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An untold story: African American women founders of private and charter high schools

Sharon Wilson

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AN UNTOLD STORY: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN FOUNDERS OF

PRIVATE AND CHARTER HIGH SCHOOLS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Sharon Wilson

June 2011

John McManus, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Sharon Wilson

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral committee:

John McManus, Ph.D., Chairperson

Robert M. Canady, D.B.A.

Lauren E. Walters, Ed.D.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother, Verdie Coleman, who left a legacy of education for generations to come when she graduated from Jefferson High School, well into her fifties. I dedicate this dissertation to my grandchildren: Oquiesha, Jamal, Kyrsten, and Askari Wilson. This dissertation is also dedicated to my nieces Asjinik and Ridgeway, and my nephews Lamar and James. I hope you will continue the legacy of life long learning which has ensured our family's capacity to thrive through the ages.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It really did take a village of support and guidance for the completion of this dissertation. The list of persons needing acknowledgement is very long and straight across. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the importance of their roles in this study.

Dr. Jack McManus, my dissertation chair has lived this project with me, informing, mentoring, debating, foraging the way to the discoveries uncovered in this research project. Thank you for your unwavering support. Thank you, Dr. Robert Canady for your gentle leadership conversations on the South, and in separating the business end from the heart of educational leadership. Moreover, thank you so much Dr. Laurie Walters for your clear, concise examination of the facts, balanced with motivational conversations about the realities of completing the dissertation process.

I thank all of the participants for their willingness to allow me to examine their lives. I came away truly transformed as a person, having seen real leaders engaged in the work of educating children.

Thank you to the expert panelists who gave of their time to comment on the written and survey instruments, Dr. Doffoney, Mrs. Biggs, Dr. Louque, and Dr. Rodriguez. Special thanks to Dr. Yael Hellman who spent several hours informing me on her research on Jewish women (after which this study is modeled), and supporting me through the process. Your assistance and support are appreciated.

Support from my family and friends has been so consistent and pervasive that is difficult to think of the words to thank them. Mom and dad, thank you for being there whenever I call. Thank you to my brother John for going before me in keeping the legacy, keeping me on track and focused on the goal. Edward, Reynoldo, and Richard

thank you for your side-by-side support. Last but not least, thank you to my sons

Stephen and Omar, and their wives Gabrielle and Janice. To my sons, who have gone

from one educational experience to another with me, and to their loving wives who have

joined in and done all that was necessary to get the job done.

VITA

Sharon Wilson

EDUCATION:

M.Ed.   Pepperdine University Culver City, CA

Masters in Education, Curriculum Development 2000

B.S. Nursing   California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA), Los Angeles

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Department Administrator, Kaiser Permanente, 2007 - present

CEO, Swilson Consulting Group, 2002 – 2007

Client Services Director, Jenesse Center, Inc., 1997 - 2002

Adjunct Professor, California State University, Dominguez Hills, Department of

Sociology, 2004 - Present

Instructor, Fresno City College, Fresno, CA 1993 – 1996

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND LICENSURE:

Registered Nursing License

MEMBERSHIPS:

Pepperdine University Alumni Club

Toastmasters

American Society of Training Directors

Board member, Sarah's Daughters

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to provide a leadership profile of selected African American (AA) women founders of private and charter high schools. To determine this profile, the research was designed to provide a defined exploration of the founders' leadership style, background, career, religious and ethical influences, entrepreneurship, community involvement, and their experiences with mentoring and helping traditions. This study also provides a demographic description of the schools they founded. This study details the untold story of a group of AA women who have affected the lives of many children.

A literature review and adaptation of Yael Hellman's study on Jewish women executives were the sources of the research questions. Five qualified professionals in the field of education validated both instruments. A purposive sample of 10 AA women founders' was obtained by snowball sampling and all consented to participate voluntarily. Data were from two sources, a larger primary written survey, and a smaller personal interview.

A profile of the African American woman founder of a secondary private and charter high school emerged. The family backgrounds includes: (a) raised in the southern U.S. (as are her parents), (b) born between 1940 and 1960 into a family of 6 siblings in which she was the middle child, (c) attended a public high school. These leaders have received a master's degree in education, carry the title CEO, and have been with her present company for 15 years. Research indicates this group of women leaders believes that her AA identity and her female gender affected her choice of career and career advancement. These founders influence to start a school derived from a family member

or friend, and their discontent with the education children at the prior school at which they worked were receiving. They believe the best preparation for the position was in their work as a teacher. Of significance is the finding these founders of private and charter high schools have high religious commitment (attend church more than once a week and is actively involved in church activities), and the church influence began as a child.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation tells the story of African-American (AA) women who started secondary private and charter schools in the greater Los Angeles area and sustained them for 5 years or longer. Their work is important to investigate not only because it tells the story of a group of African-American women but also because it contributes to the vision of preparing AA children and young adults to compete in the 21st century global economy. This information contributes to best practices; therefore, it may lead to greater academic success for AA children and young adults. Academic success in turn is linked to economic success. Economic success within the AA community leads to essential gains in quality of life and social standing. Moreover, while this study shares the story of a group of African-American women, perhaps this story will inspire other individuals and districts to emulate the best practices that are revealed in this study because the populations of students they serve, in particular economically disadvantaged AA students in Los Angeles, have continued to achieve lower than average results on standardized tests.

While current reports of the state of education for AA students are often disheartening, the literature is rich with research on counter-examples of education success stories of poor and minority students. Much of this success has been in schools with mission and vision statements highly aligned with the community they serve, and in Los Angeles these communities are often divided along ethnic, racial, and economic lines (Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003). An historical review of schools founded in the early 1900s by this collective of highly committed African-American women indicates many of them were successful because their initiatives aligned with the needs of the

communities they served. While there is not clear evidence of how the schools' visions and missions were created, on retrospective examination these were small schools with small class size in which teachers provided individualized and motivational attention to students. The teachers and administrators were highly prepared. Much of their approach is still not yet available in larger public schools that must rely on generalized mission and vision statements and broad strategies to serve a huge and diverse population. Specific mission and vision statements, small class size, individualized attention, as well as motivating strategies exist in many successful schools, such as private and charter schools. These schools tend to be community-based and in some instances serve special populations, a designation for students who are no longer eligible for public school education in Los Angeles County, including some students in special education and alternative schools.

Background on Current Education Issues for Minorities in Los Angeles

A report prepared by the Los Angeles Urban League (Global Insight, 2005) painted a dismal picture of academic achievement for AA children in Los Angeles county; as a whole, they persistently experienced lower high school graduation rates, greater high school drop out rates, lower reading and math scores, and lower rates of college graduation than any other ethnic group in the county, which includes Non-Hispanic Whites, Asian, and Hispanic students. This lack of achievement is a source of poverty in these students' lives, especially when they become adults, and is the driving force for homelessness, poor health, and a high crime rate. This fact is significant because this population of AA students represents a much wider group of disadvantaged

students that includes poor students, urban students, and minority students nationally (Frankenberg et al., 2003; Kozol, 1996).

The History of Education in the African American Community

Education takes on great significance in the AA community because learning, other than that required for manual labor, was denied to slaves by a series of laws from 1834 to the end of the Civil War. Change began in 1865 when the U. S. Government established the Freedmen's Bureau with the responsibility to start schools for freed persons after the civil war. The Bureau operated for 5 years and established over 4,000 schools throughout the southern United States. Interested persons could apply to the Bureau for funding to operate a school (Franklin, 1990).

Another significant event that marks the beginnings of formal education in the North occurred in 1861, when students and faculty from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, as well as other friends and supporters of the Africans sailing on the ship the *Amistad*, became involved when the ship landed at New London, Connecticut. This group of supporters formed the American Missionary Association. Its purpose was reportedly to combat the sins of caste, polygamy, and slaveholding (Asante, 1992). During that same time, Lew Tappan of the American Missionary Association sent teachers to open the first day school for freed persons at Hampton, Virginia.

From their earliest inception, schools aligned with and derived support from religious groups or churches. The churches provided the African-American community with connectedness, social services, and education. The first AA Episcopal Church, founded in Philadelphia in 1794, opened a school in the church building for all of the AA community not just the church members. AA ministers were frequently noted as

minister-educators, contributing to the education of the communities through their sponsorship of classes, schools and educational enterprises (Franklin, 1990).

Background on AA Women Who Have Led Education Reforms

From the onset of the Freedmen's Bureau, women were involved in education of AA children and young adults. This study describes four AA women school founders as early pioneers and contemporaries: Catherine Ferguson, Black founder of a Sunday school; Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown of the Palmer Memorial Institute; Nannie Helen Burroughs and the Women's Industrial Club; and Dr.Mary McLeod Bethune and Bethune-Cookman College. In addition, a present-day figure, Marva Collins and the Marva Collins Preparatory School, is also included.

Catherine Ferguson (1779-1854). Catherine Ferguson was born a slave; a friend purchased her freedom when she was 16 years old. Catherine gathered children from the neighborhood for religious instruction on Sundays at her home in New York City. A minister heard of her works and convinced her to move the school to the basement of his church. Catherine Ferguson became the first person to establish a Sunday school in New York City.

Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown (1883-1961). Dr. Brown was educated in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After she completed her schooling, she eventually relocated to Sedalia, North Carolina, where she found herself displaced when the American Missionary Association decided to close the school in which she worked. She raised money from her friends to hire staff and built a campus with more than 200 acres and two new buildings. The school, Palmer Memorial Institute, and the curriculum were designed with a goal of cultural learning. Its organizational goal was to be a facility where AAs

could escape common assumptions about their innate inferiority and lack of need for any education other than vocational training. The school expanded its curriculum to include liberal arts classes and advanced math and science courses. In addition, she helped create the first school for delinquent AA girls. The school operated until 1966 when it was closed for unknown reasons (Wadelington, 1995).

Nannie Helen Burroughs (1883-1961). Burroughs earned a Master's degree from Eckstein-Norton University in Kentucky. In 1907, she coordinated the building of the National Trade and Professional School for Women and Girls ages 14 and over. Ms. Burroughs became the president when the school opened with the support of the National Baptist Convention, on eight acres, in Washington D. C. Literature states that she sought to promote the highest development of Christian values in young women through a curriculum designed to emphasize practical and professional skills (Afro-American Almanac, 1996; Nannie Helen Burroughs School, 2005). In 1964, the school was renamed Nannie Helen Burroughs School. In 1969, the school transitioned to become a private Christian elementary school whose theme was to prepare students for global citizenship. The school is currently a department of the Progressive National Convention and its mission is to provide holistic education of children, which will provide them with the values, knowledge, and skills to ensure their role as productive world citizens and leaders in the global context of the 21st century.

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955). Dr. Bethune graduated from the Scotia Seminary near Concord, North Carolina, in 1894 and then worked for the Presbyterian Mission School. After a long teaching career, she founded her first community school about the turn of the century in Savannah, Georgia, which she operated for five years.

She was recruited to start a school in Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1904 and founded the Daytona Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls. In addition, Ms. Bethune was politically active and a public speaker on educational life. Her philosophy of life was "not for myself but for others, and I feel that as I give I get" (Bethune, 1999, p. 2). Dr. Bethune's financial success in operating the school afforded her the opportunity to hold stock in the Life Insurance Company of Jacksonville, as well as the city of Tampa and in the *Pittsburgh Courier* (Bethune).

The Daytona Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls merged with Cookman Institute Research during 1923 and later with the United Methodist Church. They named themselves Bethune-Cookman College in 1931, and soon began a baccalaureate liberal arts and teacher education program. Its mission was to serve in the Christian tradition the educational, social, and cultural needs of its students and to develop in them the desire and capacity for continuous intellectual and professional growth, leadership, and service to others. Its schools currently include Arts and Humanities, Business, Education, General Studies, Nursing, and Science, Engineering and Math ("About Bethune-Cookman College: History," n.d.).

Marva Collins (1936-present). The last AA woman school founder exemplified here is Marva Collins. This educational leader began teaching in her home state of Alabama in 1959 and taught in the Chicago, Illinois, public school system for 14 years. She opened the first Marva Collins Preparatory School on the second level of her home in 1975 with her $5,000 pension fund and provided an alternative program for students expelled from Chicago public schools. The record notes that many of her students had

been labeled by these educators as uneducable, borderline retarded, or learning disabled

("About Marva Collins Preparatory School," 2004). This record continued:

> The mission of the schools is to admit children on a first come, first served basis.
> No child is admitted on the basis of a screening process. Nonetheless, the school
> is ability based. This means that the children are given work to challenge their
> minds. They are introduced to ideals that will fortify their souls, and they are
> provided with tools that will help them to build happy and productive lives. (p. 1)

The school's curriculum objectives include academic and moral based concepts to

build well-rounded and bright individuals who have been taught how to reason. Students

enrolled in the school are encouraged to conform to the high academic and behavioral

standards. There is a strict discipline policy including the ability to deny a student lunch

until assignments are completed. School uniforms are mandatory, and teachers are on

their feet all day; they are not provided desks ("About Marva Collins Preparatory

School," 2004). There are several schools licensed by Marva Collins, including a private

school in Cincinnati, Ohio, for grades K-8 where 88% of their graduates entered 4-year

colleges in 2003. In addition, one elementary school she founded is located in

Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It recently converted to a charter school.

This is the untold story because while there was a presence of AA women

founders of schools from 1874 through 1954, there is little documented information on

the numbers of these women or their work after that year. Further, there is insufficient

information on their leadership profiles. Information on sustainability of these schools is

modest. An article in *The New Coalition and The Heartland Institute* to promote school

choice might explain the rationale for the absence of substantive data on these women.

Dr. Joan D. Ratteray (1948-2004) was president of the institute. She conducted research on the black independent school movement and provided technical assistant to independent community-based schools across the country from 1984 to 2004 (Ratteray, 1990). An interview with Dr. Ratteray (Clowes, 1997) explained the reason for this decline as related to changing expectations after World War II. She stated:

> There was a surge [in independent schools founded by AAs] just before World War II, and a drop as people came back from the war, expecting changes in access to public schools. Then after the 1954 civil rights decision, you had a very big dip because people thought it was time to give up these schools and go into the mainstream. (p. 2)

A resurgence of these community-based schools began during the 1970s when parents became disillusioned with public schools, went to their churches and community organizations and opened their own schools (Clowes, 1997).

With such a rich, fragmented history of successful African-American women school founders, there is value in exploring the stories of modern African-American women who are currently operating schools they founded. This study will explore the profile of the women leaders through a replication of Yael Hellman's study (1997). In addition, a deeper understanding of these women will be determined though a description of the schools they founded and the schools' sustainability profile.

The Problem

There is no published research on AA women who have founded and sustained effective private or charter high schools in the Los Angeles, California, area. All valuable methods of raising the academic performance of educationally under performing

AA children and young adults require understanding and replicated. Funding will be misused to perpetuate less effective programs and reforms if best practices in educational leadership go unstudied and analyzed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to provide a leadership profile of selected AA women founders of private and charter high schools. This study will consist of a defined exploration of each founder's background, leadership style, career, religious and ethical influences, entrepreneurship, community involvement, and mentoring and helping traditions experiences. As well, the study will provide a demographic characterization of the schools the women founded. If through the study a significant number of school founders of two groups—private schools and dependent charter schools—are identified, the researcher will provide a comparison of the founders' backgrounds, religious and ethical commitments, leadership profile and mentoring experiences.

Research Questions

The research questions for the study follow:

1. What is the demographic profile of the AA woman school founder?

2. What influenced the AA woman school founder to start the school?

3.   What is the (a) marital status and (b) marital family profile of the AA woman school founder?

4. What is the (a) religious, (b) ethical commitments, and (c) communal participation of the AA woman school founder?

5. How does the AA woman school founder utilize the mentoring and helping hands traditions in (a) achieving and (b) maintaining her career?

6. What is the general perception of the AA woman school founder regarding AA opportunity and survival in America?

7. What is the AA woman school founder's self-described leadership style?

8. What is the AA woman school founder's self-described entrepreneurial profile?

9. What is the demographic profile of the high school the AA woman founded?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it tells the story of a group of African-American women and contributes to their history and specifically to their history and contribution to the field of education. It contributes toward the goal of preparing AA children and young adults to compete in the 21st century global economy. This information will inform *best practices* guidelines in educational leadership, it may lead to greater academic success for AA children and young adults. Academic success in turn leads to economic success. Economic success within the AA community leads to better quality of life and greater social gains. Perhaps this story will inspire other individuals and districts to emulate the best practices that are revealed. This study is also significant because there is no prior published research on the AA women who have founded private or charter high schools. It is significant in part because it is an untold story, and if when told, may help or inspire others.

Limitations of the Study

The study will be limited to school founders of one ethnicity and one gender: AA women. In addition, the study investigated only secondary private and charter schools that sustained 5 years or more in Los Angeles County in areas of high density for AA

students. The results cannot be generalized beyond that set of individuals. In fact, since a purposive sample was used, the reader should be very cautious before generalizing any of the findings beyond the data source itself.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are essential to the discussion of this study; therefore, for clarity and understanding, definitions are specified:

- *Charter school*: A charter school is a public school and may provide instruction in any of grades K-12. A local or county board of education or the state sponsors the school, which abides by the specific goals and operating procedures detailed in its charter.

- *Dependent charter school*: These are semiautonomous conversion charter schools funded by, and functioning as, regular district schools. They follow district policy except for those areas they specifically describe in their charters, such as curriculum, pedagogy, philosophy, personnel and or governance. Teachers and staff continue as employees of the district and members of its collective bargaining units.

- *Educational organization* (Internal Revenue Service definition): The term *educational* relates to the instruction or training of individuals for the purpose of improving or developing their capabilities or the instruction of the public on subjects useful to individuals and beneficial to the community.

- *Education entrepreneur:* This term refers to the creation of these businesses by the use of entrepreneurial concepts to provide either one entity or an integration of educational services using a commercial perspective.

- *Independent charter school*: These schools may be either conversion or start up and may be either locally or direct-funded. These charter schools are fully autonomous and have the greatest degree of flexibility to design and implement the goals and procedures described in their charter petition. Employees in independent charter schools are on charter school leave from the Los Angeles Unified School district for a period of 5 years, at the end of which time they either resign from or return to the district.

- *Integrity*: Integrity is a commitment, in action, to a morally justifiable set of principles and values.

- *Founder/owner:* The individual who envisions and creates a business organization from their vision is the founder/owner. This person holds at least 51% ownership of the business.

- *Learning organization:* Such an organization is a thinking organization, and an organization that rewards employees to be creative.

- *Organization sustainability*: To sustain an organization includes meanings such as (a) to remain in existence; (b) to maintain a business by supplying it with necessities or nourishment such as continuous financial influx; (c) to provide for, in an effort to keep it from falling or sinking; (d) to support the spirits, vitality, or resolution of; and (e) to encourage.

- *Sustainability of a school*: Maintaining a school environment where employees meet high performance objectives and where the infrastructure including technology meets ongoing standards for students' learning needs.

Chapter 2: Background and Related Literature Review

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review conducted for information on concepts

pertaining to the educational gap of AA children and young adults, and the relevance of

this gap in the 21st century global economy. Included in the discussion is research on

private and charter schools and their requirements including the California Department of

Education Codes by which schools operate, and a review of relevant sections of the No

Child Left Behind Act. Argument unfolds on leadership styles including gender

differences, ethics, and leadership of entrepreneurs. The literature review extended to

that of AA owned business, considering their leadership traditions and sources of

entrepreneurship.

Relevance of Learning in the 21st Century

There have been three major eras of economic globalization, all driving our

perceptions of a shrinking and flattening world. The first era, circa 1492, drove global

shrinkage through worldwide exploration and trade with use of physical power and skill

to integrate it. The second era (1800-2000) driving force involved multinational

companies and the industrial revolution. That era culminated with enough interchange of

goods and information between continents for there to be a global market (Friedman,

2005). In his book *The World is Flat*, Friedman (2005) continues with his description of

globalization by disclosing that what distinguishes the third era is the emphasis on

diversity of participation in the global economy. This new era or age is the

information/knowledge worker age, to be followed by an emerging *age of wisdom*

(Covey, 2004). In *The 8th Habit*, Covey also provides a historical perspective on work

and the change in need for workers; from the hunter-gatherer to the farmer, to

industrialization of farming and of other commodities that relied on pools of manual laborers to the current era of the knowledge worker. He points out that each era, through its use of increasing technologies has created downsizing of significant levels of the workforce (90%), bringing with it a need for fewer and fewer workers, and those workers who obtain work through these transitions are those who adapt to the requirement for increasing levels of specialized knowledge. Covey's position is supported by Wilson (1996).

Competitive Competence

Because globalization has flattened the world for participants in the new economy, information and knowledge workers are driving forces; work derives from practically any country in the world. Multinational alliances combine to meet consumer demands based on their placement in the world relative to time. For instance, a radiology interpretation company in California can provide 24-hour, 7-day a week service by aligning itself with a radiology interpretation service provider in Japan, whose clock is 12 hours different (Friedman, 2005). Because computers do the work, information transmits in a seamless fashion to provide the patient and doctor located in California with results very quickly. As such, companies like Glaxo Smith Kline are eager to set up in India to take advantage of the country's ample supply of educated workers to develop new products ("Intellectual property in India," 2005).

The United States then, must position workers to compete in this new economy through provision of skilled education to its citizens (Wheelan, 2002). The economy is evolving in ways that favor skilled workers. The shift toward computers in nearly every industry favors workers who have computer skills. International trade puts low-skilled

workers in greater competition with other low-skilled workers around the globe. In addition to the ability of the knowledge worker to compete, Wheelan points out that education can also improve public health. Some of the most pernicious public health problems have relatively simple fixes that can be resolved via education and individual application of that knowledge, as in the case of AIDS prevention and obesity prevention. Therefore, it is important to have secondary schools, which will prepare citizens in global competition.

However, the ability of a significant number of AA students to compete in the global economy is poor, owing to several factors. The need for educated and skilled workers is now greater than ever. In addition, new occupations created in the future will increasingly require a more educated workforce. Even traditional jobs will require workers with a broader, deeper, and more flexible portfolio of skills (Global Insight, 2005). The report indicates there are two economic classes of AAs in Los Angeles, those who live in high-income neighborhoods where 50% are college educated (compared with a county average that 18% of AA adults who are college educated). There is the other portion of the community where AAs have the lowest median household income, $31,905, of the four major ethnic groups (White, Latino, Asian, and AA). The unemployment rate of 14% is more than double the rate for Whites and Asians. AA men experience an unemployment rate of 16% as compared with the AA female unemployment rate of 12%.

Educationally, AAs had the lowest proficiency scores in 2004. Reading at a proficient or advanced level declines from 26% in 4th grade to 17% in 11th grade. Math proficiency declined from 28% in 4th grade to 12% in 11th grade. The overall California

High School Exit Exam passing rate in 2002 was 28% for Blacks, 30% for Latinos, 65% for Whites, and 70% for Asians, suggesting many AAs and Latino students may not get their diplomas when the exam becomes a graduation requirement starting with the class of 2006 (Global Insight, 2005).

The debate around the source of academic failure for AA children has raged for decades, marked by such court decisions as the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision of 1954. In that case, the U. S. Supreme Court announced segregation in public education as a denial of equal protection of the laws, setting the stage for discrimination and racism as the source of the problem (Boxill, 1992).

Michael Eric Dyson asserts that Black and Latino children experience consistent scapegoating and are otherwise stigmatized in integrated settings. He states that they are given lower expectations by being put on lower academic tracks than White children. They have higher suspension rates from school than the majority population. In addition, he summarizes that AA children are more readily shunted into special education, remedial, and compensatory classes than are White children (Dyson, 2000).

West (1994) takes a more moderate position than the two aforementioned authors take and asserts that structures and behavior are inseparable. Institutions and values go hand in hand. How people act emanates from the larger circumstances in which they find themselves; these conditions change, their limits attenuate, by positive actions to elevate living conditions. Culture is as much a structure as the economy or politics: it is rooted in institutions such as families, schools, churches, synagogues, mosques, and communication industries (television, radio, video, music). If the elimination of Black poverty is a necessary condition of substantive Black progress, then the affirmation of

Black humanity, especially among Black people themselves, is a sufficient condition of such programs (West).

In addition to the structural, political, and cultural influences surrounding academic success, research indicates that small schools and a small class size make a difference. More students from small high schools pass core classes and go on to college, and effects of school size are greatest for low-income and minority students. Proponents of reduced class size and school size suggest that these factors contribute to the success of a broader swath of learners. The standards movement has highlighted the fact that schools are largely inequitable places. Students in schools with large populations of disadvantaged students perform least well on standardized assessments. Another rationale for small school and small class size is centered on the philosophy that students can learn, all students have the capacity to learn; no student should be left behind in the learning process and many different approaches should be explored to assure the success of all students. Powell examined independent schools in the United States and learned that private preparatory schools value both small schools and small class size as necessary conditions for student success (Wasley, 2002).

Eddy (2003) supports the work of Wasley. Eddy assessed the extent to which school size affects student achievement by analyzing data collected on 4,392 elementary schools in California. Results of a linear regression analysis indicated that socio-economic status (SES) was the strongest predictor of student performance. In addition, school size predicted student achievement even when controlling for other factors, with higher student achievement for smaller schools. She concluded that the optimal

elementary school size is 300 to 400 students, and small schools were especially beneficial for the lowest SES group (Eddy).

Charter Schools

Herrnstein and Murray (1996) concluded public schools best educate students in the middle of the bell curve of economics and cognitive ability. Private schools capture students from opposite ends of the curve. On one end of the bell curve is the student who has opted out of the public school because of their high family income, and the exceptionally bright (gifted) student. On the other end of the curve is the very low income (homeless) student and the student with very low cognitive ability who has been rejected by the public school, relegated to home schooling, expelled from school altogether, or has been placed in a school for special education. For instance, Community Education Centers, a charter school, operates with a contract from the Juvenile Court and Community Schools Division. They educate students transitioning from the Los Angeles County probation camps. Low academic achievement characterizes these students.

According to the (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), charter schools (a) are public schools, (b) are in fact their own Lead Educational Agency (LEA), (c) "are largely free to innovate" (p. 1), (d) contain a self appointed board of directors, vision, and mission; (e) "often provide more effective programs and choice to underserved groups of students;" (p. 1), and (f) "are an important alternative in districts where schools are having difficulty improving academic achievement" (p. 1). Through the No Child Left Behind Act, children who attend schools identified as needing improvement have the opportunity to enroll in charter schools located within their district. These districts are

required to use federal funding to provide meaningful choices as well as to provide

transportation to the new schools families choose.

Beginning in 1992, charter schools (dependent and independent) gained

increasing popularity through their success in Los Angeles County. In recent years, a

swell of private schools operated by churches sought and obtained California State Board

of Education approval and the local school districts charter school approval to operate as

public independent or dependent charter schools.

Private Schools

Private schools in California are not their own LEA and rely on their local

educational district for provision of some services to students including those for

assessment, health education and services, and individual education plans (IEP)

pertaining to special education (when the school is not the provider of the special

education service). They are required to have a curriculum, to keep student records, and

to have employees who encounter students receive a criminal records and communicable

disease clearance. Students must receive their immunizations and be free of

communicable disease to attend. The buildings must meet health and safety requirements

as well as other clearances and requirements similar to public schools (Williams, 1993).

Parents or members of a student's individual educational planning team may request

private school placement based on the educational needs of the child according to

California Education Codes 56342, 56365, and 56730. These schools provide ongoing

assessment of student achievement.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) provides funding for educational

services and programs for private school and public school children, teachers, and other

education personnel including those in religiously affiliated schools. The funding in these cases is designed to be of direct assistance to students and teachers and not to the private schools. The NCLB includes provisions for equitable participation of private schools in improving basic programs operated by Local Education Agencies. This includes student reading skills improvement, the Even Start Family Literacy Program, and education of children whose parents are migrant workers. Private schools benefit from NCLB by use of funds or programs designed for (a) acquisition of highly qualified teachers and principals, (b) enhancing education through technology, (c) improving math and science performance, (d) providing safe and drug free schools, and (e) ensuring English language acquisition (California Department of Education, 2005). Teacher requirements for NCLB have increased compliance requirements culminating in the 2005-2006 school year, by which date all teachers assigned to teach core academic subjects were required to have a bachelors degree, a state credential or intern certificate or be currently enrolled in an approved program, and to have demonstrated core academic subject matter competence (O'Connell, 2004).

Specific funding private schools are eligible to receive include Title 1, Reading First, Title 1 Even Start, Title II Math and Science Partnership, Title II Enhancing Education Through Technology, Title IV Discretionary Grant Programs, and Title IV 21st Century Community Learning Centers (California Department of Education, 2005). In addition, California provides financial assistance to private and parochial schools under the Child Nutrition Program (Williams, 1993).

Influence of Leadership Styles

A literature review on the leadership styles of the founders of these organizations is required, because leadership style profoundly affects sustainability. Cashman (2001) believes that leadership is authentic self-expression and creates value. Leaders start with the end in mind, starting with a clear understanding of their destination; which means to know where you are going organizationally (Covey, 1989). Leadership is also about coping with change, setting a direction, aligning people, and achieving a vision. This requires motivating, inspiring, and keeping people moving in the right direction in spite of major obstacles. Essential to this discussion is a review of relevant leadership styles: servant leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and team leadership. Integrated into the discussion are attributes and behaviors of leaders.

Modern thinking on leadership differs from that of earlier theorists. During the 1920s and 1930s, many researchers focused their attention on identifying the traits of successful leaders. Early researchers thought these traits and abilities included general intelligence, conceptual skills, creativity, judgment, persuasive ability, speech fluency, social sensitivity, and task-related knowledge (Northouse, 1997). Bass and Avolio (2000) changed their thinking on leadership to include perspectives on personality and character. Even later, leadership thinking began to ask questions on the role of the follower as well as the leader. See Table 1 for definitions of different leadership styles.

Table 1

Definitions of Leadership Styles

Leadership Style	Attributes	Actions
Transformational	• Idealized influence (attribute) • Idealized influence behavior) • Inspirational motivation • Intellectual stimulation • Individualized consideration	• Demonstrates qualities that motivate respect and pride from association with him or her • Empowering • Communicates values, purpose and importance of organization's mission • Visionary, role model • Focuses on development and mentoring of followers and attends to their individual needs, nurturing, coach
Transactional	• Contingent reward • Management by exception (active) • Management by exception (passive)	• Provides rewards for satisfactory performance by followers • Attends to followers' mistakes and failures to meet standards • Waits until problems become severe before attending to them and intervening
Servant	• Listens well, accepting, empathic	• Service is first, less coercive, creative support, leads by example
Team	• Cooperative	• Excellence, effectiveness, team leader as mediator

Note: Some information for this table is cited from the Multifactor Leadership Questionaire (Bass & Avolio 2000), in addition to drawing from the sources cited in this section.

Definitions of Leadership Styles

Leadership is a common concept in everyday life that connotes taking charge, assuming responsibility, providing answers, an ability to command respect and take into account the opinions, skills, and talents of members of the group the leader is guiding. In fields such as organizational psychology, management, organizational development, the term *leadership* takes on very specific definitions. The types of leadership relevant to this study are discussed next.

Servant leadership. Greenleaf (as cited in Walsh, 2002) coined the term *servant leader* to describe leaders who understand that they are servants first and who strive to meet the highest-priority needs of others. While most traditional leadership theories are behaviorally based, servant leadership emerges from a leader's principles, values, and beliefs.

The concept of servant leadership comes from great leaders who came from humble beginnings and were servants first and somehow rose to be great leaders. The idea of one who is a servant becoming a leader runs counter to most cultures of the world, yet we have several strong, well-known examples of this type of leader: Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and Mother Teresa, to name a few. These leaders also tend to be people of peace and nonviolence and their authority derived from something different from hierarchy and control. Their backgrounds, in other words, influenced their leadership style.

A critical look is being taken at the issues of power and authority. Even in our general social avenues, people are beginning to learn to relate to one another in less coercive and more creatively supporting ways. Servant leaders can provide an important

role in the leadership of new institutions because they may serve by newer means, such as through literary creations, dramatizing a dilemma for all (Wren, 1995).

Transformational leadership. Burns laid the groundwork in establishing the creation of this leadership style (Northouse, 1997, 2001). This charismatic and visionary leadership style is a process that changes and transforms individuals. It involves an assessment of followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership requires the presence of a leader and a follower with a commitment for the type of change that will occur between both parties. This style seems to gain its greatest success through the types of business enterprises where these individuals will have an ongoing relationship, probably in close proximity (Fisher, 2003).

Transformational leadership entails both leaders and followers raising each other's motivation and sense of higher purpose. A leadership questionnaire developed by Bass and Avolio (2000), titled the *Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ), led to popular understanding of the transformational leadership profile. This work produced a silhouette of the transformational leader as one who exhibits idealized influence (the ability to provide a vision, a sense of mission, and instill trust and respect) and intellectual stimulation (the ability to stimulate new thinking and creative ideas). Also included in the profile are characteristics of individual consideration (the ability to provide personalized attention to followers as well as trust, respect, and learning opportunities) and inspirational motivation (the ability to communicate high expectations and express important purposes in simple ways; Fisher, 2003).

Bennis and Nanus developed the following description of how transformational leaders act in order to construct organizational systems (Fisher, 2003). These behavior

patterns include such categories as attention (the ability to focus people's attention), trust (the ability to inspire trust by exhibiting consistency in action), respect (the ability to demonstrate care and concern for followers as individuals), and risk (the ability to focus on achieving success rather than on avoiding failure).

Kouzes and Posner (1995) identified five transformational leadership behaviors: (a) challenging the process (the ability to search for opportunities, experiment, and take risks toward improving the organization), (b) inspiring a shared vision (to construct a future vision and build follower support), (c) enabling others to act (fostering of collaboration and support of followers in their personal development), (d) modeling the way (leading by example and helping followers achieve their goals, and (e) encouragement.

Transactional leadership. This leadership style focuses on the exchange between leaders and followers. Transactional leadership theory became popular with the rise in behaviorally based approaches towards leadership and the power of positive reinforcement as an influence to get workers to do their work (Northouse, 1997; Wren, 1995). In this leadership style, direction and wisdom come from the leader.

Bass and Avolio (2000), in developing the MLQ for leadership styles, concluded that there are two determinants of transactional style: (a) contingent reward, the ability to reward followers for attaining certain performance levels, and (b) management by exception, the ability to take action when business activities are not occurring as planned (Fisher, 2003). In her dissertation, Burns (as cited in Northouse, 1997) described the transactional leader as one who engages in exchange, motivating followers by exchanging rewards for services rendered.

Team leadership. Northouse's (1997) model of team leadership depicts factors of team excellence and effectiveness. The key concepts of the model are the leader as a mediator in selecting the types of interventions needed by the organization, be they active involvement or monitoring of a situation.

Ethics in Leadership

A literature review of ethics is included because ethics are so elemental to leadership, and an ethical platform lends itself to explaining and expanding on leadership style. The interest in corporate ethical performance is due to several factors, including the growing lack of confidence in ethical corporate practices and the current emphasis on quality of life (Hood, 2003). Indeed integrity, synonymous with ethics in leadership, is an increasing concern within businesses and organizations (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1999). Many organizational theorists and practitioners now believe that leadership without integrity may ultimately place the organization at risk.

Further, Morgan (as cited in Parry & Proctor-Thompson, 2002) summarized that values are the basic principles and tenets that guide beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. A value is the most abstract type of social cognition, the function of which is to guide the individual's adaptation to the surrounding environment (Parry & Proctor-Thompson, 2002). Thus, values are the point at which the individual intersects with society.

Executives value most highly self-respect, family security, freedom, a sense of accomplishment, and happiness (Frederick & Weber, as cited in Hood, 2003). They are seen as the individual primarily responsible for creation of the ethical orientation of the organization, according to Hood. These values align with the transformational leadership

style in an appeal to employees' higher ideals and moral values, moral character and respect for human dignity (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

This ethical orientation of the organization reveals itself through formal and explicit activities of the business life on a daily basis, according to Carlson and Perrewe (as cited in Hood, 2003). A formal statement of the organization's ethical stance is a means through which the values and ethical orientation of the organization transmits to employees.

Hood (2003) conducted a study of executive's values, leadership style, and ethical practices in organizations. She measured ethical orientation by two variables: aligning a formal ethics policy and company programs on valuing diversity. She was able to demonstrate statistical significance in the relationship in values and ethical practice and a significant relationship between personal values and formal statement of ethics.

Framing the organizational platform for ethical practice is of important because without ethical leadership a company may be at risk. Kanungo and Mendonca (1999) cite several issues that can rise within organizations without ethical practice: compliance problems, lack of effective action, dishonesty, and communication blocks. Ethically led organizations have been found to have increased effectiveness due to a strengthened organizational culture, lower turnover levels, and increased employee effort (Parry & Proctor-Thompson, 2002). Such positive impact of ethical leadership on organizational effectiveness means that ethical development is likely to become integral to an individual's practical success as an industry leader.

Parry and Proctor-Thompson (2002) conducted a study on perceived integrity (ethical behavior) using the Perceived Leadership Integrity Scale adapted as a self-

assessment. Indicators of leader effectiveness included satisfaction with leadership, follower extra effort, and follower motivation. The study sought indicators of perceived organizational effectiveness and ability to achieve the bottom-line. Follower perceptions drove the assumptions on effectiveness measures. Parry and Proctor-Thompson positively correlated perceived integrity with leader effectiveness and organizational effectiveness. One conclusion drawn from the study was that perceptions of low integrity can come from unethical conduct, from not doing what is expected and valued by followers, and from not being seen doing the right thing. Any of these actions or inactions may be sufficient to support assumptions of immoral and unethical intentions.

Educational administrators' central moral obligation is to serve the interests of students and the interests of teachers as they attempt to facilitate student maturation and learning (Witcher, 2003). In a specific discussion on ethics in the school, Starratt (2005) described five domains of ethical responsibility. The first domain is responsibility as a human being, in which an educational leader considers the humanly ethical thing to do, taking into account the intrinsic dignity and inviolability of the other person. The second domain, responsibility as a citizen and public servant, requires the leader to consider their ethical obligations in respect to the rights of fellow citizens and to respect the public order. In the third domain, responsibility as an educator, educators have the responsibility to know curriculum material in sufficient depth to understand the multiple applications and uses that knowledge provides to the community. The fourth domain is responsibility as an educational administrator, considering that the leader has access to organizational structures and processes that affect the core work of teaching and learning. He concluded by saying each of the five domains requires and absorbs the previous

domain. The full exercise and absorption of all levels of ethical enactment is important to the educational leader. Further, according to Staratt, the honoring of the ethical responsibilities of all domains creates the foundation for the leader's invitation to move beyond transactional ethics and engage in transformative ethics.

Gender Differences in Leadership Style

Despite the relatively equal percentage of women managers and administrators in the United States today (46%), women constitute only 5% of the top corporate officers in Fortune 500 companies and 1% of chief executive officers (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003; Lowrey, 2001, 2003). The possibility of a difference in women and men's leadership is important because leadership behavior is highly connected with effectiveness. Eagly et al. found, based on informal surveys and interviews of managers, that female leaders compared with male leaders are less hierarchical, more cooperative and collaborative, and more oriented to enhancing others' self-worth. In their research on the topic of gender differences in leadership prior to 1990, they concluded there was no difference in leadership styles. However, contemporary research by such theorists of new types of styles, such as those proposed by Bass and Avolio (2000) have opened opportunities for further investigations of the leadership styles of men and women. Bass and Avolio contend that this links to new thinking about nurturing and its ability to provide inspiration to followers. (See profile included in defining transformational leaders section.)

Women may favor a transformational style because it provides a means of overcoming the dilemma of role incongruity: that of the leadership role and the gender role of nurturing (Eagly et al., 2003). Eagly et al.'s conclusion that there are gender

differences in leadership was challenged by the work of Aldrich and Cliff (Aldrich, 1990; Cliff & Aldrich, 2002) who concluded that both male and female owners manage their firms with a mix of masculine and feminine approaches. They found owners' gender had no effect on the extent of an organization's bureaucratic employment relationships. The researchers rationalized that the lack of gender differences resulted from (a) male owners adopting some feminine arrangements in their business and (b) the less bureaucratic nature of small businesses. The researchers also reported lack of gender differences resulted more from the smaller size of women-owned business than to gender-related leadership style.

Recent literature cited feminine organizations as having flatter hierarchies than masculine organizations. Advocates suggest that some feminine organization structures are circles, networks, or webs rather than as pyramids, ladders, or chains. Whereas men rely on standardized rules for judgment, feminine organizations have fewer formal policies and procedures than male organizations. In addition, gender relevant descriptions of organizations describe female-led organizations as tending to exhibit greater relational attentiveness and responsiveness to the needs of others, where as men tend to ignore personal considerations of others in order to succeed and are more goal oriented (Aldrich, 1990; Cliff & Aldrich, 2002).

The perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leader roles creates prejudice against female leaders in two ways: (a) less favorable evaluation of their actual leadership behavior, and (b) less favorable evaluation for their potential for leadership (Eagly et al., 2003). Eagly et al. found that women often face stringent requirements compared to men to attain leadership roles because there is a double standard, which

favors men in terms of perceptions of leadership and gender. Research characterized women as untrustworthy and disliked by men when they exert authority over them and display very high levels of competency. Women leaders have to be careful to display warmth by expressing nurturance and individualized consideration (Aldrich, 1990; Cliff & Aldrich, 2002; Eagly et al., 2003). These leadership modalities again agree with definitions of transformational leaders.

A leader's style should fit or match the organization's style for effectiveness and for the organization to be viable and sustainable. Another consideration of organizational effectiveness for sustainability is the leader's entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship as a Leadership Style

Central to the definition of entrepreneurship is innovation and a related, crucial defining characteristic of entrepreneurs is the creation of new combinations or means of production. This innovation could also be descriptive of the entrepreneur's character and behavior or new working practices and processes. Entrepreneurs are risk takers; this usually refers to financial risk, although it could be a particular approach to management. This latter definition suggests that entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity without regard to currently available resources (Green & Cohen, 1995). An entrepreneur is a person who takes advantage of a business opportunity by assuming the financial, material, and psychological risks of starting or running a company.

Founders of schools are entrepreneurs who not only take on the financial risks of starting the school, but move ideas forward by sharing their vision with potential contractors or grantors, students, teachers, peers, and support employees. This sharing is most often in a charismatic fashion, engaging others in their vision. The entrepreneur's

pursuit is usually a solitary journey toward a personal vision in the initial phase of creating the organization (Solomon, Fernald, & Dennis, 2003). Formaini (2001) stated that entrepreneurship does not consist of planning by groups or management decisions by corporate bodies, but the exploitation of perceived opportunity by individuals based on personal judgments and visions that others either do not see or do not wish to bear the risks of acting on. The entrepreneur's learning community is the external environment where they share in exchanges on issues of common interest and practice, empower themselves, see themselves as part of a larger whole and engage in self examination and critical reflections (Preskill & Torres, 1999).

Drucker (2001) countered the concept of the entrepreneur as a solitary pursuit and the idea that business runs counter to entrepreneurship. He wrote, "It is not size that is an impediment to entrepreneurship and innovation, it is the existing operation itself, and especially the existing successful operation" (p. 138). He contended that the day-to-day demands of surmounting small business obstacles precludes time for innovation and concluded that entrepreneurship is not a natural phenomenon; it is work. Drucker believes that entrepreneurship exists within organizations and sustainability is dependent on fostering of entrepreneurial ideas. Organizations should seek these individuals from within and give them full reign to innovate.

Entrepreneurs are found innovating, creating, and risk taking in sole proprietorships, small business, and large corporations. They have a greater risk propensity than do managers and those entrepreneurs with venture growth as their primary goal have a greater risk propensity than do entrepreneurs who have as their objective producing family income, in other words, low growth (Miner & Raju, 2004).

The authors utilize their conclusion to ascribe the trait of risk takers and risk avoiders to leaders in general. The information is important because their study found that risk taking and risk avoiding probably occurs predictably related to the organization's developmental stage, as it progresses through the growth cycle, often moving from a small entrepreneurial organization to a large bureaucratic one.

Additional attributes of entrepreneurs include a desire to introduce innovative solutions, a desire to receive feedback on performance, and a desire to think about the future and establish goals. Solomon et al. (2003) listed the following leadership attributes of entrepreneurs: (a) total commitment; (b) determination and perseverance; (c) drive to achieve and grow; (d) opportunity and goal orientation; (e) taking initiative and personal responsibility; (f) persistent problem solving, realism, and sense of humor; (g) seeking and using feedback; (h) internal locus of control; (i) calculated risk taking and risk seeking; (j) low need for status and power; (k) integrity and reliability. These qualities assist the entrepreneur to achieve the innovation and the goal that he or she set out to accomplish.

African-American Leadership and Business Development Background

African-American leadership tradition. From the 18th century through the 1950s, AA professionals, especially ministers, journalists, lawyers, and educators, served as the leading spokespersons for the social, political, and economic interests of AAs in the United States. They provided cultural meaning, values, ideals, and objectives drawn from their training and from social experiences (Franklin, 1990).

Historically, the largest group of professionals to provide leadership within the AA community was educators. These leaders who acquired literacy or advanced training

often recognized an obligation to pass that knowledge on to others within their family, community, and cultural group as part of the ethos of service that developed among middle and upper status AAs who realized their fortunes were tied to the entire group (Franklin, 1990). This is the phenomenon called the *Black helping tradition*. Plummer (2002) provided an extensive review of the subject and emphasized the primary components of the Black helping tradition. He describes the tradition in the following way:

> The Black helping tradition involves a number of key elements, including kinship, racial consciousness, religious consciousness, and a commitment to unselfish action. The key is that the individual does not exist without the family and the family does not exist without the community; the community in fact is the family. This emphasis includes the tradition of the AA female as one whose energies are more instrumental in fueling and organizing the Black helping tradition than are those of men. (p. 42)

Sources of entrepreneurship. In northern cities, the participation of Blacks in several entrepreneurial occupations was significantly associated with the low Black employment-population ratio, a measure of labor market disadvantage. The association was particularly strong for Black women in these cities. One author wrote that the disadvantage theory of business enterprise can help explain Black entrepreneurship (Boyd, 2000). According to Boyd, the disadvantage theory, as well as economic downturns, compels members of oppressed ethnic groups to find an independent means of livelihood. This theory is contrary to more traditional thinking that entrepreneurial opportunity is apparent in the presence of abundant resources. This wealth of resources

is identified as "property, wealth, human capital, group solidarity, and cultural values and institutions" (p. 972).

Boyd (2000) continued, "Blacks have a low level of entrepreneurship" (p. 973). The low level of commercial pursuit is attributed to an absence of "business tradition, impoverishment of Black consumers, the lack of a large protected market, intense racial discrimination, and group disunity" (p. 974). Further information is lacking on educational entities started by AAs—both recent information and quantity of information. This possibly indicates that there just are not many educational entities started by AAs.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review in Chapter 2 discussed economic globalization, competitive competence, the educational gap relative to this competitive competence, and influencing factors of public schools. The chapter presented evidence on charter schools and their requirements as an alternative to the historically formatted public school. Discussion included leadership styles and ethical platforms that include servant, transformational, transactional, and team descriptions. Entrepreneurship was defined as a leadership style and discussed in terms of gender. Research on leadership by school administrators and their impact on school sustainability are submitted. The chapter's final area of research is on AA business development.

The 21st century engenders the era of the information/knowledge worker. Globalization and subsequent flattening of the world calls for consideration of the ability of the American worker to compete. Specific information on economic status and educational attainment of AAs in Los Angeles California demonstrated the lack of competitiveness for a segment of the population where there is an economic and

educational achievement gap. Reasons for this gap range from poverty to imposed and self-imposed segregation, tracking, and relegation to special education classes, as well as expulsion, low self-esteem, and lack of cultural sensitivity.

Research indicates that small schools and small class size are significant impacts on student outcomes in elementary school and high school, especially for children of low socio economic status. Best outcomes relative to student to teacher ratios are within private schools. Private schools include students from both educational spectrums, well to do and bright, as well as students requiring special education.

Charter schools (dependent and independent) are gaining increased popularity; many are their own Local Education Authority (LEA) with vision and mission statements as well as innovative curriculum supported by technology. Both private and charter schools have NCLB provisions for programs and teacher credentialing and can access federal, state, and local funds to supplement their programs. Charter and private schools exhibit smaller school and class size. They provide more effective programs and choices to underserved groups of students. They offer alternatives to schools having difficulty improving their academic performance. The study explores leadership in charter and private high schools.

Leadership style influences school organizations sustainability. The discussion reviewed transactional, transformational, team leadership, and servant leadership styles. In addition to leadership style, the leader's ethical platform influences the business life of the school on a daily basis. Framing the organizational platform for ethical practice is of important because of the risk of compliance problems, ineffective action, dishonesty, and communication blocks. Leadership integrity relates to organizational effectiveness.

Educators have particular ethical responsibility as leaders, human beings, citizens, educators, and educational administrators.

Chapter 2 also discussed research on leadership differences by gender. There is conflicting evidence on differences in leadership by gender. Women create flatter hierarchies relative to men and are encouraged to be nurturing to preclude disdain from their male employees. Others cite the size of the smaller companies as driving women's leadership style rather than their gender alone.

The subject of the research is AA women leaders of private and charter high schools, so it is imperative to discuss the role of the AA educator. Historically, AA educators provided cultural meaning, values, and ideals for their community. There is research on the Black helping tradition or ethos of service. Leadership developed among AA's who share their resources, knowledge, and money because of feelings of kinship, racial and religious consciousness, and commitment to unselfish action, yet research of AA women leading educational organizations is lacking. AA have a lower percentage of the population involved in entrepreneurship as compared to other business owners. Much of AA involvement comes from the disadvantage theory, where oppressed displaced peoples find an independent means of livelihood out of necessity.

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this descriptive study was to provide a leadership profile of selected AA women founders of secondary private and charter schools. This study consisted of a defined exploration of the founders' background, leadership style, career, religious and ethical influences, entrepreneurship, community involvement and their mentoring and helping traditions experiences. As well, the study provides a demographic characterization of the schools the women founded. Chapter 3 affords a description of the research design, description and validation of data gathering instruments, description of data sources, description of the data gathering process, and data analyses procedures to achieve the research purpose.

Description of the Research Design

This research was a descriptive study profiling selected AA women founders of secondary private and charter schools. The study explored those schools that have been operating for greater than 5 years. In consideration of the purpose of the study a descriptive research design was selected because the nature of the research question(s) lends itself towards a description of what is occurring by querying the how are and what occurrences are taking place. The topic lends itself to exploration because variables cannot easily be identified to explain the behavior of the women founders of the schools. In addition, qualitative inquiry techniques were selected because of a need to present a detailed explanation of this topic from its natural environment (Creswell, 1998). These elements were incorporated into the research design to allow for inquiry into the AA women's demographic backgrounds and their consideration for issues of faith, ethics, career influences, mentoring and helping hands traditions practices, community

involvement, entrepreneurship, and leadership style. This method of inquiry supports an exploration of their underlying principle for starting the schools and their perceptions regarding survival and opportunity for AA women in America.

Description of the Data Gathering Instrument

This was a descriptive study with two sets of data: a larger written survey sample and a smaller personal interview from the participants. The written survey instrument is an adaptation by the researcher from an original survey by (Hellman, 1997) and is included in Appendix A. The revised survey instrument excluded some of the original questions because they were designed to profile Jewish women in corporate America. The current research focuses on African-American women who have founded schools. Thus, the Hellman survey was adapted to the current research population. The written survey required 15 to 20 minutes of the participant's time to complete. The interview survey developed from a review of the literature and occurred at each founder's school site. The researcher read each question to the study participant and asked her to respond to the question, providing as much information as she deemed necessary to provide a complete response. The interview survey required 30 minutes of the participant's time to complete. Each written survey question and interview question was linked to one of the research questions. The written survey instrument includes 37 questions, and there are 15 interview questions designed to answer the following research questions (see Appendix B: Interview Questions):

1. What is the demographic profile of the AA woman school founder? (Survey questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 25, and 26.)

2.   What influenced the AA woman school founder to start the school? (Survey questions 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23. Interview questions 1, 4, and 5.)

3.   What is the (a) marital status and (b) marital family profile of the AA woman school founder? (Survey questions 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.)

4.   What is the (a) religious, (b) ethical commitments, and (c) communal participation of the AA woman school founder? (Survey questions 11, 12, 13, 14, and 18. Interview questions 8, 9, 10, and 11.)

5.   How do the AA woman school founders utilize the mentoring and helping hands traditions in (a) achieving and (b) maintaining their careers? (Survey questions 24, 28, 29, 30, and 31. Interview questions 6, 12, and 13.)

6.   What is the general perception of AA woman school founder regarding AA opportunity and survival in America? (Survey question 32.)

7.   What is the AA woman school founders self-described leadership style? (Interview questions 2, 3, 7, and 14.)

8.   What is the AA woman school founder's self-described entrepreneurial profile? (Interview question 15.)

9.   What is the demographic profile of the high schools the AA woman founded? (Survey questions 27, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37.)

Validation of Data Gathering Instruments

The data collection methods included collection of written survey questions by closed and open-ended response technique and face-to-face interview of the women leaders in a natural environment. The researcher developed the survey and face-to-face interview instruments to profile AA women school founders who have sustained the

school for greater than five years. A pilot study validated content of the survey and interview protocols.

Prior to implementing the study, the researcher conducted a pilot study to test for internal content validity of the survey and interview instruments. A panel of five qualified professionals in the field of education determined content validity of the modified Yael Hellman survey and interview questions. The panel of experts were Dr.Ned Doffoney, Ed. D. , President Fresno City College; Yael Hellman, Ed. D. , Assistant Professor, Organization Leadership, Woodbury University; Sharon Squires, Ph. D. , Assistant Professor, Sociology Department, California State University Dominguez Hills; Nelly Rodriguez, Ed. D. , The Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools; and Beverly Biggs, Ed. D. , Administration, California State Attorneys General Office. Each member of the panel received a copy of the research questions, survey, and interview instruments by email in Microsoft Word format. Each returned the response to the researcher's email address by May 22, 2006 (see Appendix C: Cover Letters to Panel of Experts). The panel provided feedback on the relevance of the survey and interview instrument to the research questions. Based on the feedback from the five expert panelists no questions were changed or deleted.

Data Sources

Because there is no relevant database or useful directories a purposive sample of 10 women developed through snowball sampling, a strategy used to identify cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich (Creswell, 1998). Access to information-rich AA women began by the researcher through the process of contacting a resource identified in the literature review: The New

Coalition at Heartland Institute's Lee Walker, of Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Walker identified one potential participant during a telephone conversation conducted in December of 2005. Mr. Walker identified an AA woman leader and founder of a charter school sustained more than 5 years and located in the greater Los Angeles area. He also provided the name of the school. Seeking out the website, The Great Schools.net, yielded contact information.

In a follow up telephone call to the school, the administrative assistant confirmed the founder as an AA woman leader of a private school, which has been open to high school students for more than five years. The administrative assistant, upon request, provided the names of additional potential participants believed to match the stated criteria. The researcher contacted each referred potential participant or school, and spoke with the secretary or assistant. At times, each secretary or administrative assistant staff provided up to six names of potential participants for follow up. In a few cases, the secretary or administrative assistant was not aware of anyone who matched the criteria. The researcher telephoned each referral. Each referred potential participant's staff was asked the confirming questions regarding the potential participant: AA woman, founder of the secondary private, or charter school, located in the Los Angeles area, school sustained for more than five years. When the responses were positive, the woman's name added to the list of potential study participants. Each person contacted was asked the confirming questions and also was asked for names of potential study participants regardless of whether or not the potential participant under inquiry met the study criteria. When the person called provided a referring name, they provided full contact information; the woman's full name, school name, school address, and school telephone

number. With partial information the potential contact information was obtained through the Great Schools.net website.

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board approval to conduct the research all referred potential participants were contacted, the study was explained using the consent to participate form, and their participation in the research was requested and obtained. Upon direct inquiry, some potential participants did not meet the research criteria. The researcher asked each potential participant to provide names of AA women aligned with the study criteria. In an overwhelming number of cases, the potential participants and participants knew their feeder schools; however, they were not aware of any peers. When a potential participant's background did not equilibrate with research criteria the referral list and snowball sampling process commenced. The process repeated until 10 women consented to participate in the study.

Ten participants completed a written survey and nine of those participants consented to a face-to-face interview with the researcher. A single case may be sufficient to display something of substantive importance, but Creswell (1998) suggests using at least six participants in studies where one is trying to understand the essence of the experience.

Description of the Data Gathering Process

Each potential participant spoke initially by telephone (see Appendix D: Telephone Script for Calls to Potential Participants). Interested participants in the study were sent a written request to participate in the study along with an informed consent form (see Appendix E: Cover Letter for Survey Participants, Appendix F: Consent to Participate in a Research Study, and Appendix G: Signed Consent to Participate in a

Research Study) and a copy of the written survey instrument by mail. Each participant

returned the survey by mail. Criteria for participation in this research project as follows:

(a) Respondent represents a private high school, (b) or respondent represents a charter

high school, (c) the demonstrates a minimum of five years sustainability, (d) school was

founded by an AA woman, and (e) the school is geographically located in and around

Los Angeles County, California.

A purposive sample of 10 AA women founders who met the research criteria each

participated in a one-hour individual interview with the researcher. Each electronically

recorded interview underwent transcription and content analyses. The interviews

answered the nine research questions. The protection of human subjects included their

voluntary participation and assurance of confidentiality of data collected by coding each

written survey and interview instrument with a number in order to track the study

participant's responses. The identification sheet lists each participant by name and an

identifying number. The number became the identifier instead of the participants name

on their written survey and face-to-face interview sheets (see Appendices A and B). Data

described characteristics of the group studied. No information identifies any individual

study participant. Privacy of interview material occurs by retention of participant and

code number identification sheets in a locked file cabinet, accessible only to the

investigator, for 5 years. There was minimal risk of harm from participation in this

research study. The participants gave their permission to use an electronic recording

device during the interview. Participants received information on the purpose of this

study, security of confidential data, the expected benefits of the research, and

dissemination of results of this research. The results of the study will be available on the researcher's website as well as the dissertations online website.

Description of the Data Analysis Process

The data analysis process transpired only on data gathered from the participants for whom there was written survey and face-to-face interview. There is exception for one case in which the participant became unavailable for interview after submitting her response to the written survey.

The researcher conducted a descriptive analysis, using the written survey instrument, by item, to answer the research questions. There is content analysis of the open-ended written survey questions. A narrative format and with figures records the data. Face-to-face interview questions received content analysis after transcription and validation by participants. Presentation of identified thematic content areas takes place in a narrative format, and displayed as frequency tables. Tables and figures display commonalities and differences.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Findings

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the written survey and fact-to-face interviews. The research sample consisted of 10 cases: AA women founders of secondary private or charter schools located in the Los Angeles area. The schools they founded had been sustained for 5 years or greater. This chapter reports findings of the research results by their analyses as they relate to the nine research questions. This analysis will result in a profile of an AA woman founder of secondary private or charter high school. The research results display in two sections. Section one describes results of the written survey instrument. Section two illustrates results of face-to-face interviews with the participants.

Written surveys and face-to-face interviews took place during May and June of 2006. The snowball sampling process proved to be productive; the referred founders' administrative staffs were most helpful in providing the researcher with names of each potential women founder's or their school's name. The process eventually resulted in the researcher's contact with participants who met the study criteria. Ten participants completed the survey and 9 of the 10 respondents to the written survey participated in face-to-face interviews.

Research Results

There are two sections of research results. Section one lists each research question and then describes the participant's responses to that question obtained by written survey response. Section two lists the research questions and describes the participant's responses during the face-to-face interview.

The written survey instrument allowed for participant responses to research questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9. Participants provided more than one response to some questions. The research questions considered in this section are

1. What is the demographic profile of the AA woman school founder?

2. What influenced the AA woman school founder to start the school?

3. What is the (a) marital status and (b) marital family profile of the AA woman school founder?

4. What is the (a) religious, (b) ethical commitment, and (c) communal participation of the AA woman school founder?

5. How does the AA woman school founder utilize the mentoring and helping hands traditions in (a) achieving and (b) maintaining her career?

6. What is the general perception of the AA woman school founder regarding AA opportunity and survival in America?

9. What is the demographic profile of the high school the AA woman founded?

Section One: Results of the Written Survey

Research question 1: What is the demographic profile of the AA woman school founder? Respondents self-described their ethnicity, year of birth, birthplace, birth order, number of siblings and parent's birthplaces. Responses indicate type of high school attended, highest level of educational attainment, job title, and number of years with their current school.

Respondents provided answers on their ethnicity. Nine of the 10 survey respondents described themselves as AA. One respondent described herself as American-African. Two respondents were born between 1930 and 1950. Seven of the

participants were born between 1941 and 1960. One respondent chose 1961-1970.

When asked about the birth state, 6 out of 10 respondents were born in the southern part

of the United States: Missouri, Texas, and Virginia. Four of the respondents are from

California. Six of the 10 respondents said they are the middle child when queried on

their birth order. Three of them are the youngest child and one is the oldest child.

Respondents were asked to state their family size; their average families size was six with

a range from three to 12 siblings. Six respondents were from families with two to four

siblings. Two respondents family size was six to seven siblings, while two respondents

have 11 and 12 siblings. Participants response to the question about their mothers and

fathers birth places revealed eight study participant's mothers are from the southern

section of the United States, particularly Kansas, Missouri, Texas, and Arkansas. One

participant's mother is from Illinois and one is from California. Nine participant's

fathers are from the southern section of the United States: the states of Texas, Virginia,

Missouri, and Florida.

Responses allowed for categorization by the high school attended. Nine

respondents attended a public high school and one attended a private high school.

Participants indicated the highest level of education attained as of the survey date. Three

respondents received a bachelor's degree, most often in an education related area, while

four received master's degrees. One participant is a Doctorate of Philosophy, one

received a Montessori certificate in Education, and one received a Certificate in

Management Effectiveness.

The women executives answered the query as to their current title at the

organization. Four of the 10 respondent's title is Chief Executive Officer, followed

closely by Executive Director (three) and administrator (two). Two respondents also titled themselves Principal in addition to their other titles.

Founders responded on the number of years in leading their organization. The respondents have on average lead their organizations for 15 years with a range of 3 years and a maximum of 38 years. The standard deviation is large at 12 years. One respondent had founded more than one school of which at least one sustained for more than 5 years.

Research question 2: What influenced the AA women school founders to start the school? Participants described their feelings on the effect their AA identity and identity as a woman had on their career choices and advancement.

The question asked, "Do you feel your AA identity had any affect on the career which you chose?" Eight of 10 respondents feel their AA identity affected their career choices. The question, "Do you feel that being a woman had any affect on the career you chose?" resulted in six of 10 respondents replying that their AA identity had influenced their career choices.

The founders responded on whether their AA identity affected their career advancement. Six of 10 respondents feel their identity as an AA identity affects their career advancement options. These same women answered the question if they feel that being a woman had any affect on their career advancement. Six of 10 respondents believe their identity as a woman affects their career advancement.

Research question 3: What is the (a) marital status and (b) marital family profile of the AA woman school founder? The research examined participants' marital status, number of children, and types schools their children attend.

Marital status. Study participants responded to the question about their marital status. An equal number of study participants are either married or divorced; four of 10 respondents are married, four respondents are divorced. One respondent is single and another is widowed. They were asked "If married, how long have you been married to your current spouse?" Four married respondents stated they have been married for more than 10 years.

Children and the schools they attend. Women founders replied on the subject of their children and the schools they attend. To the question asked, "Do you have children?" Seven of the 10 study participants stated yes. Three do not have children. The women responded to the question, "If you have school aged children, what type of school are they enrolled in?" Participants responded they are mothers to between one and five children. Four study participants have children in school; three respondents' children are adults.

Study participants replied to the question about the type of school in which the children are enrolled. Of the four study participants with children, one child enrolled in a religious elementary school, one child enrolled in a private elementary school, one child enrolled in a religious middle school and one child is enrolled in a private high school, one child is enrolled in a charter high school. No study participants have children enrolled in a public or religious elementary school, a public middle school, or a public high school.

Research question 4: What is the communal participation, religious and ethical commitments of the AA woman school founder? Participants reported on their participation in popular AA community events and other community activities. The

women responded to inquiry about communal participation as well as their role in the community, their participation in professional organizations, their involvement in activities such as through volunteer opportunities, feminist activities, sorority life, or any other social or business activities. The participants responded about their participation in a health club or church affiliated activity.

Communal participation and role in the community. To answer the research question the founders were asked which of the following AA holidays they currently celebrate in their home: Kwanzaa, Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, Juneteenth, or none. Six respondents celebrate Kwanzaa. Seven of the 10 respondents celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday. Six respondents celebrate Juneteenth. Two study participants do not celebrate any AA holidays.

Participants were asked, "Outside of work, which of the following activities do you participate in: a professional organization, community or voluntary organizations, feminist groups, sorority life, other social or business club, a health club, church affiliated group?" One-half of the study participants participate in a professional organization. Seven of 10 respondents volunteer at a community organization. No participants are actively involved in feminist activities. One respondent participates in sorority activities. Two respondents participate in other types of social or business activities. Three respondents participate in health club activities. Eight of 10 respondents participate in church affiliated activities.

Religious commitment. Inquiry into the religious commitment of the founders took place. When queried on their membership in a faith-based community, all 10 respondents answered they participate actively in a faith-based community. When asked

do they consider themselves Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, or another religion, all participants indicated they are Christian. The researcher then inquired on the frequency of religious worship with the question, "How frequently do you go the church/temple/synagogue/ reading room, or other place of worship?" and seven of 10 respondents indicated they go to church to worship more than once a week, one participant attends church monthly, and one attends church five to six times per year.

Research question 5: How does the AA woman school founder utilize the mentoring and helping hands traditions in (a) achieving and (b) maintaining her career? Respondents answered questions of the influence on each founder's initial decision to start a school, areas in which they received mentoring, areas in which they provide mentoring, their service on boards of directors, and their interest in sharing their leadership story with others.

Influence on the founder's initial decision to start a school. Study participants responded to the question on who most influenced their decision to found a school: their mother, father, spouse, other relative, a friend, another person or some event. Several participants had multiple responses. Six respondents decided to start a school because of the influence of a relative; their sister influenced two respondents, their father influenced two, and their spouse influenced two. One respondent was influenced by her children initially to start a school, while another reports her mother, father, spouse and sister influenced her concurrently. Yet another respondent indicated her initial influence to start the school came from her clients. In addition, three respondents developed from an unusual event to start a school, such as the death of a relative or a final discouraging event at the school at which they worked.

Areas in which the respondents receive(d) mentoring. The question was asked," in which of the following areas they received mentoring: business operations knowledge, motivation, ethical guidance, finance, teacher, or none of the above." Responders reported they received mentoring in business operations. Six of the 10 said they received business operations mentoring while four of the 10 said they did not.

Four respondents said they received mentoring which was motivating. Six of the study participants received financial mentoring. Two of the 10 participants reported they received mentoring in teaching. Four of the respondents have received ethical mentoring. Two respondents said they have not received mentoring of any type.

Areas in which the respondents provide mentoring. When queried about their service on a corporate board, seven of the respondents answered they serve on a corporate, education, government, or community board of directors. Most participants indicated they participated on more than one board. One participant serves on a corporate board of directors. Three of 10 respondents serve on education serving boards. Three of the respondents serve on government or commission boards. Six respondents serve on a community or human services board.

Study participant's interest in sharing their leadership story with others. Participants responded to inquiry on their interest in sharing their story with others, two of the 10 participants said they share their leadership story now. Seven of the 10 women are interested in sharing their leadership story. One indicated she would not be interested in sharing her leadership story.

*Research question 6***: *What is the general perception of AA women school founders regarding AA opportunity and survival in America?* Participants retorted

about their perceptions of labor market disadvantage through examination of their

thoughts on opportunity, survival, significance of family versus career, and on the value

of an AA education.

Thoughts on opportunity and survival. Study participants responded on

agreement, disagreement, or report as undecided to the statement that virtually all

positions of influence in America are open to AA women. Most disagree (7 of 10) that

positions of influence are open to AA women. Two participants responded they agree

virtually all positions of influence in America are open to AA women.
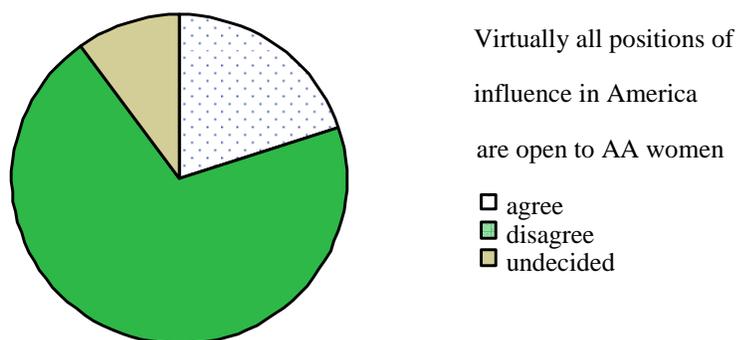
Figure 1. Positions of influence in America open to AA women

Positions of influence in America. Study participants responded they agree,

disagree, or are undecided when asked if negative feelings towards AAs are at an all time

low. Seven of the founders disagree with the statement that negative feelings towards

AAs are at an all time low.

Negative feelings towards AAs is at an all time low in America

■ disagree
□ undecided
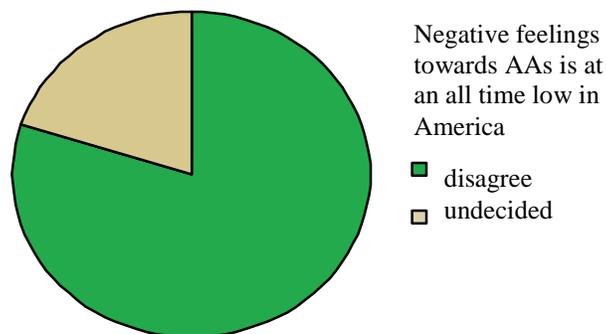
Figure 2. Perception that negative feelings towards AAs are at an all-time low

Significance of family versus career. Participants answered the question, for every AA woman family is more important than career. Eight of 10 respondents are of the opinion that family is of greater important than is a career.

.

For an AA woman family is more important than career.

□ agree
■ disagree
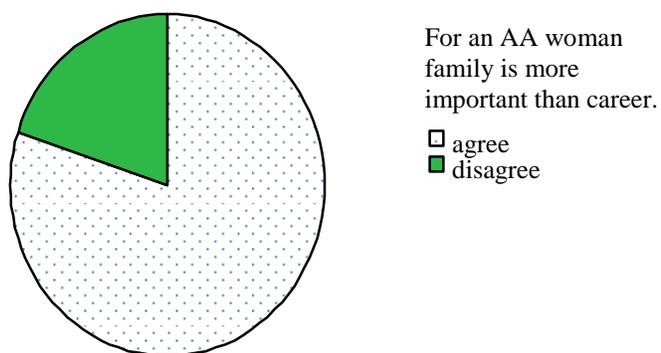
Figure 3. Perception that family is more important than career

Value of an AA centered education. On the issue that every AA child should

have a formal AA education, study participants equally divided in their responses. Three

respondents agree with the statement, three disagree with the statement, and three

founders were undecided.

Every AA child should have a
formal AA education

☐ agree
☐ disagree
☐ undecided
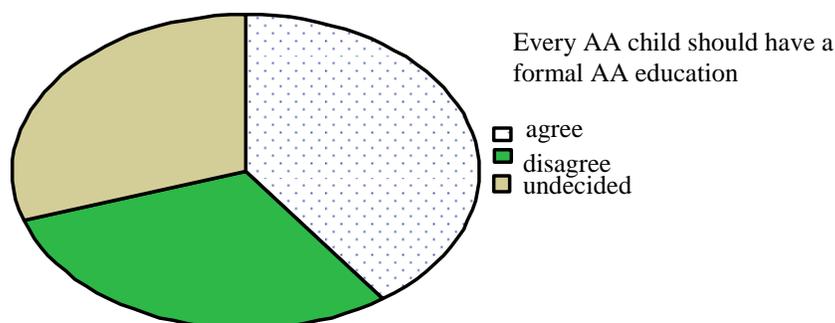
Figure 4. Perception that every AA child should have a formal AA education

*Research question 9: What is the demographic profile of the high schools the

AA women founded?* The school's demographic profiles are explained through a

classification of the high school started by the founders, ethno-demographics of the

student's who attend these schools, a description of who the school aims to serve, and a

listing of the number of students who attend the schools.

Classification of the high school. Participants responded to classify their high

school as a private school, independent charter either school, dependent charter school, or

other. A tally of the results indicates eight of the schools founded are private high

schools. Private schools include religious schools. Two are independent charter schools.

Ethno-demographics. Study participants were requested to list the percentage of students by their ethnicity: Latino/Hispanic, AA, Caucasian or White, Asian, other. In 9 of the 10 schools the population of AA students is 75 to 100%. One school has enrolled AAs 50%, Latino/Hispanic students 50%.

Respondent's description of whom the school aims to serve. Participants responded on whom the schools aims to serve educationally. Six study participants reported they serve a well-rounded mix of students from all educational backgrounds. Two respondents provide special education to students, and one provides education to students with criminal backgrounds. One respondent answered the school aims to educate historically underachieving disadvantaged children in overcrowded communities. All of study participant's schools are located in the greater Los Angeles area of California.

The number of students who attend the schools. The school founders answered how many students attend the schools. Seven of the 10 schools are small, with 100 students or fewer. One school has between 200 to 299 student attendees. One school has between 301 to 400 student attendees. One school has greater than 400 student attendees.

Section Two: Results of the Interviews

Section 2 describes the study participants' responses to the face-to-face interviews. Their responses received content analysis; a frequency table displays clusters of themes. In presenting the findings, the researcher grouped participants' responses by research question, followed by a summary of their responses.

Interviews with the study participants took place at their school site and usually lasted for 1 hour. Of the 10 respondents to the written survey, nine consented to face-to-

face interviews. The 10th study participant became unable to participate in the face-to-face interview after submission of her written survey. In one instance the interview ended abruptly when a school disturbance required the founder's immediate attention; she was unable to answer the remaining two questions. Another interview lasted 4 hours; participant explored deeply each question before answering.

The survey instrument recorded participant responses to research questions 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8. The research questions considered in Section 2 are

2.   What is the (a) religious, (b) ethical commitments, and (c) communal participation of the AA woman school founder?

4.   What influenced the AA woman school founder to start the school?

5.   How does the AA woman school founder utilize the mentoring and helping hands traditions in (a) achieving and (b) maintaining her career?

7.   What is the AA woman school founder's self-described leadership style?

8.   What is the AA woman school founder's self-described entrepreneurial profile?

Research question 2: What are the (a) religious, (b) ethical commitments, and (c) communal participation of the AA woman school founder? Survey participants described their feelings on the affect their AA identity and identity as a woman had on their career choices and advancement.

Influences upon the founder's decision to start a school. Research participants responded to the question on what influenced their decision to start a school. Four respondents made their decision to found the school during college or university life, three were in undergraduate school, and two made their decision during graduate school.

The influence for most survey participants, five of nine, to start their school occurred because of their strong feelings that children in their immediate environment were not being adequately educated. States one participant, "I saw that wasn't going to happen to our kids (children at the group homes) because they were suspended all the time." Two of the nine participants' influence to start their schools happened when they believed AA students should have a good quality education in an AA base or community.

Table 2 summarizes findings of the influences on each founder's decisions. An interview participant shared the following with the researcher:

> I happened to trip over it with my sister. She was always interested in children and how they how they fell through the cracks. When she retired, she convinced me to come on board with her to start the school. I found myself doing a lot of research and found there was a need for it. (Participant #1, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Another shared:

> The thing that influenced me more than anything was the success of my own daughter in the type of program we wanted to start. We felt there were many uphill challenges we had to face in her attending the school that was not AA based. I felt AA students needed the same opportunity as other students to be in that type of program. My husband who is very community oriented and supportive of education felt it was time and I had been in the fabric business for many years and I knew business. We felt we did not have a perfect location but we went ahead and started. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Table 2

Influences Upon Decision to Start a School

Theme	Frequency
Strong feeling that children in their immediate environment were not being adequately educated	4
Felt AA students should have a good quality of education in an AA base	2
Influenced by AA educators who came to educate her in her community	1
Violence in their child's school	1
Family commitment to educating children in the community	1

Note. N=9

Another shared:

> That is where a lot of encouragement came from, where I grew up in Austin
> Texas. There were many educators there; we had the community center right in
> the projects. The Black educators came together and what they decided, what
> they wanted to do was to train, teach parents how to do everything, to sew,
> budgeting, how to can food and store it, make your own sheets and pillow cases
> and bedspreads and everything. I remember my mom would take us down there,
> we'd get lunch, make the quilts, and things like that I'd take the scraps and make
> doll clothes. (Participant #6, personal communication June 6, 2006)

Another stated,

> A few classmates mistreated my son after they noticed him on television. He was
>
> punched in the mouth and his teeth were knocked out because of jealousy.
>
> (Participant #3, personal communication, June 1, 2006)

Yet another respondent replied:

> They closed the school and after a few months, I was able to get it opened for
>
> myself. I wanted a school that has more control over the kids at school than the
>
> public schools have. Participant #5, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

One participant stated:

> My father wanted to help the community after the Watts riot he gave interest
>
> loans to anyone who wanted to start a business. He had a big practice and knew
>
> just about everybody. He gave low interest loans, for cleaners, bar-b-que,
>
> barbershop, mom and pops stores, and laundromats. They failed. In 1968, he
>
> called a family reunion and said the only way to help the community to through
>
> education. We should start a school and start with the very young. I was in pre-
>
> med when he said this; I thought it would be of service in the community but a
>
> way for me to develop myself into what I wanted to do. I stopped what I was
>
> doing, took Montessori courses, and qualified for Director. I had never heard of
>
> Montessori, I realized after I was introduced to the concept, 1956 or 52 or
>
> something she [the Montessori teacher] was like papa, clothed the poor, she used
>
> a simple way of life for the skills needed for developmental classes to be able to
>
> afford a higher intellectual level. I become involved with Montessori philosophy
>
> because it was the way I was educated, from my father. I saw dignity in his work

and people respected him, he was from the people not from the ivory tower

looking down, not driving a big fancy car, he was of the people. (Participant #7

personal communication, May 26, 2006)

Another participant said:

I started group homes and in-group homes there are the most difficult kids to

place, they are not placed in foster homes because they have special needs, one of

them is education. The nonpublic schools I enrolled my children in suspended

them. What the district does is send them to nonpublic schools and hopefully

those schools can get them on the right track back into mainstream. I saw that

was not going to happen to my kids because they were suspended all the time. So

the kids were sent home more, I knew they were not getting their education and

they were not there getting mainstreamed. So I made a decision to open my own

private school and have a policy not to suspend unless they are life threatening

unless its life threatening to themselves or others. (Participant #8, personal

communication, June 6, 2006)

Another participant said:

I grew up in the time of idealism in the 60s and 70s. That was a time of

empowerment and self-determination. We all felt that in order to make progress

we should have our own institutions. The seed was germinated there. Then I was

the Director of [name omitted] middle school, a very elite independent school and

for financial reasons they closed. We had a wonderful school, almost like a

boutique, a wonderful school with such a positive environment. So when it

closed we said let's open our own school and that's where the school started.

(Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006)

And finally one participant said, "I was motivated to start the school upon the death of a relative" (Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006).

Respondent's prior career path considerations. Study participants described their prior career path considerations. Two thirds of interview participants were teachers or in school to become credentialed instructors prior to starting their schools. Table 3 summarizes the findings on the founders' career path considerations.

Table 3

Career Path Considerations

Theme	Frequency
Previous career as a teacher	6
Business owner	2
Social worker	1

Note. N=9

Study participants shared the following with the researcher:

I previously taught at the university level. Moreover, I always have to share this little tidbit. I knew I did not want to teach little folks so I wanted community college or university level. I did not think I would be teaching high school youth at this level. So while I was teaching at the university level there was a need to groom people coming up. So even though it wasn't my first choice I knew they needed help to get to the level I was teaching at. We had to do something

different so I went on and did it. (Participant #1, personal communication, May

23, 2006)

One participant said:

Prior to the school, I was an undeclared major at Cal state. I had taken education

courses, yet career wise I was a communications dispatcher for the Sheriffs

department, and my own business. My daughter influenced me to go back and

get solidly into education so that we could do this. This was career change, total

career change. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Another stated:

Actually, I was in a partnership at a community center. We worked from the

whole-man concept, our base of clientele was families in poverty, and we felt

there was several areas of need; economic, housing, recreation, education, health,

all of those components in order to fully equip families in poverty. We built

economical housing, we had economic planning, family shelter, supplemental

school education for the youth, summer employment, all of that. (Participant #6,

personal communication, June 6, 2006)

Yet another said,

Previous careers. I was a photographer, x-ray tech, med transcriber, managed

offices, cleaned buildings at night, a tailor, Sheriff's department as cashier clerk.

Business owner, did hair, laundry, catering. (Participant #7, personal

communication, May 26, 2006)

Another participant shared:

I was a social worker. First, I was a Treatment Counselor at MacLaren Hall, and then I went to the field as a social worker; placing kids at different places I would not leave my dog at made me decide to open group homes and have quality placement for children. So I started doing that, I started to do that, and then I started the school. (Participant #8, personal communication, June 4, 2006)

Another said:

I think I was born a teacher. I wish it had not been that way. Had I been that way, the creator, I would have made myself an artist. The way they can take something out of nothing and just create. God said not. I cannot dance, and so I left school when I was in college. I stopped going, flunked out, and wandered around, Europe (England, Germany, and Paris) then to West Africa. I came back and finished school, then I started (working at) the public school after, I tried journalism, community organizing, and that was not it. When I started teaching, that was it and I knew it. I wish it were not so but….Sometimes you just have to fulfill your promise and when you step into that then you flourish and once you do then you flourish, and it becomes effortless, I love this work, students love me, administrators hated me. (Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006)

Another shared, "My career path, ironically, I was a liaison at the school my children attended, I was working on my business degree." (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Previous occupation that best prepared them for founding the school.

Interviewees described the previous job that best prepared her for the current business.

Work as a teacher prepared this group of women for their current business according to

four of the nine participants. "The community center and teaching there. We did a lot of

education for high school dropouts. That was more valid that any administrator

position." (Participant #3, personal communication, June 1, 2006)

Table 4 summarizes the findings on the previous job that best prepared the

participants for the current business.

Table 4

Previous Best Occupational Preparation

Theme	Frequency
Secretarial position	1
Business owner	2
Teacher	4
Being a parent	1
Work as a social worker	1

Note. N=9

Interview responders reported some of the following statements:

I would have to say my very first job; during that time, I think it was Pacific Bell I

worked as a long distance operator. I think all my 11 sisters worked at either

American Airlines or Pacific Bell. I picked Pacific Bell because I graduated from

one of the first community colleges in 1970 Virginia. I was really told you would

have to get a career that would last you a lifetime. And so I couldn't think of

anything; I looked at all my sisters they all were secretaries and so I received an

Associate of Arts in Secretarial Science, so once I received it I knew I could do

that job. It prepared me for anything because as long as you could type, edit, read

comprehend, all these things encompassed in that degree, I didn't realize it at the

time but once I got older I realized I could always come back to that skill.

(Participant #1, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Another study participant stated:

The fabric shop, gave me my experience in holding the bottom line, in hiring

employees and paying employees and the ins and outs, but helped me to realize

just being able to teach is not enough. (Participant #2, personal communication,

May 23, 2006)

Another shared,

The community center and teaching there. We did a lot of education for high

school drop outs. That was more valid than any administrator position. I was like

a rebel more or less. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

Another respondent said:

Being a parent. I had to budget when my children were in private school. I had

to learn to fix nutritional foods, I had to organize the family, I had to volunteer at

school I had to do all the things I do now. Civil rights and community activism,

the world is only as large or small as you want it to be. I teach the children to be

free thinkers. I teach them to take care of themselves. (Participant #7, personal

communication, May 26, 2006)

Another participant stated,

I was a staff psychologist at a youth center that gave me a lot of insight in working with kids and family therapy as well, and nonprofit experience was useful. (Participant #8, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

An additional interviewee stated:

I'm a teacher and I worked in the classroom and the students love me and I'll do anything to support teachers because I want them to stay and unfortunately what I saw in public schools is that teachers are not valued, not respected, its almost like a revolving door. When you find a good teacher, you try to hold on to that teacher and so that prepares you, just teaching and valuing teaching, because we are as good as our teachers, so if teachers need the time off, or the day, do it. And I want teachers to teach what they are comfortable with, good at teaching. (Participant #9, personal communication, May 26, 2006)

Research question 4: What is the communal participation, religious and ethical commitments of the AA woman school founder? This research question was analyzed through an inquiry about communal participation as well as their role in the community. As well, religious influences upon them as a child and adult, and their ethical commitment were evaluated.

A consistent response to the question "describe your role in the AA community," was to hear from the women they do not consider themselves to have a big role, they do not identify themselves as a leader in the AA community. They do hear people tell them they are a leader or that their organization is making an impact on the community, responds four of the nine interviewees. "From my perspective I don't see my role in the AA community as a big role, but I've been told it's a big role," (Participant #1, personal

communication, May 23, 2006) and reports another respondent, "Well I can't really say that I perceive a role, if others are looking at me as an achiever I thank God for that." (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006). See Table 5 for participants' views of their roles within the AA community.

Table 5

Participants' Views of Their Role Within the AA Community

Theme	Frequency
One who does not see herself as having a "big role" but is seen by others as having a "big role"	4
Promoter of leadership in others	2
One who instills interest in younger adults to carry on the concern of "where we are going as a community"	3

Note. N=9

Study participants shared these stories while describing their role in the African American community:

From my perspective, I don't see my role in the AA community as a big role, but I've been told it's a big role. I find that interesting because I am just doing work. When we go into the different stores through out the community we hear the name of the school, or my name and knowing that I feel it's very important that I be able to carry myself in the most appropriate way. I did not realize the impact I had on the community until I first heard people talking. (Participant #3, personal communication, June 1, 2006)

Another stated:

> Well I can't really say that I have what I perceive a role if others are looking at me as an achiever I thank God for that but I haven't actually been called on to mentor anyone or to speak I have spoken at one or two seminars but aside from being a pastor's wife I don't know really how else, define myself. Sometimes I hesitate to share I am a pastor's wife because people have a tendency not to be themselves around me tell their honest opinion, they will give it to me unless they find out, then they are cagey with me. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

And another interviewee said:

> I am a great promoter of leadership. I like promoting and developing leadership in others that is what I spend a lot of my time on. It does not matter to me whether I ever receive the identity of being a leader, I will push all my teachers. When I started, we were not going to have a principal. I was hopeful it would go that way until everybody started looking at me for paychecks and the books, "where's the paper, where's the pay check" you know, and it was something that was forced upon me even though I take a real strong back seat. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

While another said,

> My role in the community is that I am also a teacher at my local church now, and before that, I served as Children's church leader for 6 years. I served as Director of a youth summer program for 3 years before moving to Los Angeles. (Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006)

One survey responder said:

> Unfortunately and I have found over the years everybody seems to respect a
> woman more than a man, the older I get the more respect and power I seem to get.
> I think it is because it is non threatening and it's the nurturing thing. Twenty-five
> years ago I got the Bloods and Crips [gangs] together using Richard Pryor as the
> broker. I picked up trash outside here every day. Then the people would pick up
> trash on our block only, because they respected the area. The gangs looked up to
> me because we have been in the community, not because of making money, not
> because I cannot do anything else. (Participant #5, personal communication, May
> 30, 2006)

And another participant stated:

> I see myself as very active and very concerned with the climate that's in our
> community now and the concerns of how I can help and how I can insert in those
> coming behind me to have the same kind of compassion and concern about where
> are we going and where are we headed in our own communities. When I was in
> grad school, and the school I chose was Clinical Psychology, and the whole
> premise was you cannot sit in a white sterile office in Beverly Hills and help
> people in our communities to deal with issues, to deal with the things they come
> to you for help with, you need to be next to them to help them alleviate some of
> their personal problems. (Participant #8, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

One interviewee said:

> Well, you know just growing up, I think it was the time that I grew up in,
> whatever time you grow up in that's going to stamp you forever. I grew up in the

hip hop generation it's about the 'bling bling' they say. Well, I grew up in the 60s

and 70s and so it was a Black thing and so it's still a Black thing for me. I am

going to do whatever I can to help my people. I know other people will benefit I

know that people all over the world look to the AA community in America. Our

culture is known all over the world. I expect these kids to come back and build

our community because they have so many more opportunities than we ever

thought about. One-half of our first graduating class went to a four-year college.

In those who do not, we have saved some kids from dropping out. We begged

one kid not to drop out. He has now been admitted to an art college here. He said

"You guys saved my life." Saved him from prison. We're changing generations.

(Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006)

Another research participant stated, "I don't have any role in the AA community. I go to

church and that's it." (Participant #3, personal communication, June 1, 2006)

   Religious influences in child and adulthood. One hundred percent of the

interview participants said that there were religious influences upon them from an early

age, usually by age 5 or 6. All reported they attended church on a frequent basis from an

early age. "We were raised in the church. You know, three to four times a week and

twice on Sunday." (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

   Five respondents stated that as an adult their religion helps them to remain

grounded. Said one respondent "I developed my spiritual life and myself as a person."

(Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006) See Table 6 for a summary of

participants' religious influences as an adult.

Table 6

Religious Influences as an Adult

Theme	Frequency
As an adult my religion helps me to remain grounded	5
I believe God's will and biblical teaching is the answer for our youth	2
Influence of church for emotional and financial supporter of her works	1
Influence by church activities as a construct for teaching and learning	1

Note. N=9

Study participants shared the following comments on their religious influences as a child and as an adult:

Well, I am grounded. Ever since I can remember, I have always gone to church. It was always the rule if one of my sisters graduated, the oldest sister, or brother in school sang in the choir next. If they sang for the choir, the next sister would take over when that one graduated. I was the last one to sing in the choir. And so church has always been a part of my life, I love it. That is what grounds me. I have a lot of faith that has followed me all of my life. As an adult it just helps me to remain grounded, stable, looking at issues a certain way, even in making decisions to look at it from a different perspective or bigger picture. It helps me to understand it's not always about me. There are decisions I make that have an impact on other people. (Participant #1, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

And another said:

As a child I was taken to the Baptist church and a will never forget it. I was 5 or 6 but I was touched and I could not understand everything going on but I knew it

was serious. I knew from the expressions on people's faces it was serious. In addition, from that point I had, in other words a cursory type of knowledge of what being a Christian was all about. Then we changed and stopped visiting the Baptist church and became a member of the AME during my adolescent years. I remember when I was in public school the teacher introduced the concept of atheism in the class, some people don't believe there is a god, I turned him out and started looking out the window, about 16 years old, I said hum, no, there has to be a god. I remember being touched. I saw what Jesus did and does and all I learned about Jesus, whatever he said from that point on was dealing with what he taught about the social studies, and it wasn't too long after that that I got saved. I did not know everything I needed to know then but religion definitely influenced my life. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Yet another participant said:

I am very involved in my church I participate in a lot of different activities, and God's will and biblical teaching is what I believe in. I believe it is the answer for our youth. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

While another responder stated:

As a child I was raised in church, went to church about 3 days a week and I really enjoyed it because there was much for the children to do, which gave us constructive play and learning activities. Now as an adult, I still attend church, not as much as I did as a youngster, but I do attend regularly. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Another interviewee said:

Went to church almost every day as a child and I go now. I went to junior high school [in LAUSD]. My music teacher took time out of his personal life and he took the students to this wonderful church. I'm still there and serve on the board of trustees, in Christian education, I've been there 40 years now. I have grown up in that church, have a good strong foundation on the word and the Bible, and was just taught to strive to be the best and that is what we did. I developed my spiritual life and my self as a person. So many people there I can call mom and they were instrumental in raising me spiritually and emotionally and my present pastor now was as member up until 20 years ago and I grew up with these people and they are my family and stood behind me emotionally and financially whatever I needed they were there. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

Another answered:

I grew up in a primitive Baptist church. I think it was a church that evolved from slavery, the women sit on one side, men sit on another side. Communion, we actually wash each other's feet. I did not think anything about it, now I say "how interesting." As I got older in the 60s and 70s I would go visit the nation of Islam, and then I went to the Science of Mind I tried that for a while, then I ended up in the AME church. He is the one who really got me back into the church. It was a cultural influence. He had read every book I had read, all these references to Africa and to black folk. He was the preacher that represented my generation. I stopped going for a while. When my daughter got older, I was watching sports on T. V. I decided this is my responsibility, as my mother, to take her to church.

It was wonderful I found the Lord myself. (Participant #9, personal

communication, May 24, 2006)

Religious considerations in decision to start and operate a school. When study

participants were asked to describe their religious considerations in starting and operating

the school, one third of the interviewed respondents reported their religious

considerations with regard to beginning the school were through spiritual divination,

inspirations from God. An equal number of respondents gave no religious consideration

in starting and operating the school. One interview participant chose the Accelerated

Christian Education curriculum because of her beliefs. Table 7 summarizes findings of

the respondents on the question of religious influence in starting and operating the

school.

Study participants shared the following themes with the researcher:

I have always felt that this is not my business, this is God's business; I had no

idea how we even started. When I first started, I had no clue I would be doing

this. (Participant #10, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

Another respondent stated:

Number one, it would be nondenominational, accept students from whatever faith

they were, also that we would make it a part of the curriculum and that is why we

chose the accelerated Christian education curriculum because it is integrated into

the actual academics. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Table 7

Religious Considerations in Decision to Start and Operate a School

Theme	Frequency
Founders believe their work was being done through God's design, God was directing them, God's inspiration	3
The school would be nondenominational	1
Integrate religion into the curriculum	1
No religious influence in decision to start and operate the school	3
Provide students with a solid spiritual background	1

Note. N=9

Yet another study participant answered:

> I saw a lot of the Christian schools close down. I was teaching at a Christian
>
> school and saw it close down, there was a lot closing down, when they closed
>
> down and was concerned. Parents were crying, "What am I going to do with my
>
> children". I said to the teachers and the parents, its time for us to step up to the
>
> plate and take responsibility for our own kids. We have to educate them and help
>
> them and if we do not we will lose them. (Participant #6, personal
>
> communication, June 6, 2006)

While another stated:

> I just want to provide a solid spiritual background for the children so that they
>
> would have that foundation inside of them to become productive adults and carry
>
> it on in their families. (Participant #5, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

And another participant answered:

I just knew; it was something, it was a path the Lord was leading me to. It was

not just something I know he ordered my steps and I just thank God that I heard

and I am following his direction. (Participant #8, personal communication, June 6,

2006)

While another answered:

There were none. I believe the school was divinely inspired. I'm a Christian, xx

is an Evangelist. xx is a Muslim we have xx a Buddhist; we have everything.

(Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006)

One study participant stated, "Any religious influences, no." (Participant #3, personal

communication, June 1, 2006) While one respondent said, And another replied, "That it

be a Christian school." (Participant #10, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

Ethical commitment. Research participants described their ethical

responsibilities in leading the school. Thirty-three percent of interviewed participants

describe their ethical responsibilities in leading the school similarly: to be open and

above board. This description is synonymous with transparency in leadership. "I know

of schools where they would put the answers down, (private schools) for the kids and

make it look like they are really learning, that's a disservice not only to your ethics but to

the child, why would you say this child passed if they couldn't." (Participant #6, personal

communication, June 6, 2006)

Two of nine respondents reported it is ethically important to believe in the

children, to teach the children to think and to make the best decisions for a healthy school

environment. "I don't require my students to take a test to enter the school. They do not

have to prove to me they can learn. We believe all students can learn." (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

See Table 8 for a summary of survey responses regarding ethical responsibilities in leading the school.

Table 8

Ethical Responsibilities in Leading the School

Theme	Frequency
To believe in the children; they can learn, they have a purpose	2
To teach the children to think	2
To be open and above board when dealing with staff and vendors	3
To make the best decisions for a healthy school environment.	2

Note. N=9

Respondents' thoughts on ethical leadership of a school:

I think it is at the top of the list. You have to have ethics in whatever you do in life.   mean I just see that as very important. I feel that it is my job to demonstrate that there is a right and a wrong and there is a justice it may not happen here in this life but there is a justice. We teach them the biblical commandments and we teach them there is only one way.

Administratively, no ethical issues, I would refuse to compromise in that area, I believe in doing everything aboveboard and by the book if someone comes to me and tells me I need to work but I can't show my income because I'm on social security disability, I'm sorry you are going to volunteer. When they are happy with you then fine but when they get mad at you I do not want anyone to hold

anything over me. I do not say or do any thing I could not stand in a court and

testify, yes, I did this and this is why and so I do not have any issue like that.

Even with our buses we have to pass rigorous CHP inspections and paperwork I

almost need to hire a person full time just to handle those regulations but I do that

with the grace of god. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

While another respondent shared:

I do not require my students to take a test to enter the school. They do not have to

prove to me they can learn. We believe all students can learn. I have had kids,

come classified ADD, on medication I tell the parents, this is love we give to the

kids, I have found this change in the kids. Then I tell the parents from the

beginning, we will put something on the wall for him to learn while he's climbing

it. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

And yet another said:

My responsibility is to make sure that the children I meet know who they are and

where they are going at an early age and have at least an idea of their direction in

life. I do not want them wandering around. (Participant #5, personal

communication, May 30, 2006)

One participant responded:

I try to uphold principals that children have to have a work ethic to stay here. I do

not back down to the parents. If necessary, they will have to leave. Some

children come on scholarship; one had a diamond in her nose. If she had walked

in the first day with it we would not have accepted her. At the end of the school

year, she had to leave. Strict enforcement on standards and the rules. We had a

family that left one time because we would not let the family come every day late. The point I am trying to make is that he came late everyday. However, he wanted the explanation from the teacher. He wanted school to start when he arrived. She (the mother) said she would not tell him what to do. I explained the teacher could not stop and explain to him every time. (Participant #5, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

And one respondent said:

I deal with many people who want to be paid under the table. They might be on disability and of course, you can't do that you have to be with the Lord. Other than that, I do not really have any issues with anyone asking me to do something unethical, I think in terms of running a business people want you to say they make a certain amount of money they want you to report less or more or stuff like that, issues around the paycheck or money. Kids on meds at the school if they have been prescribed if I see it keeps them from doing their work I start questioning. Many kids in special education are on meds to help them to learn. To sit in the classroom, however if it keeps them sleeping through the class, then I'm questioning, I want to talk to whoever is giving the medicine. (Participant #8, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

Another participant volunteered this response:

It is very had to expel a kid. That is hard. Then on the other hand, you can change that kid's life forever. I made a decision to expel a kid and it was the best thing that happened to the school and the kid. You have to do it to have a healthy school. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

Research question 5*: *How does the AA woman school founder utilize the mentoring and helping hands traditions in (a) achieving and (b) maintaining her career? Participants' responses describe the influence on each founder's initial decision to start a school, areas in which they received mentoring, areas in which they provide mentoring, their service on boards of directors, and their interest in sharing their leadership story with others.

Factors contributing to the founder's success. Study participants described the single most important factor to which they attribute their success. Over one half of the interview participants stated that the Lord and prayer was the single most important factor, which they could attribute to their success. Two of nine interviewees attributed their success to the support of family and friends, as shown by Table 9.

Study participants shared the following thoughts on the single most important factor that has lead to success:

> I would say my ability to do research. That is the single factor that has contributed to my success. Because of the fact without real research and real information it does not work, so you really have to do your homework. Academic or whatever situation that you're in these things are not usually found on the surface, whether it's something you do in your business or in your school environment, you want to be sure you give out good information. The only way to do that is to do research. (Participant #1, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Table 9

Most Important Factor Leading to Founder Success

Themes	Frequency
Ability to research issues	1
The Lord helps me/prayer	5
Family / friend support	2
Capacity to love the children	1

Note. N=9

Another respondent stated:

Not to sound spiritual or anything but if I tell the truth it was the real Lord. The fact that the real Lord Jesus himself helped me so tremendously I would not be in it if he had not stepped in and helped me. I know it had to be nothing but him. Sometime people are in church and they do church things or whatever but there is a real trust in the real Lord that cannot be seen on the outside. This is something a true believer knows with out any doubt. We had to rely on the scriptures. It was he because there were times we were renting buildings; while we were trying to get our building established, we were put out of places on a moments notice, we never missed a day of school, and we had to rely on scriptures. "Behold I set before you an open door that no man can shut." In addition, when they tried to shut the door they found out they were just men. The Lord already had another door open. We had the key before they got their sentence completed that you are no longer welcome in this building. We had the key in our pocket to our new one.

It's true. We never missed a day. You know the poem "Footprints;" we were

carried. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

And another said:

I would have to say prayer, I do not know, it has been a blessing, a blessing in

disguise. I do not pay myself, I am using money that my husband gives me and

my allowance from him. (Participant #5, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

Another study participant stated, "There were quality people in my life. I had wonderful

family and friends who encouraged me to achieve anything I wanted and be productive in

whatever I decided to do." (Participant #3, personal communication, June 1, 2006)

And yet another said:

Success as a leader it is because of my capacity for love, it is the one

commonality everybody can recognize. People might think uh she is stuck up,

but love is something everybody has to agree. Maybe they cannot define it or do

not understand it or haven't had a lot of it but they recognize it. I love what I do;

it makes me feel like living. (Participant #7, personal communication, May 26,

2006)

While another responded thus:

I would say my parents because my father worked hard; he had a janitorial

business. He worked hard. He said people go to school, go to college, and they

get dumb. They want to work for somebody. My father came out here during the

40s and one day he just quit he left his job and it was history from there. My

mother came from Oklahoma and they worked on the farm of course, real values

there, just good strong God people with a work ethic and that has a lot to do with

my success. I am so grateful, my mother in particular had us go to church, and of

course as I have gotten older it has meant more, I have my own personal

relationship with God. (Participant #9, personal communication, 5/24/06)

Another participant volunteered, "Awesome employees." (Participant #10,

personal communication, May 30, 2006)

Mentoring received by founders. On the topic of mentoring received by the

study participants, over one-half of the respondent's reported they received no mentoring.

This report is significant because all of the respondents report they provide mentoring.

One third state they received mentoring from family, friends, instructors, business

acquaintances, and former supervisors. One third of study participants indicated they

received mentoring in the form of values instruction, motivation, financial mentoring,

and visioning, character development, energy for the business, boldness, and teaching.

See Table 10 for a summary of thematic results regarding mentoring received by

participants.

Table 10

Mentoring Received by Participants

Theme	Frequency
Family/friends/instructors, instilled values, provided vision	3
Has not received any mentoring.	5
Business acquaintances, motivation, finance, teaching	1

Note. N=9

One research participant's responses to the question of receipt of mentoring:

I would say that mentoring I received has been from my family, friends and from

my instructors and they have all affected me in things I do everyday. My sisters

and friends have been women; the academic or teachers/professors have been

men. (Participant #1, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Another shared:

I really cannot say I received any mentoring from anyone. I read Marva Collins

book after we were in it. I heard about some of the mistakes others had made and

you can call that some somewhat remote mentoring, no I did not have any one

take me under their wings. I was it, people have called me, I am thankful, and I

am willing to help anyone. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23,

2006)

 And one other said:

Definitely one director, I took his vision and gave life to it. Character

development, his idea about class connections where the kids sit around in a circle

and talk. I took his ideas and molded it to fit the AA community. Then of course,

I had built on it from there. One Assistant Principal, I adored her energy her

depth all the stuff she was doing. One principal, his boldness. To take a school

like that and turn it around. He would take the thugs and give them power. He

would invite them in and then sometimes then put them in charge when he would

leave, that was masterful. Participant #9, personal communication, May 24,

2006)

Description of mentoring opportunities provided. Participants in the research

study described any mentoring they have provided, or provide currently. Four of nine

respondents or slightly less than one-half stated they provide mentoring on school start up and operations. One respondent states, "I just do it everyday because I think it is so natural, so people won't have to make the mistakes I made, helping individuals not to make the…if you see somebody going down that road…by sharing your story." (Participant #5, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

Two of the interview participants stated they provide mentoring to the children by sharing their life's stories. See Table 11 for a summary of survey responses regarding mentoring opportunities provided by the participants. Respondents shared their stories on mentoring others:

> I never really say I am a mentor, but others say I am a mentor. I just do it everyday because I think it is so natural so people won't have to make the mistakes I made helping individuals not to make the, if you see somebody going down that road, by sharing your story. That is what folks would do. Why not help them not to go through the storm. It is just a part of what I do, I do not think about it. I always feel that I make something and when it has been rocky or a struggle I feel sharing that can perhaps help someone else, or at least be able to come up with some suggestions and help them reach their own goals. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Table 11

Mentoring Opportunities Provided by the Participants

Themes	Frequency
Mentoring to other interested in starting or operating a school	4
Participation on a board of directors	1
To the children on life's lessons	2
General, students, parents, and staff	2

Note. N=9

The same respondent continued:

> The unknown is the most difficult for me, and if I can share, help that person to
> see that upcoming problem, before it happens then that would help them not to
> have to go through the trials and tribulations that I have been through. It is
> somewhat hard because I do not think about mentoring everyday. I think the
> mentoring part of me came from my parents. Because I can remember we always
> had a house full of kids and grandkids, even so there was always room for another
> one. During the summer they would take on the neighborhood youth core. My
> father would provide summer jobs for them. I used to see him with Vista
> workers. We had a large house and the Vista workers, similar to AmeriCorps,
> from over seas and they would come and stay with us while they worked in social
> services organizations. Therefore, we always had someone at our house at all
> times. Therefore, I think that is where I get that. (Participant #2, personal
> communication, May 23, 2006)

Another respondent stated:

> A few have called and asked a question or two and hopefully I have been able to
>
> help, they don't always take your advice to me it works out fine and sometimes
>
> it's a big mistake. (Participant #1, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

And a founder said:

> With all the people who work here now, to anyone who is coming up. One came
>
> here because he is going to be an Assistant Principal. I want to give everyone the
>
> opportunity, you want to move, just make it happen. Being in a position to
>
> provide those opportunities to people is important. (Participant #9, personal
>
> communication, May 24, 2006)

> And one participant said, "Through the Boards. I support government Boards.

The community boards." (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

Responded one participant, "I do not provide any, unless it's the kids you are talking

about." (Participant #5, personal communication, May 30, 2006) One founder stated,

"We are preparing a mentoring program. We are proposing for the mentor to have

money. I do not personally mentor anyone at this time. " (Participant #6, personal

communication, June 6, 2006)

Research question 7: What is the AA woman school founder's self-described

leadership style? Each founder described her leadership style, their main concerns in

starting the school, a description of the day they began the school endeavor, thoughts on

being a leader of the school, thoughts on the most important thing people should know

about them as an AA woman school founder.

Three main concerns on school start-up. Research participants described their three main concerns when they started the school and how they overcame those concerns. Each of the nine interviewed participants may have given more than one response to the question on their three main concerns when starting the school. The responses varied, three of 14 responses targeted marketing. Respondents were concerned how they would let the community know they were open, how would they let potential contractors know of their presence? Interview participants also expressed concerns about assuring student success, and financial stability of their organizations. Two respondents had no concerns about opening the school. One participant said, "I felt the charter school was divinely inspired and we never had a doubt that we would open it and find a wonderful building and we could succeed, it never occurred to us that we wouldn't make it." (Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006) See Table 12 for a summary of teachers' three greatest concerns in starting their schools.

Table 12

Three Greatest Concerns Starting the School

Themes	Frequency
Marketing of the new school	3
Creating a school in which students could succeed	2
Facility acquisition	2
Financial stability of the school	2
Were not concerned with start up of the school	2
Concerns over control of student violence	1
Change in personal role from teacher to administrator	1
Personal organization	1

Note. N=14

Study participants described their responses to the question of their concerns over school start up:

First one was there was a great need for individual attention to help students to get to a certain level, because eventually everyone has to work. Number two was the fact there was young adults that I talked to they really do not have a goal, and number three was that without these two things then how they would even be able to function once they get out into the real world. So that convinced me to go ahead and start it. (Participant #1, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

And one participant responded:

One was personal; that I didn't feel I was the most organized person in the world. I could just see papers everywhere and I prayed Lord you can help me to overcome this I read books on organization and I practiced and got systems down and that helped me overcome that particular obstacle. The one main challenge we had was the building, the proper building the zoning that could comply with the fire dept requirements, at the time real estate was not as unaffordable as it is now and so we were able to solve those real estate problems by first buying a relatively inexpensive piece of property and then renting and then purchasing a vacant lot and then were able to buy our own building. In 1985, we purchased the property. It was not until 1995 that we actually purchased our final property where we currently are. The other concern, I was not sure how we would communicate the message and get students to enroll, my advertising experience in fabric helped me get started with newspaper advertising helped. We started with 22 students and ended 51 students. In the 2nd year 95 students, its been 110 to 115 students

thereafter with some fluctuations and then we were taking in too many with three

buildings, 201 students, not charging enough tuition all these students with not

enough money to staff, not a good point at all caused a lot of stress, we balanced

things out. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

And one research participant stated:

Oh, I guess I was worried about the teachers that were coming with me. How

they would feel if we did not make it. Then I knew we would make it because it

is God's will. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

While one participant volunteered:

One was misbehavior of other children. Another was coming into a system that

did not really care about quality education and the third was to make sure a strong

foundation was set in rearing and educating my own children. I overcame these

concerns by researching what I could do to make a better educational program for

the children. (Participant #3, personal communication, June 1, 2006)

One research participant answered:

My father's vision was to have a school, to start with the very young and teach

them the joy of learning functional, of working free of the government, free of

impingement, working because it's your mind it's your destiny. He wanted you

to be in control of your destiny. He had the money; his medical practice funded

the program. When he saw nobody was interested in the school he gave me cart

Blanc to do whatever I wanted. I learned from experience. My role changed

from being a servant to being a server. I have a very deep sense of spritually and

that is the only institute I fear is God, I do not fear anything else, laws, man, I pay

homage to my God. I feel my faith has protected me.   (Participant #7, personal

communication, May 26, 2006)

One research participant responded:

Main concerns were getting the contracts with school districts because in L. A.

they just do not give them to AAs. I do not have LAUSD today and I have been

in business for 18 years, I mean LAUSD, they say they do not give them to

anybody anymore but that is not true. I know of non-AAs who have gotten the

contracts. However, it is getting contracts and then getting them to send you kids

and that is hard, that is very difficult, being located here. There are major

obstacles. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

One other respondent replied:

I felt [name omitted] charter school was divinely inspired and we never had any

doubt that we would open it and find a wonderful building and we could succeed,

it never occurred to us that we wouldn't make it. If I knew what I know now I

probably would not have opened but now, you have the mind of a child you just

think you can do anything. (Participant #9, personal communication, May 24,

2006)

And one said:

Financing, parent participation, and space. Initial financing came from the

church. Announcements to parents with went out with an overwhelming

response. Church soon relocated to a larger space. (Participant #10, personal

communication, May 30, 2006)

And another study participant stated, "At the time I didn't have any concerns because I knew I could run the school." (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

Descriptions of the day they decided to start the school endeavor. Study participants described the day they began their school endeavor. Interestingly, one third of the interviewees made their final decision to start their school endeavor upon hearing of the closure of the school they were teaching. Equally, one third of participants decided to begin the school endeavor when a relative, a sister or father, told them to. "In 1968 he called a family reunion and said the only way to help the community to succeed is through education. We should start a school with the very young" (Participant #7, personal communication, May 26, 2006). See Table 13 for a summary of this information.

Table 13

Day Participant Decided to Begin the School Endeavor

Theme	Frequency
I was told to start the school	3
The day the school told us they were closing down	3
A sponsorship door opened	1
A crisis occurred at one of the children's schools	2

Note. N=9

Study participants' descriptions of their experiences are elucidated here:

I was excited but I knew I had to do a lot of homework. We were on a time

schedule. I had to go to Detroit where she (my sister) lives and help her get

started because it was easier to start this type of school there than in California.

Then 6 to 7 months later, we started the one here. (Participant #1, personal

communication, May 23, 2006)

Another participant said:

> That was an evening when we finally drew our breath in and out and said we
>
> would do it because a door had opened up and I thought about how we would get
>
> sponsorship and I drove over to a Jack-in-the-Box and I just thought, we are really
>
> going to do this and I prayed, and I was in a residential area and someone called
>
> the police on me. You are not going anywhere you are in this car in this
>
> neighborhood, I had to show my license and so I got in and I said all right enough
>
> of thinking lets just act. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

While one respondent stated:

> I decided to do this the day the school told us they were closing down. It had
>
> been on my mind because we thought things had been bad for a long time. I
>
> decided that day to start and buy the building we were in. (Participant #6,
>
> personal communication, June 6, 2006)

In addition a founder replied:

> The day that really hit home the school called me and said one of my children was
>
> at school. They called me and said that he was on top of the roof wanting to
>
> jump, I said why you calling me you're supposed to have therapists, crisis
>
> counselor, why can't you handle this situation? Why are you calling me to come
>
> there and handle this? I decided that day, "This is it. I need a school for these
>
> kids." (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

And one other participant answered:

> I never thought I would leave. It was such an extraordinary school, I had been
>
> teaching for 15 years in L. A. Unified, Compton Unified, and Inglewood, taught

in all previous districts, when I got the opportunity to be the director there it was

like a dream, cart blanche, I could hire the teachers, and fire the teachers, hand

select the students create the kind of art programs I though were important And

so I never thought I would leave and so when they told me it was going to close I

was just…Then I knew God had prepared us. We spent that time there so that we

could do something more and bigger. Would affect more than 50 children…and

so that is how the school was born and so today we have 310 students. Therefore,

the vision was to have a charter school and so we knew our dream is to replicate

this. (Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006)

And another said, "The day I decided was when my children were stars of the school in

the teacher's eyesight and not the students. I wanted them to be treated like other

children." (Participant #4, personal communication, June 61 2006) In addition one

stated, "When papa said I think we can help the community by starting a school, has to be

qualitative just like in Beverly Hills, a unique offer, things a child would need."

(Participant #3, personal communication, May 26, 2006)

    Respondents share their thoughts as a leader of a school. Study participants

described, to the researcher, their thoughts on being a school leader. A significant

number of the participants, one third, realize they are a leader because people follow

them. This is consistent with the definition of a leader. One participant states, "I realize

I'm the leader because people followed me and they followed me because I respect them

and treat them right and hope for them to do well." (Participant #9, personal

communication, May 24, 2006) Two of nine reports a leader must have the ability to

identify systemic gaps and know how to resolve them, as important. See Table 14 for a

summary of responses regarding participants' thoughts on school leadership.

Table 14

Participant Thoughts on School Leadership

Theme	Frequency
Realization that you are a leader because others follow	3
Flexibility and open mindedness as necessary qualities	1
Identification of systemic gaps and their resolution	2
Sharing of school mission and vision	1
Systemization	1
Values, integrity as important	1

Note. N=9

One founder's thoughts on being a school leader are shared here:

> This was real important because a leader of the school or of people in general,
>
> when you're in leadership role it's very important. I think you should have
>
> values, integrity. You can be your own boss but have an open ear to hear others
>
> position; it is theirs from their perspective. Respect, being respectful. Understand
>
> and be able to hear others beliefs. That is important. It can range from spiritual
>
> to general to everyday beliefs and your health so it is the whole gamut of beliefs.
>
> Just be able to have a sensitive ear or open mind to hear others even if they do not
>
> care for yours, as a leader your have to be flexible, open minded. (Participant #3,
>
> personal communication, June 1, 2006)

And one shared:

> To be a leader means that that you need to know what should be happening and to
>
> know what is happening and you are able to bring those two together. I think that

one needs a lot of wisdom I do not feel there is any real management theory, x, y, z, but every individual has to be dealt with as individuals, and the x management is not going to work on everyone. Some people you handle in a light way with a little guidance and some you have to manage with tough love. It depends on the person. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Another stated:

I try to find teachers that share my vision and mission; that has to be for us to reach out to students. We are losing them and I mean it is a main factor and I find people that are very outgoing and want to be a part of it. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

And another said:

A lot of work has to be done. Must set standards and they have to reach your standards. Teachers and parents come late. You have to collect tuition on a monthly basis. (Participant #5, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

And another said:

I call myself administrator. I prefer the title *administrator*. When we decided I was going to start the school I bought all the other teachers from the previous school and everybody was worried. We were at another school where we originally taught. I told them I wanted to rent the building; they [the school that closed] could not get ready for that. They did not believe a women period. They did not believe in women in authority positions at all, and especially a Black woman. They laughed about it and said oh she will probably be here a couple of

months. They did not give me an o. k. Until about a week before school was to

start. (Participant #6, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

Another replied:

I do not have a lot of thought. I just decided that if I did not take matters into my

own hands, in educating my children, who would. I wanted them to be able to

pursue their dreams and get a great education without being penalized or

restricted. (Participant #3, personal communication, June 1, 2006)

While one stated:

Leader of a school. A lot of work that has to be done. Must set standards and

they have to reach your standards. Teachers and parents come late. Class starts

8:45. They are coming in now 5 minutes late. We charge tuition on a monthly

basis for the annual tuition. June is the month for the last payment. Some keep

their kids home so they won't have to pay. We told them if your child is not here

he gets no report card and no credit. (Participant #5, personal communication,

May 30, 2006)

And yet another participant stated:

Being a leader means insist on order. Not only can you address chaos you have to

have order. A systematic approach. Besides 10,000 activities, I did not know

where to jump. What it means to be a leader. I cannot take a lot of credit because

it is kind of I think it's what you should do. I could work so hard. No social life?

No that is what life is. (Participant #7, personal communication, May 26, 2006)

Another respondent answered:

I love being the leader of the school I have good staff and my thoughts around the whole school issue, you never feel like you are doing enough there's always room for improvement, it's a day to day operation, the kids come in with different issues everyday, issues you didn't think a child should be going through, being a leader you have to be able to think quickly, identify where that kid is. We feed them hot breakfast, and lunch everyday. We do not require them to bring their food, some will have it and some will not. (Participant #8, personal communication, June 6, 2006)

One said:

It is hard for me to think of myself as a leader. I think of the great orators, and people who have their way, gets surrounded by a crowd and I'm not that kind of person, I'm really shy and I really don't like to be in first and to be in the spotlight I can do it but I don't like it. When I think about people they say your doing something with our children, you are doing a good job. However, it does take a collective effort and I realize that I cannot do this by myself, it takes all of us and so I think that for every problem that we have the solution right here…connecting all the dots. (Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006)

In addition, one research participant answered: "Managing by quality, TQM, including performance appraisal and budgeting appropriately are important leadership strategies." (Participant #10, personal communication, May 30, 2006)

The most important thing people should know. The study participants described what they would say is the most important thing people should know about an AA woman school founder. See Table 15 for a summary of this information.

Table 15

Most Important Information: The Founders

Theme	Frequency
The founder's number one concern is for the future of the students.	4
They are making significant impact in student's educational success.	2
Their success is measured in effort.	2
They provide the AA student ethnic and religious relevant education.	2

Note. N=9

One participant responded:

> The individuals who enter into this place understand at this school, student's
>
> interests are number one. In addition, I feel that if I cannot help you move to the
>
> next level in your education that I will help you to find somewhere else to go to.
>
> If we are not able to help the student, we can find additional resources or
>
> whatever. The students come here for a reason and if we cannot help them we
>
> should help them to find out who can help them. (Participant #1, personal
>
> communication, May 23, 2006)

Another respondent stated:

> Well, I don't know except to say when I faced with a problem or when I want to
>
> just give up I have to dig down inside myself and find the strength to go on and to
>
> make it better for the next generation just as women have done all these centuries,
>
> they have to dig down inside themselves and find that strength wherever they can
>
> get it from and go on. Because there have been all kinds of forces on the outside,
>
> and people threatening to sue and fire departments, and cities, and they could not

shut us down, they tried their best in some cases, like the code and the move and

all. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Another stated:

That I love the kids, truly I love kids that is the best thing to know. There's no

denying any kid an education. I do not think there are any kids anywhere

incapable of learning. I do not believe that. I had kids come here that L.A. city

schools, performed at second grade level, reading. The next year the same

student gave the graduation address. In addition, I mean the factors were there

that prove he acquired the skills. His mother cried, "That is not my son giving

that speech," he didn't only read it he knew it; six pages of writing and he knew

it. I was so happy for the whole thing. (Participant #6, personal communication,

June 6, 2006)

And one respondent answered:

Historically, all of our leaders, they all have been centered. They all have had

God as their maker. All of them Harriett Tubman, even Malcolm X everyone, has

had it. Because of that and my belief, I know we are going to win, despite all the

obstacles you read about. When the people have a mind to build, we will not

always be like this we can do it all. Imagine seeing your momma and grand

momma as slaves, then you, your kids, your grand kids are slaves and yet we

came out of it. (Participant #9, personal communication, May 24, 2006)

Another participant answered that it is important for children to receive an education that

mirrors their ethnicity and religion (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23,

2006).

Research question 8: *What is the AA woman school founder's self-described entrepreneurial profile?* Respondents described their thoughts on being an entrepreneur. A significant number of interview participants five of nine, report being an entrepreneur allows them freedom of creativity and vision, and allows them to reach and grow. Two stated they are glad they work for themselves. The other two respondents were cautious and reluctant entrepreneurs. "I love it because when I wake up in the morning I know something new is going to happen, I am going to work with whatever I have" (Participant #3, personal communication, June 6, 2006). See Table 16 for a summary of participants' thoughts on entrepreneurial pursuits.

Table 16

Thoughts on Entrepreneurial Pursuits

Theme	Frequency
As an entrepreneur they have freedom of creativity and implementation of their vision	5
Advice to others they not take risks	1
Self employment is rewarding	2
Entrepreneurship was placed or imposed upon her	1

Note. N=9

One research participant described this experience:

I know it is rough. Okay, I would not have it any other way. I say that with honesty because the creativity it allows and the vision it allows you to see, you are always looking forward. The excitement. There are the down times its, exciting to say I will be glad when it's over so I can come on up. So it runs the gamut. I love it because when I wake up in the morning I know something new is going to happen, I am going to work with whatever I have. I thank God for the

opportunity because I have learned so much in these 9 years. The reward is awesome. You help to change people's lives. (Participant #1, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

While another replied:

My thoughts are people should really be careful they should really know what they are doing, despite the best plan and so I think they should not risk everything that they should put their toe in the water, see what response they get first before they jump into it, and risk everything in today's economy. The best way to do it is to work in the field for a while maybe under someone and really learn the ins and outs before they go into it. (Participant #2, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

And another respondent answered:

I have had an entrepreneur's mentality. All my life and I never wanted to be imprisoned by anyone else being in charge. I wanted to be able to soar without limitations. (Participant #3, personal communication, June 1, 2006)

While another stated:

I think they should not risk everything that they should put their toe in the water and see what response they get first before they jump into it and risk everything in today's economy. (Participant #4, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the findings of the research study, consolidate information, and make recommendations for the future. Chapter 5 summarizes the research, followed by conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further work.

Summary of the Research

This dissertation tells the story of AA women who started secondary private and charter schools in the greater Los Angeles area and sustained them for 5 years or longer. Their work is significant because it tells a unified, collective story of a group of AA women, working in the public sphere of education. It also contributes towards the goal of preparing AA children and young adults to compete in the 21st century global economy.

The purpose of this descriptive study is to provide a leadership profile of selected AA women founders of secondary private and charter schools. This study consists of a defined exploration of the founders' background, leadership style, career, religious and ethical influences, entrepreneurship, community involvement, and their mentoring and helping traditions experiences. As well, the study provides a demographic characterization of the schools the women founded.

This is a descriptive study with two sets of data: a larger written survey sample and a smaller personal interview from the participants. The written survey instrument is an adaptation by the researcher from an original survey by (Hellman, 1997). The revised survey instrument excluded some of the original questions designed to profile Jewish women in corporate America. The current research focuses on AA women who have

founded schools. Thus, the Hellman survey was adapted to the current research population. Each written survey question and interview question linked to one of the research questions. The written survey instrument answered the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the AA woman school founder?

2. What influenced the AA woman school founder to start the school?

3. What is the (a) marital status and (b) marital family profile of the AA woman school founders?

4. What is the (a) religious, (b) ethical commitments, and (c) communal participation of the AA woman school founder?

5. How do the AA woman school founders utilize the mentoring and helping hands traditions in (a) achieving and (b) maintaining their careers?

6. What is the general perception of AA woman school founder regarding AA opportunity and survival in America?

7. What is the AA woman school founders' self-described leadership style?

8. What is the AA woman school founder's self-described entrepreneurial profile?

9. What is the demographic profile of the high schools the AA woman founded?

The data collection methods included collection of written survey questions by closed and open-ended response technique and interview of the women leaders in a natural environment. Prior to implementing the study, the researcher conducted a pilot study to test for internal content validity of the survey and interview instruments. A

panel of five qualified professionals in the field of education determined the content validity of the modified Yael Hellman's survey and interview questions. Each member of the panel received a copy of the research questions, survey, and interview instruments by email in Microsoft Word format, and responded to the researchers email address.

The panel provided feedback on the relevance of the survey and interview instrument to the research questions. Because of their responses, the original questions maintained.

Because there is no relevant database or useful directories a purposive sample of 10 women developed through snowball sampling, a strategy used to identify cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich (Creswell, 1998). Access to information-rich AA women began by the researcher through the process of contacting a resource identified in the literature review.

Each founder received a written request to participate in the study and a copy of the survey by mail, and returned the survey by mail. Criteria for participation in this research project follows: (a) respondent represents a private high school, (b) or respondent represents a charter high school, (c) a minimum of 5 years sustainability, (d) school was founded by an AA woman, and (e) the school is geographically located in and around Los Angeles County, CA. This purposive sample of 10 AA women founders meeting the research criteria each participated in a 1-hour interview with the researcher.

Quantitative item analysis of participant's written survey took place; one participant provided a written survey only. Participant interview responses received descriptive analysis to identify characteristics of the women founders.

Summary of the Results

The AA woman founder of a charter or private secondary school was born between 1941 and 1960 in the southern part of the United States, making her part of the baby boomer generation, but also first generation southerner who had gone to the west. This distinction carries with it some allegiances. Her father was born in a southern state, as was her mother. The founder is highly educated with a master's degree in education. She went to a public high school. She is the middle child of a large family. Her title is Chief Executive Officer, and she has headed the organization for 15 years.

The AA woman school founder believes her identity affects her career choices and opportunities for career advancement. As well, she thinks her woman gender has an impact on her career choices and opportunities for career advancement to the same degree.

She decided to found the school during college or university life, influenced to start the school because of strong feelings that children in her immediate environment were not being adequately educated, where she was a teacher. Her work as a teacher best prepared her to be founder of the school.

This leader is either married or divorced. As a married founder, she has been so for a long period, more than 10 years. If she is divorced, it is for personal reasons. She has between one and five children and most of these children are now adults. The non-adult children attend public charter schools or private schools.

The AA woman founder celebrates Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and Kwanzaa holidays. She serves on a professional Board of Directors. She does not identify herself as a leader but accepts that others see her as a leader in the community.

This woman is has a strong religious commitment. As a Christian, she is an active member of a faith-based community. She attends church more than once a week and credits her success to divination. The Christian, religious influence began at an early age; she attended church frequently as a child. She is ethically committed to operating in an open and above board manner, transparent, in a way, which provides optimal education to the children. Her profile is consistent with other executives who, as a group value most highly self-respect, family security, freedom, a sense of accomplishment and happiness, values important to operating a sustainable organization (as described in Chapter 2 under the section heading *Ethics in Leadership*).

This founder has received mentoring in business operations and finance. She provides mentoring by serving on board of directors and is willing to share her leadership story to others when asked, consistent with the Black helping tradition expressed by Plummer (2002). She believes that positions of influence are not open to AA women. This and other ideas profiled are as described by (Boyd, 2000) on the disadvantage theory of Black business enterprise, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation under the section heading *Sources of entrepreneurship*. She believes that family is of greater importance than career and is torn over the value of a formal AA education for children.

Her greatest concern with starting the school was the interest of others, student success, facility, teacher survival. Her final decision was usually determined when she was "directed" to do so by a family member or the school she was teaching at closed, out of necessity so well delineated by Boyd (2000). She thinks to demonstrate acceptance and love, the identification of systems flaws and repair, and that others follow are significant leader qualities. She enjoys the creativity and implementation of her vision

because of entrepreneurship. She exhibits the leadership attributes of entrepreneurs described in Chapter 2 under the heading *Entrepreneurship as a Leadership Style*.

This is a transformational leader, demonstrating qualities that motivate respect and pride from association with her. She communicates values, purpose, and importance of the organization. She examines new perspectives for solving problems and completing tasks as well as focuses on development and mentoring of followers and attends to their individual needs (as a trait described for transformational leadership in Table 1).

This woman founded a private high school to serve a well-rounded mix of students from all educational backgrounds. The school is majority AA, is located in the greater Los Angeles area, and the school size is less than 100 students.

Conclusions

Belief in God and incorporation of that belief into their everyday practice sustains and guides the founder, more profoundly, than the influence of education and other business practices in sustaining the schools. The founder leads quietly, putting others first and this is an effective leadership strategy, which engages her followers.

The founder of a secondary charter or private high school is a conservative woman founder with traditional family values. She believes having a family is more important than having a career. She has a high ethical platform, described in the literature as critical to sustaining effective organizations.

Recommendations for Further Study

An understanding of the profile of AA woman founder may be furthered through creation of a professional organization for AA women founders of secondary charter and private schools. Perhaps it could be initiated with a tea. As described in the study, these

are solitary women and this phenomenon may be magnified in this group because Los Angeles is such a large city and its make up precludes associations with those outside the immediate working area unless there is a specific purpose.

A comparative study of women leaders of different ethnic and religious backgrounds would augment the body or research. A cursory review of the research by Yael Hellman and comparison with the research completed here leaves the question of whether there are cultural and ethnic variances in leadership that could be explored. Such exploration would further deepen the knowledge on how women lead.

An increased understanding of the subject might be acquired through an exploration of the school's organizational structures, behavior and student performance of the schools these women founded. There continues to be minimal information in the academic literature on the organization structures and operating capacities of private and charter high schools lead by AA women. Such information as high school graduation rates, college entrance, drop out, teacher salaries, facilities functioning, enrichment activities, supplies and equipment, specifics on the curriculum, technology integration and other issues would lend to the greater understanding of the effectiveness of the schools. Women founders of other types of educational organizations or educational institutions could be studied as well.[1]

A short novel could be written to memorialize these leaders' work. The book could be integrated into the high school's English, history, or social studies curriculum. A copy of the book might be provided for student reading the school's library.

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[1] Appendix H: Resource Information includes technical terms to interpret the exact meanings that differentiate an *educational organization* from an *educational institution.*

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APPENDIX A

Written Survey Instrument

Participant #:_____   Date: _____

Directions: Please check all categories that you think are an appropriate response to each

question. There may be more than one correct response.

1. Founder's ethnicity

    ___a. AA

    ___b. Other (Please state) _____

2. In what year were you born: ____

3. Birthplace: _____City _____State

4. Please indicate the highest degree of education attained as of this date.

<u>Highest Degree Earned</u>	<u>Field of Study</u>
a. ___Bachelor's	_____
b. ____Master's	_____
c. ____Ph. D.	_____
d. ____Ed. D.	
e. _____Professional Degree (other) (Please specify _____)	
f. ___Other degree (please specify _____)	

5. How would you categorize the high school you attended?

    ___ a. public

    ___ b. private

6. Marital status:

__a. single, never married

__b. married

___c. divorced

___d. widow.

7. If married, how long have you been married to your current spouse?

    ___a. less than 1 year

    ___b. between 1-5 years

    ___c. between 6-10 years

    ___d. greater than 10 years

8. If divorced, to what reason do you attribute to the divorce?

    ___a. job or business related stress

    ___b. personal differences

    ___c. physical separation, job assignment, travel.

    ___d. other. Please explain. _____

9. Do you have children?

    ___a. yes

    ___b. no.

___c. If yes, ___# of children. (If you do not have children, please proceed to question

#___)

10. If you have school aged children, what type of school are they enrolled in?

    ___a. elementary public school

    ___b. elementary religious school

    ___c. elementary private school

___d. middle public school

___e. middle religious school

___f. middle private school

___g. private high school

___h. religious high school

___i. Public high school

___j. other. Please explain. _____

11. Which of the following AA holidays do you currently celebrate in your home?

___a. Kwanzaa

___b. Martin Luther King's birthday

___c. Juneteenth

___d. none

12. Are you an active member of a faith-based community?

___a. yes

___b. no

13. Do you consider yourself?

___a. Christian

___b. Muslim

___c. Jewish

___d. Buddhist

___e. other

14. How frequently do you go to church/temple/synagogue/reading room, other place of

worship. ?

    ___a. more than weekly

    ___b. monthly

    ___c. 5-6 times per year.

15. Were you the

    ___a. first born or only child

    ___b. a middle child

    ___c. youngest of two or more children

16. Indicate the state or foreign country in which your parents were born:

    Father_____

    Mother_____

17. How many siblings are in your family, including yourself? _____

18. Outside of work, which of the following activities do you participate in?

    ___a. professional organizations

    ___b. community or voluntary organizations

    ___c. feminist groups

    ___d. sorority life

    ___e. other social or business club

    ___f. health club

    ___g. church affiliated

19. Do you feel that your AA identity had any effect on the career, which you chose?

    ___a. yes

    ___b. no

20. Do you feel that being a woman had any effect on the career, which you chose?

    ___a. yes

    ___b. no

21. Do you feel that your AA identity affected your career advancement?

    ___a. yes

    ___b. no

22. Do you feel that being a woman had any effect on your career advancement?

    ___a. yes

    ___b. no

23. At what stage in your life did you decide to pursue the founding of a school?

    a. before high school

    b. during high school

    c. during undergraduate school

    d. during graduate school

    e. other (specify)_____

24. Who most influenced your initial decision to found a school?

    a. your mother

    b. your father

    c. your spouse

    d. other relative (specify)_____

e. a friend

f. other person (specify)_____

g. some event (specify) _____

25. Founder's current title within the organization

___a. Chief Executive Officer

___b. Executive Director

___c. Administrator

___d. Director

___e. Other (Please state) _____

26. No. of years with this organization: _____

27. Please classify the high school.

a. private school

b. independent charter school

c. dependent charter school

e. other (please specify)_____

28. In which of the following areas have your received mentorship?

___ a. business operations knowledge   ___ d. ethical guidance

___ b. motivation   ___ e. finance

___ c. none of the above   ___f. teaching

29. Do you currently serve on any corporate, educational, governmental or community

service boards? ___ yes ___ no. If you do, please check all that apply.

Organization	# of hours of service per month
a. Corporate board (for profit)	_____
b. Educational board	_____
c. Governmental board/commission	_____
d. Community/human services board (nonprofit)	_____

30. Would you be interested in sharing your story with others?

___a. yes

___b. no.

31. Do you share your leadership story now?

___a. yes, If so how is this done? _____

___b. no.

32. In general, do you agree, disagree or are you undecided about the following:

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
a. . Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to AA women.	☐	☐	☐
b. For an AA woman, family is more important than career.	☐	☐	☐
c. Every AA child should have a formal AA education.	☐	☐	☐
d. Negative feelings towards AAs is at an all-time low in America.	☐	☐	☐

33. The ethnic demographics of the students attending the school?

    _____ % Latino – Hispanic

    _____ % AA

    _____ % Caucasian or White

    _____ % Asian

    ___% other (what is that other if known) _____

34. Educationally, who does the school aim to serve?

___a. High achieving students

___b. Students requiring special education

___c. Students with criminal backgrounds

___d. Well rounded mix of students from all educational backgrounds

___e. Other, please describe. _____

35. What is the zip code of the school?_____

36. How many students attend the school?

    ___a. 0-50

    ___b. 51-100

    ___c. 101-150

    ___d. 151-200

    ___e. 201-300

    ___f. 301-400

    ___g. >400

37. The high school serves students in the following grades:

___a. 9th

___b. 10th

___c. 11th

___d. 12th

APPENDIX B

Interview Instrument

Date of interview: _____

Participant case number: _____

1. What influenced your decision to start a school?

2. What were your three main concerns when you started the school and how did

    you overcome those concerns?

3. Describe the day you decided to begin this school endeavor.

4. What were your career path considerations?

5. What previous job position best prepared you for your current business?

6. What single most important factor do you attribute to your success?

7. Please share your thoughts on being a leader of the school.

8. Describe your role within the AA community.

9. Please describe any religious influences upon you as a 1) child and 2) now as an

    adult.

10. What were your religious considerations in starting and operating the school?

11. Describe your ethical responsibilities in leading the school.

12. Please describe any mentoring you have received.

13. Please describe any mentoring opportunities you provide(d).

14. What would you say is the most important thing people should know about you

    as an AA woman school founder?

15. What are your thoughts about being an entrepreneur?

APPENDIX C

Cover Letter to Panel of Experts

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education at Pepperdine University, I am undertaking a descriptive study of AA women founders of charter and private schools. The purpose of the study is to profile leadership of AA women founders of private and charter schools.

 This study will consist of a select exploration of the founders'; background, leadership style, career, religious and ethical influences, entrepreneurship, community involvement and their mentoring and helping traditions experiences. As well the study will provide a demographic characterization of the schools the women founded.

You are invited to be on the panel of experts for the validity of the study. Your contribution will be significant because of your expertise in the field of education.

Accordingly, please take time from your schedule to review the attached research questions, written survey questions and interview questions. Please mark items you find vague or difficult to understand with suggestions for improvements. In addition indicate whether or not the research question will be answered by the use of the specific written survey instrument items and interview items assigned to it. Please return your comments by email to: ---------------------------------Your return of the questionnaire by May 22, 2006 is appreciated. Thank you in advance for your generosity and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wilson

APPENDIX D

Telephone Script for Calls to Potential Participants

My name is Sharon Wilson. I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, West Los Angeles CA, and am conducting a research project as a part of the degree requirements for a Doctorate in Education. The title of the research study is *An Untold Story: AA Women Founders of Private and Charter Schools.* The purpose of the study is to provide a leadership profile of selected AA women founders of private and charter high schools. It is hoped this study will provide information on the founders' background, leadership style, career, religious and ethical influences, entrepreneurship, community involvement and their mentoring and helping traditions experiences. As well the study will provide information about the schools the women founded. I would like for you to volunteer to participate in the study, which will require you to complete a survey and participate in an interview with me. The written survey will take 15 minutes, and the interview will take 30 minutes to complete. I would like to tape record the interview. In addition, I would like to interview you at a location convenient to you; the interview should take about one hour. If you agree to participate I will send you a consent form to sign and return to me.

APPENDIX E

Cover Letter for Survey Participants

My name is Sharon Wilson; I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University under the supervision of Dr.John McManus in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am conducting this dissertation research in partial fulfillment of the doctoral requirements of Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology. The purpose of the study is to profile leadership of AA women founders of private and charter schools. You are being requested to participate in this research study because you are an AA woman founder of a private or charter high school in the Southern California area, and you have sustained your school for 5 years or greater.

This study will consist of a select exploration of the founders'; background, leadership style, career, religious, and ethical influences, entrepreneurship, community involvement and their mentoring and helping traditions experiences. As well the study will provide a demographic characterization of the schools the women founded.

To participate in the study you are being asked to complete a paper and pencil survey, and participate in an audio taped interview with the researcher. The tape will be used for research purposes only. The potential risk to you as a study participant is mild discomfort in answering personal questions as well as disclosure of confidential information through accumulation of information from the study questionnaire and personal interview tape recordings and notes. In the event you do experience discomfort a break will be provided. Your responses, both written and tape recorded will be kept confidential, the researcher has linked the study participant name with a code number, and this information will be kept in a locked confidential file cabinet accessible to the

investigator for 5 years after which the identifying information will be destroyed. No information gathered from your study participation will be released to others without my permission, unless law requires such a disclosure. If the findings of the study are published or presented to a professional audience, no personally identifying information will be released.

The potential benefit to society in general is in provision of information on AA women founders of secondary private and charter high schools. There is no direct benefit to participants in this study. You have the right to refuse to participate in or to withdraw from the study at any time. As a study subject you do not have to answer every question. Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no compensation, financial or otherwise for participating in this study.

For further information on this research project procedure, contact Sharon Wilson at 460 E. address, phone. You may ask further questions by contacting Dr.John McManus at Pepperdine University, GSEP, 310-XXX-XXXX. If you have further questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact Stephanie Woo, PhD, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University, (310) XXX-XXXX.

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Statement for Survey Participants

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Education at Pepperdine University, I am undertaking a descriptive study of AA women founders of charter and private schools. The purpose of the study is to profile leadership of AA women founders of private and charter schools.

This study will consist of a select exploration of the founders'; background, leadership style, career, religious and ethical influences, entrepreneurship, community involvement and their mentoring and helping traditions experiences. As well the study will provide a demographic characterization of the schools the women founded.

You have been selected to participate in this study as you were identified, through snowball sampling, as an AA woman school founder. Snowball sampling is a strategy used by investigators to identify research study participants when there is no existing database on contact information for the group under study. Through this process participants are recruited by initially asking an expert in the field for contact information of a potential participant who meets the research criteria. In this case the name and school name of AA women leaders, founders of a private or charter high school sustained for greater than 5 years was requested. To complete the snowball sampling process the investigator proceeds to confirm the contacted person meets the criteria, and then asks the contact (or those in their environment) the same question regarding additional available participants. The investigator, contacts each successively referred person, in an effort to accumulate a list of participants.

The information you provide will contribute greatly to the body of knowledge on AA women school founders, of which there is little information. The study is completely voluntary. The written survey will take 15 minutes to complete. In addition, you will be requested to allow the researcher to interview you at your site in order to complete the study. The interview will take 30 minutes to complete. Your confidentiality is assured in the study.

A return envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Please return surveys by mail to Sharon Wilson at ------------------, your response by May 22, 2006 is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wilson

APPENDIX G

Signed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Please review this statement carefully: *I understand to my satisfaction the information in the consent form regarding my participation in the research project. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.*

_____

Participant Signature

_____

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

_____

Principal Investigator

_____

Date

_____

APPENDIX H

Resource Information

Educational organization. (Internal Revenue Service definition). The term

educational relates to the instruction or training of individuals for the purpose of

improving or developing their capabilities, or the instruction of the public on subjects

useful to individuals and beneficial to the community.

Educational institution. Advocacy of a particular position or viewpoint may be

educational if there is a sufficiently full and fair exposition of pertinent facts to permit an

individual or the public to form an independent opinion or conclusion. The mere

presentation of unsupported opinion is not educational. The method used by an

organization to develop and present its views is a factor in determining if an organization

qualifies as educational within the meaning of section 501(c)(3).

The following factors may indicate that the method is not educational:

1. The presentation of viewpoints unsupported by facts is a significant part of

   the organization's communications.

2. The facts that purport to support the viewpoint are distorted.

3. The organization's presentations make substantial use of inflammatory

   and disparaging terms and express conclusions more on the basis of

   emotion than of objective evaluations.

4. The approach used is not aimed at developing an understanding on the

   part of the audience because it does not consider their background or

   training.

Exceptional circumstances, however, may exist where an organization's advocacy may be educational even if one or more of the factors listed above are present. "The following types of organizations may qualify as educational:

1. An organization, such as a primary or secondary school, a college, or a professional or trade school that has a regularly scheduled curriculum, a regular faculty, and a regularly enrolled student body in attendance at a place where the educational activities are regularly carried on.

2. An organization whose activities consist of conducting public discussion groups, forums, panels, lectures, or other similar programs

3. An organization that presents a course of instruction by correspondence or through the use of television or radio

4. A museum, zoo, planetarium, symphony orchestra, or other similar organization

5. A nonprofit children's day-care center.