her support in person.

**Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

Due to the nature of this qualitative case study, the scope of the study was limited to the experiences of one school principal. However, the results can further assist the development of new or additional professional standards for educational leaders. The following are recommendations for policy and practice.

- A standard should be added to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders that promotes the development of building positive relationships at schools.

The current 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders do not reference the importance of building positive relationships in schools. It is imperative that all school leaders make this their top priority through the development of trust, authenticity and presence. Building positive and strong relationships affects all avenues of the school and can influence all stakeholders.

- A standard should be added to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders that promotes building a *culture* of caring.

The current 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders do not reference the importance of creating a culture of care. Care ethics focuses on empathizing with all
stakeholders and treating people with respect and dignity. The Professional Standards should define and outline how principals can create a culture that promotes caring.

- Principals must have ongoing professional development through the State that promotes creating and maintaining a positive school culture.

The literature review in the study showed that creating a positive school culture is critical to student achievement. Therefore, it is a policy recommendation to require ongoing professional development to educational leaders that focuses on the importance of school culture. Making school culture a priority will put relationships, trust and care to the forefront of school’s agendas.

- Future administrators must be prepared in administration programs.

The outcomes of this study demonstrated that the beliefs and actions of a principal can positively influence school culture. Therefore, each belief and practice should be discussed in administration programs to prepare future leaders. This is especially imperative for administrators that will lead middle schools and high needs schools.

- Teacher preparation programs must imbed beliefs and practices in their curriculum.

Future administrators start off their careers by being trained as teachers. It is vital that teacher preparation program properly prepare teachers the beliefs and practices of successful leaders.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Due to the nature of this qualitative case study, the scope of the study was limited to the experiences of eighteen grade six through eight teachers within one district in Southern California, as well as one school principal, on school counselor, one school
assistant principal, three classified staff and three parents. Other possibilities for further studies are listed below.

- Study the longitudinal impact a moral transformative principal’s actions and beliefs have on school culture.

  This study was limited to research that was conducted over a period of several months. The study would benefit from having a longitudinal analysis of the principal, dependent on the principal remaining at the school site. A longitudinal study would allow more in depth research on the maintenance a positive school culture.

- Study more schools that have identified moral transformative principals.

  This study was limited to one school in southern California. It would be beneficial to research multiple schools to identify common or varying themes of successful moral transformative leaders. Studying more schools would give the researcher more concrete findings that could be applied from school to school.

- Expand this study to elementary and high school principals at high needs schools.

  This study was limited to one middle school. It would be beneficial to identify if the themes would cross over to an elementary and/or high school leader. There would be benefit in understanding if high need schools all need a similar type of leadership.

- Expand the study to compare a principal evaluation to the actual performance of the principal.

  This study just began to introduce the idea of the 2015 standards for Professional Educators. The study did not analyze the principal’s actual evaluation to identify whether the evaluation correlated with the principal’s success with positively influencing school
culture. Developing further research that includes a principal’s evaluation would create additional recommendations for policy and practice.

- Expand the study to identify which moral transformative beliefs positively transform a school culture.

The focus of this study was to identify the beliefs and actions of successful principals that positively influence school culture. An additional study would identify the specific beliefs and actions that would positively transform a school culture. This would require more time to analyze the leadership beliefs and actions of the school principal.

- Schools and Districts should develop criteria to identify administrators that are the best fit for transforming school cultures.

The data from this study showed that there are specific beliefs and actions of successful principals. These beliefs and actions should be part of the criteria used to determine the best fit principal during an interview process.

- Develop a quantitative, correlational study.

The data would benefit from adding a quantitative, correlational study. A quantitative study would use statistics to support the findings and may be more reliable and objective.

Concluding Reflection

Schools have an obligation to provide a high-quality education to all children in our country. A high-quality education often depends on the ethical and moral behaviors of the school principal. Therefore, moral leadership is needed to ensure that our students receive what they need to be successful. Moral leaders, that intertwine the right beliefs and actions, have a profound ability to make a difference in school cultures and students’ lives.
This study demonstrated that there are specific moral transformative beliefs and actions of school principals that positively influence school culture. These beliefs and actions, combined with building strong relationships, being present and authentic, and creating a culture of care, all contribute towards creating and maintaining an effective environment for all types of learners.

The survey results, interviews and focus groups each demonstrate that there are authentic exemplars of successful principals with beliefs and actions that positively influence a school culture for a productive learning environment for all. This study has been a profound opportunity to learn about the importance of selecting the right leader to lead a high needs middle school. As Turan and Bektas (2013) stated, “good leaders have the power to change organizations, while better leaders have the power to change people” because “human beings are the heart of the organization” (p. 157). These exemplars must be recognized so that our children have the opportunity to excel in this competitive and changing society. Schools house our most precious resource for the future, and the time is now to ensure that these resources, our children, have exemplar models of integrity, trust, care, and authenticity.
References


Appendix A: Principal Interview Questions

1. Introductions: Please state your position and length of years you have been at this site.

2. Vision: Does you give high priority to developing within the school a shared set of values, beliefs, and attitudes related to teaching and learning? Explain and give examples.

3. Expectations: Do you have high expectations for teachers and students? Explain and give examples.

4. Individualized support: Do you support staff in terms of professional development and for their contribution to the school? Explain how and give examples.

5. Staff to staff: Do you facilitate opportunities for staff to learn from each other? Explain and give examples.

6. Collaborative Culture: Do you promote an atmosphere of caring and trust amongst the staff? Explain and give examples.

7. Collaborative Culture: Do you facilitate effective communication among staff? Explain and give examples.

8. Collaborative Culture: Do you make an effort to know students and staff? Explain and give examples.

9. Monitoring the School: Are you visible and accessible to students and staff? Explain and give examples.

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your beliefs and actions?
Appendix B: Interview and Focus Group Questions- For Assistant Principal, Counselor and Teachers

1. Introductions: Please state your position and length of years you have been at this site.

2. Vision: Does your principal give high priority to developing within the school a shared set of values, beliefs, and attitudes related to teaching and learning? Explain and give examples.

3. Expectations: Does the principal have high expectations for teachers and students? Explain and give examples.

4. Individualized support: Do you feel supported by your principal in terms of professional development and for your contribution to the school? Explain and give examples.

5. Staff to staff: Does your principal facilitate opportunities for staff to learn from each other? Explain and give examples.

6. Collaborative Culture: Does your principal promote an atmosphere of caring and trust amongst the staff? Explain and give examples.

7. Collaborative Culture: Does your principal facilitate effective communication among staff? Explain and give examples.

8. Collaborative Culture: Does your principal make an effort to know students and staff? Explain and give examples.

9. Monitoring the School: Is your principal visible and accessible to students and staff? Explain and give examples.

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your principal’s beliefs and actions?
Appendix C: Focus Group Questions for Parents

1. Introductions: Please state your position and grade of your child.

2. Is your principal sensitive to family and community needs and requests? Explain and give examples.

3. Does your principal plan and work with parents and community representatives? Explain and give examples.

4. Describe your relationship with the school principal. Do you consider this relationship positive? Explain and give examples.

5. Does your principal create an environment of caring and trust for the school? Give examples.

6. Does your principal facilitate effective communication with parents? Explain and give examples.

7. Is there anything else you would like to share about your principal’s beliefs and actions?
Appendix D: Consent Form- Parent Focus Group

Purpose:
As a doctoral student at Cal Poly Pomona, I am conducting a focus group under the direct supervision of my Doctoral Chair, Dr. Betty Alford. You are invited to participate. The purpose of the study is to examine principal leadership and school culture. I will use this information to add to my dissertation.

Procedures:
If you participate in this study, you will be in a group of approximately 4 – 6 parents. I will be the facilitator who will ask questions and facilitate the discussion, and an audio recorder will document the focus group. If you volunteer to participate in this focus group, you will be asked some questions relating to your experience with principal leadership and school culture.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

Benefits and Risks:
Your participation may benefit research regarding effective principal leadership behaviors and actions and school culture. No risk greater than those experienced in ordinary conversation are anticipated. There are some questions involving school safety and student behavior that may cause discomfort, however if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the questions you do not have to answer the questions. Everyone will be asked to respect the privacy of the other group members. All participants will be asked not to disclose anything said within the context of the
discussion, but it is important to understand that other people in the group with you may not keep all information private and confidential.

**Confidentiality:**

Data from this study will be analyzed by myself staff and documented in my dissertation. No individual participant will be identified or linked to the results. Study records, including this consent from signed by you, may be inspected by my doctoral chair. The results of this study may be presented at a District meeting; however, your identity will not be disclosed. All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly confidential. All materials will be stored in a secure location and access to files will be restricted to paid professional staff.

**Consent:**

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this focus group.

Participant's signature: ____________________________________________

Printed name: ____________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Marci Chavez @ mrojas@cpp.edu
Appendix E: Consent Form- Teacher Focus Group

Purpose:
As a doctoral student at Cal Poly Pomona, I am conducting a focus group under the direct supervision of my Doctoral Chair, Dr. Betty Alford. You are invited to participate. The purpose of the study is to examine principal leadership and school culture. I will use this information to add to my dissertation.

Procedures:
If you participate in this study, you will be in a group of approximately 4 – 6 teachers. I will be the facilitator who will ask questions and facilitate the discussion, and an audio recorder will document the focus group. If you volunteer to participate in this focus group, you will be asked some questions relating to your experience with principal leadership and school culture.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

Benefits and Risks:
Your participation may benefit research regarding effective principal leadership behaviors and actions and school culture. No risk greater than those experienced in ordinary conversation are anticipated. There are some questions involving school safety and student behavior that may cause discomfort, however if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the questions you do not have to answer the questions. Everyone will be asked to respect the privacy of the other group members. All participants will be asked not to disclose anything said within the context of the
discussion, but it is important to understand that other people in the group with you may not keep all information private and confidential.

**Confidentiality:**

Data from this study will be analyzed by myself staff and documented in my dissertation. No individual participant will be identified or linked to the results. Study records, including this consent from signed by you, may be inspected by my doctoral chair. The results of this study may be presented at a District meeting; however, your identity will not be disclosed. All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly confidential. All materials will be stored in a secure location and access to files will be restricted to paid professional staff.

**Consent:**

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this focus group.

Participant's signature: ________________________________

Printed name: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Marci Chavez @ mrojas@cpp.edu
Appendix F: Consent Form- Principal Interview

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona Informed Consent Form for Research Involving Human Subjects

You are being invited to participate in a research study, which the Cal Poly Pomona Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved for conduct by the investigators named here. This form is designed to provide you - as a human subject - with information about this study. The Investigator or his/her representative will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. You are entitled to an Experimental Research Subject’s Bill of Rights and a copy of this form. If you have any questions or complaints about the informed consent process of this research study or your rights as a subject, please contact the Compliance Office within Cal Poly Pomona’s Office of Research and Graduate Studies at (909) 869-4215.

Project Title: Identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture

Principal Research Investigator: Marci Chavez, cell phone: (805) 698-7729, email address: mrojas@cpp.edu

Dear Principal,

You are being invited to participate in an educational research study. For my doctoral dissertation, I am interested in identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture.

This study is under the supervision of Dr. Betty Alford, phone number (936) 554-5240, and email address: balford@cpp.edu, who is my dissertation committee chair for the Doctorate of Education in the Educational Leadership program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

If you agree to participate in this study, I am hoping that you will participate fully to ensure the validity and success of this study. However, your participation in this research is

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voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Declining to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you.

Your participation in this research study asks that you participate in an approximately 60 minute recorded interview and 2-3 informal observations. The questions asked in a focus group will include questions regarding your views of principal leadership. If any of my questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not need to respond.

Your name, school, and district will remain confidential. All data with your name on it will be deleted. Any data collected from your school will be combined with answers from other participants in the study to form averages before they are reported. Your district’s administrators will not see any data, observation notes, or interview responses at any time during or following the study.

There is no compensation for participation in this study. Please contact the principal research investigator, Marci Chavez at (805) 698-7729, e-mail ms.marci83@gmail.com, if you have any questions about this research or your rights as a participant. You are entitled to receive a copy of the completed informed consent form.

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Name of Participant Signature Date

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Name of Participant Signature Date

IRB-16-57
Appendix G: Consent Form- Assistant Principal

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona Informed Consent Form for Research Involving Human Subjects

You are being invited to participate in a research study, which the Cal Poly Pomona Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved for conduct by the investigators named here. This form is designed to provide you - as a human subject - with information about this study. The Investigator or his/her representative will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. You are entitled to an Experimental Research Subject’s Bill of Rights and a copy of this form. If you have any questions or complaints about the informed consent process of this research study or your rights as a subject, please contact the Compliance Office within Cal Poly Pomona’s Office of Research and Graduate Studies at (909) 869-4215.

Project Title: Identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture

Principal Research Investigator: Marci Chavez, cell phone: (805) 698-7729, email address: mrojas@cpp.edu

Dear Assistant Principal,

You are being invited to participate in an educational research study. For my doctoral dissertation, I am interested in identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture.

This study is under the supervision of Dr. Betty Alford, phone number (936) 554-5240, and email address: balford@cpp.edu, who is my dissertation committee chair for the Doctorate of Education in the Educational Leadership program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

If you agree to participate in this study, I am hoping that you will participate fully to ensure the validity and success of this study. However, your participation in this research is...
voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Declining to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you.

Your participation in this research study asks that you participate in an approximately 60 minute recorded interview. The questions asked in a focus group will include questions regarding your views of principal leadership. If any of my questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not need to respond.

Your name, school, and district will remain confidential. All data with your name on it will be deleted. Any data collected from your school will be combined with answers from other participants in the study to form averages before they are reported. Your district’s administrators will not see any data, observation notes, or interview responses at any time during or following the study.

There is no compensation for participation in this study. Please contact the principal research investigator, Marci Chavez at (805) 698-7729, e-mail ms.marci83@gmail.com, if you have any questions about this research or your rights as a participant. You are entitled to receive a copy of the completed informed consent form.

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Name of Participant Signature   Date

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Name of Participant Signature   Date

**IRB-16-57**
Appendix H: Consent Form- Counselor

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona Informed Consent Form for Research Involving Human Subjects

You are being invited to participate in a research study, which the Cal Poly Pomona Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved for conduct by the investigators named here. This form is designed to provide you - as a human subject - with information about this study. The Investigator or his/her representative will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. You are entitled to an Experimental Research Subject’s Bill of Rights and a copy of this form. If you have any questions or complaints about the informed consent process of this research study or your rights as a subject, please contact the Compliance Office within Cal Poly Pomona’s Office of Research and Graduate Studies at (909) 869-4215.

Project Title: Identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture

Principal Research Investigator: Marci Chavez, cell phone: (805) 698-7729, email address: mrojas@cpp.edu

Dear Counselor,

You are being invited to participate in an educational research study. For my doctoral dissertation, I am interested in identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture.

This study is under the supervision of Dr. Betty Alford, phone number (936) 554-5240, and email address: balford@cpp.edu, who is my dissertation committee chair for the Doctorate of Education in the Educational Leadership program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

If you agree to participate in this study, I am hoping that you will participate fully to ensure the validity and success of this study. However, your participation in this research is
voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Declining to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you.

Your participation in this research study asks that you participate in an approximately 60 minute recorded interview. The questions asked in a focus group will include questions regarding your views of principal leadership. If any of my questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not need to respond.

Your name, school, and district will remain confidential. All data with your name on it will be deleted. Any data collected from your school will be combined with answers from other participants in the study to form averages before they are reported. Your district’s administrators will not see any data, observation notes, or interview responses at any time during or following the study.

There is no compensation for participation in this study. Please contact the principal research investigator, Marci Chavez at (805) 698-7729, e-mail ms.marci83@gmail.com, if you have any questions about this research or your rights as a participant. You are entitled to receive a copy of the completed informed consent form.

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Name of Participant Signature Date

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Name of Participant Signature Date

IRB-16-57
Appendix I: Consent Form - Parent

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona Informed Consent Form for Research Involving Human Subjects

You are being invited to participate in a research study, which the Cal Poly Pomona Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved for conduct by the investigators named here. This form is designed to provide you - as a human subject - with information about this study. The Investigator or his/her representative will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. You are entitled to an Experimental Research Subject’s Bill of Rights and a copy of this form. If you have any questions or complaints about the informed consent process of this research study or your rights as a subject, please contact the Compliance Office within Cal Poly Pomona’s Office of Research and Graduate Studies at (909) 869-4215.

Project Title: Identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture

Principal Research Investigator: Marci Chavez, cell phone: (805) 698-7729, email address: ms.marci83@gmail.com

Dear Parent,

You are being invited to participate in an educational research study. For my doctoral dissertation, I am interested in identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture.

This study is under the supervision of Dr. Betty Alford, phone number (936) 554-5240, and email address: balford@cpp.edu, who is my dissertation committee chair for the Doctorate of Education in the Educational Leadership program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

If you agree to participate in this study, I am hoping that you will participate fully to ensure the validity and success of this study. However, your participation in this research is
voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Declining to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you.

Your participation in this research study asks that you participate in an approximately 30 minute focus group that will be audio recorded. The questions asked in a focus group will include questions regarding your views of principal leadership. If any of my questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not need to respond.

Your name, school, and district will remain confidential. All data with your name on it will be deleted. Any data collected from your school will be combined with answers from other participants in the study to form averages before they are reported. Your district’s administrators will not see any data, observation notes, or interview responses at any time during or following the study.

There is no compensation for participation in this study. Please contact the principal research investigator, Marci Chavez at (805) 698-7729, e-mail ms.marci83@gmail.com, if you have any questions about this research or your rights as a participant. You are entitled to receive a copy of the completed informed consent form.

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Name of Participant   Signature   Date

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Name of Participant   Signature   Date

IRB-16-57
Appendix J: Consent Form-Staff

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona Informed Consent Form for Research Involving Human Subjects

You are being invited to participate in a research study, which the Cal Poly Pomona Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved for conduct by the investigators named here. This form is designed to provide you - as a human subject - with information about this study. The Investigator or his/her representative will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. You are entitled to an Experimental Research Subject’s Bill of Rights and a copy of this form. If you have any questions or complaints about the informed consent process of this research study or your rights as a subject, please contact the Compliance Office within Cal Poly Pomona’s Office of Research and Graduate Studies at (909) 869-4215.

Project Title: Identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture

Principal Research Investigator: Marci Chavez, cell phone: (805) 698-7729, email address: mrojas@cpp.edu

Dear Staff Member,

You are being invited to participate in an educational research study. For my doctoral dissertation, I am interested in identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture.

This study is under the supervision of Dr. Betty Alford, phone number (936) 554-5240, and email address: balford@cpp.edu, who is my dissertation committee chair for the Doctorate of Education in the Educational Leadership program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

If you agree to participate in this study, I am hoping that you will participate fully to ensure the validity and success of this study. However, your participation in this research is
voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Declining to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you.

Your participation in this research study asks that you participate in an approximately 30 minute survey. The questions asked in the survey will include questions regarding your views on school culture and leadership. If any of my questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not need to respond.

Your name, school, and district will remain confidential. All data with your name on it will be deleted. Any data collected from your school will be combined with answers from other participants in the study to form averages before they are reported. Your district’s administrators will not see any data, observation notes, or interview responses at any time during or following the study.

There is no compensation for participation in this study. Please contact the principal research investigator, Marci Chavez at (805) 698-7729, e-mail ms.marci83@gmail.com, if you have any questions about this research or your rights as a participant. You are entitled to receive a copy of the completed informed consent form.

__________________________________________________________
Name of Participant    Signature    Date

__________________________________________________________
Name of Participant    Signature    Date

IRB-16-57
Appendix K: Consent Form-Parents

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona Informed Consent Form for Research Involving Human Subjects

You are being invited to participate in a research study, which the Cal Poly Pomona Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved for conduct by the investigators named here. This form is designed to provide you - as a human subject - with information about this study. The Investigator or his/her representative will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. You are entitled to an Experimental Research Subject’s Bill of Rights and a copy of this form. If you have any questions or complaints about the informed consent process of this research study or your rights as a subject, please contact the Compliance Office within Cal Poly Pomona’s Office of Research and Graduate Studies at (909) 869-4215.

Project Title: Identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture

Principal Research Investigator: Marci Chavez, cell phone: (805) 698-7729, email address: mrojas@hlpusd.k12.ca.us

Dear Teacher,

You are being invited to participate in an educational research study. For my doctoral dissertation, I am interested in identifying the moral transformative behaviors and beliefs of a successful principal that positively influence school culture.

This study is under the supervision of Dr. Betty Alford, phone number (936) 554-5240, and email address: balford@cpp.edu, who is my dissertation committee chair for the Doctorate of Education in the Educational Leadership program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

If you agree to participate in this study, I am hoping that you will participate fully to ensure the validity and success of this study. However, your participation in this research is
voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Declining to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to you.

Your participation in this research study asks that you participate in an approximately 30 minute focus group that will be audio recorded. The questions asked in a focus group will include questions regarding your views of principal leadership. If any of my questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not need to respond.

Your name, school, and district will remain confidential. All data with your name on it will be deleted. Any data collected from your school will be combined with answers from other participants in the study to form averages before they are reported. Your district’s administrators will not see any data, observation notes, or interview responses at any time during or following the study.

There is no compensation for participation in this study. Please contact the principal research investigator, Marci Chavez at (805) 698-7729, e-mail ms.marci83@gmail.com, if you have any questions about this research or your rights as a participant. You are entitled to receive a copy of the completed informed consent form.

____________________________  ______________________  ______________________
Name of Participant          Signature          Date

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Name of Participant          Signature          Date

IRB-16-57