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Creating the organizational conditions that enable and support a shared approach to leading school change

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CREATING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE AND

SUPPORT A SHARED APPROACH TO LEADING SCHOOL CHANGE

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the overarching challenge education practitioners face—knowing

how to lead significant change collectively in their schools. This qualitative research

study explored the definition of shared leadership and examined a framework of seven

behavioral, social, and cultural organizational conditions hypothesized to support a

shared approach to leading change in schools: (a) communication and widespread

participation; (b) clarity of roles and responsibilities; (c) feedback, recognition, and

celebration; (d) mutually supportive and trusting relationships; (e) collaborative learning

and inquiry; (f) collective mindsets conducive to change; and (g) attention to shared

purpose and focus for the whole school. Interviews were conducted with 15 individuals

and focus groups with 34 school leadership team members from four elementary schools

in Missouri. The participating schools, which were located in both rural and

urban/suburban locations, were purposively selected based on demonstration of increased

shared leadership capacity and improvement in student achievement on state assessments

over the previous two years.

As the framework proved to be a useful tool to help leadership teams to make

sense of their lived experiences, the researcher recommends that education practitioners

and those who work with them consider using the framework when collectively leading

change in schools. Findings from this study indicated that lived experiences with shared

leadership expanded school leadership teams' views of and commitment to shared

leadership. Participants' experiences focused less on influencing one another and more on

taking collective responsibility to fuel system momentum and ongoing commitment for

change. Taken as a whole, the descriptions of lived experiences with shared leadership offer a picture of a critical mass of individuals who persistently attended to forward movement and momentum for change until there was a rising tide and eventual "tipping point" for mass movement in the system. In light of the study findings, the researcher offers a definition of shared leadership: taking collective action, responsibility, and accountability for achieving common goals while cultivating the conditions needed to promote change. In other words, shared leadership might be considered a process of creating the demand for, commitment to, pursuit of, and conditions for collective change.

Chapter 1: Problem and Purpose

The purpose of a leadership team is really to open your vision, or widen

your perspective of the school. What is your vision, and how are you going

to get there? And it's not about problems, it's about solutions.

(Instructional Specialist)

Today's K-12 educators—especially those working in struggling schools—often

feel frustrated by what seem to be overpowering constraints and stifling demands for

accountability coupled with historically being left out of conversations and decisions

about change. As a result, they begin to feel that their actions do not have much influence

on improving their schools and the educational outcomes of their students. This study is

about individuals—such as the teacher quoted above—and groups who *do* believe they

have influence; people who choose to work together to make positive changes in their

schools and, as a result, feel hopeful and energized. They think and act in ways that

create better outcomes for themselves and their schools. This study is about discovering

their stories and, in the process, illustrating what can be possible for others.

Statement of the Problem

This study examines the overarching challenge education practitioners face—

knowing how to lead significant change collectively in their schools. This section

provides context for the problem by arguing that: (a) improving the K-12 education

system is a priority; (b) improving the K-12 education system requires effective

leadership; (c) recent research calls for a shared approach to leading school change; and

(d) research on sharing leadership for change is sparse and provides little guidance about

the behavioral, social, and cultural factors associated with sharing leadership in schools that have been successful in making significant changes. This study contributes to filling the gap in the research by examining the experience of elementary school principals and teachers in multiple sites who have learned to share leadership while transforming their schools. Specifically, it examines common conditions in the school environment that support a shared approach to leading school change by testing a framework of seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors: (a) communication and widespread participation; (b) clarity of roles and responsibilities; (c) feedback, recognition, and celebration; (d) mutually supportive and trusting relationships; (e) collaborative learning and inquiry; (f) collective mindsets conducive to school change; and (g) attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school.

Improving education systems is a priority. Improving K-12 education systems continues to be an international and national priority. The Education for All initiative, led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has identified six rigorous education goals that 164 global entities committed to achieve by 2015 (UNESCO, 2000). In the United States, about 10% of U.S. schools continue to be identified as "in need of improvement" each year. This issue, coupled with a pervasive and persistent achievement gap among student subgroups and high drop-out levels challenging school communities throughout the nation, has led the current federal administration to create an unprecedented call to action to turn around the nation's struggling schools. The problem of widespread, underperforming schools is not new; it has prompted several school reform movements over the past few decades, from

restructuring in the 1980s to state standards, assessment, and curriculum reform in the 1990s. The school effectiveness research of the 1980s prompted the education community to address key factors contributing to school success, such as leadership, instructional focus, climate conducive to learning, high expectations for all students, and consistent measurement of student achievement (Townsend, 2007). This movement also emphasized a focus on results as the measure of effectiveness for schools, a belief that all children can learn, and an awareness that school effectiveness is not dependent on family or community factors such as socio-economic status. The 1990s brought increased attention to the context in which schools operate; however, it was not until very recently that educational reform efforts began to take into consideration more social and contextual factors in addition to structural and procedural (Adams & Forsyth, 2009). Though much research has been conducted on school effectiveness and school improvement, there is still not consensus on what it takes to transform schools. Over the past several decades, researchers have helped the field understand a lot about *what* to do to improve outcomes for students; it is a matter of picking a few of those things that are appropriate for a school's needs and context and maintaining a consistent focus on implementing them with follow-through and accountability. But the socio-cultural components of change are complex, and involve the perceptions and behaviors of many individuals. The current research provides little guidance for considering these factors. Therefore, schools must figure out how to collectively engage the humans in the system in change and build momentum for significant and continuous change.

Improving the K-12 education system requires effective leadership.

Leadership is consistently identified as a central component in education reform

literature. In fact, many studies have shown that leadership positively impacts student

achievement (Hallinger, 1996; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010;

Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Robinson, 2008). For example, in one meta-analysis

researchers reviewed studies involving approximately 2,800 schools, 14,000 teachers,

and 1.4 million students to identify what leadership behaviors impact student

achievement. The study identified 21 leadership responsibilities (e.g., monitor/evaluate)

significantly correlated with higher levels of student achievement (Waters, Marzano, &

McNulty, 2003). Much of the research to date has focused on the role of the principal or

other positional leaders. However, several of these researchers have argued that

principals alone cannot fulfill all of the leadership responsibilities necessary to transform

schools and suggest a more shared, collaborative approach to leading school change

(Lambert, 2003; Leithwood, et al., 2007; Louis, et al., 2010; MacBeath, 2005; Marzano,

et al., 2005; Spillane, 2006).

  Recent research calls for a shared approach to leading school change. Since

the 1990s the literature has shown an increased attention to the idea of shifting school

leadership from a more traditional, hierarchical approach to one that involves multiple

stakeholders, including principals and teachers working together, to influence change

(Birky, 2006; Chrispeels, 2004; Gronn, 2000, 2002; Hallinger, 2003; Harris, 2004, 2008;

Lambert, 2003; Leithwood, et al., 2007; Louis, et al., 2010; MacBeath, 2005; Spillane,

2006). Harris (2008), for example, has argued that developing broad-based leadership

capacity in schools is "both urgent and necessary for school transformation" (p. 4).

Recent studies have shed light on why traditional, hierarchical leadership may not be

enough to transform today's struggling schools and indicate that a collaborative, shared

approach to leadership is a promising reform strategy for several reasons: (a) high rates of

principal turnover; (b) increased accountability demands; and (c) collective ownership

needed for sustainable change (Barth, 2001; Birky, 2006; Cohen, 2002; Crowther, 2009;

Danielson, 2007; Dozier, 2007; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003; Institute for

Educational Leadership, 2001; Kaser & Halbert, 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009;

Louis, 2010; Louis, et al., 2010; York-Barr, 2004).

However, despite the wave of support for shared or distributed leadership, a

recent survey of teachers commissioned by the Wallace Foundation found that teachers

have detected few indicators of shifts from more traditional, hierarchical to non-

traditional, shared approaches to leadership in schools (Louis, et al., 2010). The

entrenchment of hierarchical models of leadership is likely due, at least in part, to a lack

of guidance from the research and literature about how to share leadership.

Research on sharing leadership for change is sparse. Despite recent

widespread attention to and support for a shared leadership approach, the concept is

poorly understood among researchers and practitioners, and many schools struggle to

implement shared leadership effectively (Chrispeels, 2004; Printy, 2006; Yep &

Chrispeels, 2004). In addition, the research in this area tends to be sparse and fragmented

(Angelle, 2010; Harris, 2004, 2007a; Hulpia, 2009; Timperley, 2005). Spillane and

colleagues have studied patterns of leadership distribution, focusing on what and how

leadership functions are "stretched over" the interaction of various individuals and situations in an organization over time (Spillane, 2006; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Spillane & Orlina, 2005). A small body of research focuses on identifying structures and practices schools use to share leadership. For example, some case studies illustrate how shared leadership is operationalized in individual schools; however, these accounts tend to be highly contextualized and are not necessarily linked to outcomes. They also tend to be accounts from the principal perspective (Birky, 2006; Harris, 2004) or the teacher leader perspective (e.g., Smylie & Denny, 1990) and not from the joint, or organizational, perspective. There are a small number of quantitative studies designed to gauge the impact of sharing leadership on changes in student achievement, and the findings have been mixed. However, several recent, large-scale studies have provided evidence that shared leadership does positively impact student achievement (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Louis, et al., 2010). For example, a six-year study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation found that a collective or shared approach to leadership had a moderate but significant impact on student achievement (Louis, et al., 2010). This study was a long-term, collaborative effort among many education researchers and is one of the most extensive studies to date on the topic of education leadership. Similarly, a longitudinal study involving 198 U.S. primary schools conducted by Hallinger and Heck (2010) found that collaborative leadership had a significant impact on student learning and demonstrated the mutually reinforcing relationship between collaborative leadership, school improvement capacity, and student learning. Although these studies make the critical link to student outcomes and allow for generalizations

about the impact of sharing leadership, few studies provide a good description of what shared leadership looks like in schools that have successfully improved student achievement, from the perspective of both principals and teacher leaders.

Several researchers have indicated a need to learn more about the relationship between the school environment and sharing leadership for systemic change. For example, the study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation (Louis, et al., 2010) investigated the school and district leadership practices that lead to improved educational outcomes and found that collective leadership practices—collaborative leadership involving principals, teachers, and parents—had a modest but significant indirect effect on student achievement. They found that the "influence of collective leadership on students operates through its influence on teacher motivation and work setting" (p. 29). A limitation of this study was that it did not identify the specific work setting conditions associated with motivation and those that moderated collective leadership and student outcomes. Other researchers have suggested studying similar variables that seem to influence schools' ability to effectively share leadership. For example, Birky (2002) suggested additional research be conducted to examine administrator beliefs and actions that motivate or discourage this type of leadership and how school climate or environment affects teacher leadership. Given the traditional viewpoint that all teachers are the same, teachers' fear of standing out, and deeply embedded norms of teacher autonomy and isolation, others have suggested the need to study what schools have done to re-culture themselves to support teachers taking on leadership responsibilities (Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis, 2009; York-Barr, 2004). Crowther (2009) has

argued that supportive organizational environments are necessary to support teacher leadership, but that these environments are uncommon. Harris (2008) has argued that "distributed leadership can only be achieved by deliberately creating and orchestrating the internal conditions in which distributed leadership can function" (p. 26). All of these researchers point to a common gap in the literature; that is, a need to know more about the socio-cultural conditions in the school work setting or environment that influence sharing leadership in schools that have been successful in making significant changes (as measured by gains in student achievement). Therefore this study contributes to filling that gap by examining the experience of elementary school principals and teachers who have learned to share leadership while working to transform their schools. Specifically, it examines the common organizational conditions—behavioral, social, and cultural—they create to enable and support their efforts to collectively lead change.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the behavioral, social, and cultural conditions in the work setting that support elementary school leadership teams and staff to successfully share responsibility for leading change. Specifically, it examines common elements of school leadership teams' perceptions and experiences across multiple elementary school sites who have intentionally focused for at least two to three years on (a) building capacity for and sustaining shared leadership, and (b) implementing change initiatives of increasing scope and magnitude in order to positively impact student achievement. The research study tests a framework of seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors that facilitate a shared approach to leading school change (see Table 1).

The researcher hypothesizes that these factors, which were identified iteratively through the researcher's change practice in schools and a review of the literature (as described in Chapter 2), are the most significant conditions needed to effectively share leadership for school change.

Table 1

Framework of Behavioral, Social, and Cultural Factors that Facilitate a Shared Approach to Leading School Change

Factor	Description
1. Communication and widespread participation	Open, two-way communication encourages widespread participation. Collective participation in decision making leads to shared ownership and commitment.
2. Clarity of roles and responsibilities	To effectively share leadership, it is important that staff members are clear about their work and understand their responsibilities. Reaching clarity involves ongoing negotiation and conceptualization of individual (e.g., teacher leader, principal) and group (e.g., leadership team) roles.
3. Feedback, recognition, and celebration	Embedding feedback, recognition, and celebration into the school culture can increase motivation and provide psychological safety for the risk-taking and experimentation necessary for a shared approach to leading change.
4. Mutually supportive and trusting relationships	Shared efforts to make significant changes require trust among stakeholders, including principals and teachers. Trust facilitates collaboration, shared leadership, a healthy school culture, and school improvement.
5. Collaborative learning and inquiry	Developing a culture of collaborative learning and inquiry—one in which teachers and principals, for example, exchange ideas about school and classroom practices, learn, and problem solve together—facilitates shared leadership. Inquiry discussions are often guided by the examination of various data sources and the use of structured processes.
6. Collective mindsets	Psychological states such as attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, values, and expectations impact behaviors. These mental states

(continued)

Factor	Description
conducive to school change	are not fixed; rather, we make choices that influence our own ways of thinking, which then influence the social ways of thinking and doing that eventually become ingrained in the overall culture of an organization. Schools can develop collective mindsets that are conducive to sharing leadership and school change.
7. Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school	A shared approach to leading change is facilitated when organization members develop a sense of collective ownership, responsibility, and accountability for the school's shared vision, purpose, and goals. Schools with a shared purpose and focus have schoolwide goals and a shared commitment and focus for change while assuming mutual responsibility and a collegial approach to accountability for results.

The school sites for this study were a sub-set of schools that participated in a previous study to evaluate the effects of a two-year school improvement initiative called Success in Sight: A Comprehensive Approach to School Improvement (Dean & Parsley, 2008). In the previous study (hereafter referred to as Success in Sight) the researcher co-developed the school improvement approach and directed the implementation of this intervention, which was a combination of professional development and technical assistance designed to increase school leadership teams' capacity to use data, share leadership, identify and use research-based practices, develop and foster a purposeful community, and use a continuous improvement process to positively impact student achievement (see Appendix A for a summary of the study). This study examines the contextual conditions for one of those capacity areas—shared leadership—in schools that were successful in improving student achievement. This area of investigation was not pursued in the Success in Sight study.

Over the course of two years (2008-2010), school leadership teams (with the assistance of outside consultants and overseen by the researcher of this study) intentionally focused on building their shared leadership capacity while engaging in ongoing, manageable change initiatives. They began by increasing their individual and leadership team capacity to plan and lead change initiatives and, over time, developed schoolwide capacity for sharing leadership for change. Finally, the sub-set of schools chosen for this study was ultimately able to achieve the intended outcome of increasing student achievement. It is important to note, however, that the researcher does not purport that there is a causal link between shared leadership and increased student achievement in the specific schools involved in the Success in Sight study, and student achievement is not measured in this study.

Research Questions

The central research questions and associated sub-questions for this study were:

1. How do experienced school leadership team members conceptualize shared leadership?

    a. How do leadership team members define shared leadership?

    b. What are the various roles principal and teacher leadership team members play while sharing leadership for school change?

    c. What is the relationship between individual and team leadership?

    d. How do leadership team members' lived experiences compare to their pre-conceived expectations of sharing leadership?

2. What are the supportive factors that elementary school leadership team

    members experience in a shared approach to leading change?

    Specifically, how do elementary school leadership team members describe:

    a. Teacher and principal actions (e.g., specific behaviors, events, critical

       incidents) that support a shared approach to leading change?

    b. The nature of relationships (e.g., principal-teacher, teacher-teacher) and

        other social conditions that support a shared approach to leading

        change?

    c. Teacher and principal attitudes and beliefs that support a shared approach

       to leading change?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions provide clarity for terms associated with the study's

purpose.

Leadership. Definitions of leadership vary throughout the literature; however,

almost all definitions reflect leadership as a process of exercising influence. When not

specified, school-level leadership is often assumed to be positional (principal, assistant

principal). However, for the purposes of this study, leadership is simply defined as the

process of exercising influence regardless of role or position in the school.

Shared leadership. Shared leadership, a term often used interchangeably with

distributed, collaborative, parallel or *collective leadership* in the literature, is a

collaborative, mutually reinforcing process of influence among individuals and groups in

an organization who share responsibility and accountability for achieving common goals.

In a school setting, it involves principals, teachers, and others, such as support staff and parents, exercising collective influence, sharing decision making, and assuming collective responsibility and accountability for improving student outcomes (Chrispeels, 2004; Dean & Parsley, 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Watson, 2007).

School leadership team. School leadership teams are typically comprised of school administrators (principals, assistant principals) and teacher representatives and may include other members such as counselors, paraprofessionals, specialists, and parent/community representatives. They oversee planning, implementation, and monitoring of change initiatives for the school. School leadership teams vary in size, but on average consist of 6-8 members. Administrators typically remain constant team members while other members, such as teacher or parent representatives, periodically rotate membership (e.g., every two years). A school leadership team is often used as one structure to support and facilitate a shared approach to leading school change; however, schools with high levels of shared leadership develop schoolwide leadership capacity using a variety of structures and processes. *School leadership team* is a generally accepted term in the literature to describe these teams; however, individual schools often adopt alternative labels, such as school improvement team, for that structure.

School environment/work setting. The school environment or work setting consists of all of the organizational conditions—physical, procedural/behavioral, social, political, and cultural—that influence the functioning of the school. For the purposes of this study, work setting is limited to the factors that are most likely to influence and be influenced by a shared approach to leading change efforts at the school level; therefore,

factors related to the physical environment and external policies are not included.

Behavioral factors are the routine and observable actions school stakeholders take (e.g.,

providing feedback). Social factors are related to the social relationships in the school

(e.g., trusting relationships). In this study, cultural factors are limited to patterns of shared

attitudes, beliefs, values, and assumptions that shape school life (e.g., believing that all

students can learn; holding high expectations for all students).

Purposeful community. A purposeful community is defined as one that identifies

and works collectively toward important outcomes that matter to all, uses all available

assets effectively, shares a collective belief that the community can accomplish its goals,

and operates from a set of agreed-upon processes that guide actions and decisions

(Waters & Cameron, 2007).

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations. This study confines itself to interviewing and conducting focus

groups with principal, teacher, and counselor leadership team members in four Missouri

public elementary schools. Although this study examines organizational conditions that

facilitate sharing leadership, the primary intent is to illuminate the behavioral, social, and

cultural factors that support a shared approach to leading school change, and the study

does not emphasize physical, structural, or policy factors such as building conditions,

resource allocation, scheduling, or recruitment and retention. The researcher

acknowledges that there are many factors outside the school (e.g., union influences,

district mandates) that impact the extent to which schools can develop shared leadership

(Yep & Chrispeels, 2004); however, since education change is ultimately about doing

things differently for students in classrooms and schools, this study focused on school-level factors over which individual schools sites might have the most influence—those conditions school staff create and reinforce daily to support collective engagement in significant change—and that do not require significant resource allocation or reallocation. The researcher also acknowledges that a shared leadership approach may not be appropriate for all schools or all situations. This study is designed to explore the conditions that support a shared approach to leading change once that approach was already taken; that is, the study is not meant to compare situations in an effort to determine when shared leadership is an appropriate approach to take.

This study also originates from a positive organization perspective; that is, the study focuses on supports and successes rather than barriers or roadblocks to change. The intent is to identify the conditions that fuel individual and collective influence and ultimately create momentum for change rather than the factors that serve as barriers. Humans are natural problem solvers, and educators are specifically trained to identify deficits in order to make improvements for students and schools. In other words, the common practice is to focus on what is wrong in education systems; what goes right is often overshadowed in this era of accountability in favor of gap analyses, problem identification, etc. This study intentionally adopts a positive organizational stance. The researcher believed challenges and obstacles would naturally and inevitably emerge during the interviews, and these were recorded. However, the analysis focuses on the factors that are supportive of change. Finally, the researcher acknowledges that a shared approach to leadership typically encompasses more stakeholders than teachers and

principals; however, this study was limited to those roles because they are the closest to impacting student learning and typically constitute the majority of the school leadership team.

Limitations. The purposive sampling procedure and small number of sites examined in this study limits the generalizability of findings. For two years, the schools participating in this study all intentionally focused on and received external assistance designed to build their capacity to use a shared approach to leading school change; that is, the common experience in which each of the schools previously engaged may serve as a limiting factor. In addition, the study is not generalizable to all elementary and secondary schools in all regions of the United States; it is limited by being conducted in one state and at the elementary level (K-8). Finally, the research is limited by the time frame of data collection; that is, it draws conclusions from a point in time rather than a longitudinal data set.

Significance of the Study

The primary audience for this study is education practitioners. A study of the factors that support a shared approach to leading significant school change is important for helping educators and change practitioners better understand, intentionally assess, and address the behavioral, social, and cultural aspects of the work setting that may support a school's collective leadership approach to change. For example, principals often struggle with visualizing less traditional leadership roles and may have fears associated with sharing leadership such as losing power or appearing as if they are not fulfilling their job responsibilities; the results of this study could alleviate some of those concerns. Likewise,

teachers who serve on leadership teams are often unclear about what leading change means for their roles as both teachers and leadership team members. They often express concerns about socio-cultural implications of change efforts and their roles in leading them; this study sheds light on factors that others have found supportive in this situation.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature and Research

The purpose of this study is to understand the organizational conditions—

specifically, the behavioral, social, and cultural factors in the work setting—that have

supported multiple elementary school leadership teams in successfully sharing leadership

for change. To provide conceptual grounding for the study, this chapter provides first

background and context for school reform within the larger field of organization change,

and second a critical review of current research and literature related to (a) shared

leadership, and (b) school environment. It also includes a review of the literature for each

of the seven school-level behavioral, social, and cultural factors the researcher proposes

support a shared approach to leading school change:

1. communication and widespread participation;

2. clarity of roles and responsibilities;

3. feedback, recognition, and celebration;

4. mutually supportive and trusting relationships;

5. collaborative learning and inquiry;

6. collective mindsets conducive to school change; and

7. attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school.

Organization Change Perspective

This study is about leading organization change. Organization change is a planned

process of learning and behaving in new ways by altering a system's

components—mission and vision, goals, strategies, structures, processes, culture,

technology—that drive people's behavior, for the sake of achieving new and better

outcomes for those they serve (Cawsey & Deszca, 2007; Rothwell, Stavros, & Sullivan, 2010). Researchers and theorists have been striving to understand how to facilitate organization change for over a century. Recognizing that changing organizations involves influencing humans to do things differently and, ultimately, improving how people function together (French & Bell, 1999), the field has drawn on knowledge from a wide range of disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, applied behavioral sciences, organizational behavior and psychology, management, leadership, and organization theory (French & Bell, 1999). Changing schools to better meet the educational needs of young people requires not only a change in the core technology of schools—i.e., instructional practice—but all of the subsystems that impact teaching and learning (e.g., school structures and procedures, relationships and ways of working together, leadership, beliefs). As such, the study of educational change is driven by the same disciplines underpinning and theories derived from the field of organization change.

The scientific management approach to structuring, managing, and improving organizations—developed in the early twentieth century by Frederick Taylor (Taylor, 1911)—had a strong influence on the American education system and continues to be evident in schools today. The dominant organization metaphor with this approach is that of a machine, with an emphasis on ideas such as logic, structure, efficiency, discipline, and bureaucracy. School systems are highly bureaucratic, employing for example "hierarchy of authority, division of labor with specialization, and written rules and policies" to help them deal with the "magnitude and complexity of their resources and tasks" (Tschannen-Moran, 2009, p. 218). Large, urban school districts in particular reflect

this type of bureaucratic, machine-like reliance on structure, discipline, and hierarchy. In addition, schools are continually searching for the "one best way" to improve teaching and learning, and value a logical approach to the analysis of data to drive decision making at all levels. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s, researchers studied high-performing schools to extract common characteristics and practices to inform improvement efforts of lower performing schools. They found commonalities and published findings that many schools tried to implement—Edmonds (1979) in his seminal work identified five key correlates or indicators of effective schools (strong leadership, high expectations, clear mission, safe and orderly environment, and opportunity to learn-time on task)—however, many schools struggled to implement the practices and, as a result, were not successful in becoming "effective" schools (DeBlois, 2000). Current federal priorities continue to be geared toward creating effective schools and emphasize practices such as the use of data to evaluate teacher, leader, and school performance. Some researchers posit that overreliance on these structures makes school systems too rigid and may hinder schools from achieving their true goal of arming students with the tools they need to compete in an ever-changing global economy (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). These researchers suggest that in order to achieve the flexibility and dexterity necessary to adapt to the changing conditions in a digital world, schools may need to more fully integrate "professional structures—such as opportunities for collective inquiry, scrutiny, reflection, and decision making" into the school bureaucracy (Tschannen-Moran, 2009, p. 218).

While influences of the more mechanistic or bureaucratic approach to leading and

changing schools continue to be evident today, the education field has also been

influenced by the humanist perspective. Initially fueled in the mid-twentieth century by

leading organization change theorists such as Kurt Lewin, Rensis Likert, Richard

Beckhard, Douglas McGregor, and Chris Argyris, the humanist movement began shifting

attention to the role that individuals and groups play in impacting organizational

outcomes. At its heart, organization change is about influence—influencing people to

behave differently, which ultimately requires them to change their underlying beliefs and

assumptions. Recognizing this, education change scholars have brought increased

attention to this notion that education reform requires *reculturing* and an intentional focus

on the humans in the system implementing change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2007; Geijsel,

2007; Kytle, 2000; York-Barr, 2004).The humanist organization change movement also

provided foundational research for school reform efforts in the last several decades that

have emphasized more participative structures and recommended increased involvement

of teacher leaders in managing schools (Barth, 2001). For example, in the late 1980s and

early 1990s, site-based management models, which shift authority from the central office

to the school level where those closest to students share in the decision-making, became

commonplace. Site-based management produced mixed results, often due to varied

implementation. However, it served as a critical turning point for re-examining the nature

of responsibility and accountability and introducing more democratic and participative

leadership structures in schools (Marks, 2003). During this time, a variety of whole-

school reform models emerged (e.g., Accelerated Schools, Success for All, Coalition of

Essential Schools) that used school leadership teams (teachers, principals, parents) to

guide implementation. Although these models increased involvement of teachers in

decision making, the principal was still considered the primary leader and had the

primary influence over all decisions (Marks, 2003). Additional influences on educational

reform from this time include

- the explicit use of continuous improvement/change processes and cycles of inquiry;
- the use of collaborative structures (such as professional learning communities) as a lever for change;
- use of survey methods for gathering stakeholder perceptions to take stock of school strengths and weaknesses;
- recognition and support for teachers' commitment, creativity, capacity, and willingness to take responsibility for solving problems related to student learning; and
- the importance of effective team functioning and the influence of school culture on change efforts.

In the late twentieth century, the environment was much more turbulent due to financial

uncertainty and increased globalization and competition from East Asian markets; as a

result, the focus in organization change shifted to organizational transformation (i.e.,

radical as opposed to gradual, incremental change) (Demers, 2007). Organization change

practitioners emphasized helping organizations navigate second order change (French &

Bell, 1999), defined as fundamental/discontinuous change that transforms the

organization and leads to new ways of "doing business" that are significantly different

from the old way. Transformation has continued to be a dominant theme in the 21st

Century. According to Anderson and Anderson (2010):

> [t]he most prevalent type of change in organizations today is
>
> *transformation*. Developmental and transitional change can be tightly
>
> managed. Transformation cannot. It requires a broader and deeper
>
> knowledge of the people and process dynamics of change, a knowledge
>
> that stretches beyond change management and project management. It
>
> demands a close and intelligent partnership between the tangible
>
> requirements of change—organizational and technical—and the intangible
>
> human and cultural dynamics of change. Leaders must create the
>
> capabilities, infrastructures, mindsets, and behaviors they require. (p. 3)

The rate of change today is unprecedented and is likely to continue to accelerate;

therefore, the "challenge of the future is to help people learn to ride the waves of change

in real time and as events unfold" (Rothwell, et al., 2010, p. 19). In addition to the rate of

change, some important trends impacting organizations in the 21st Century include

increased globalization and interconnectedness, economic turmoil, continued

technological advances, a shift to a highly competitive knowledge economy, innovation,

and concerns about sustainability (Katz & Miller, 2010; Rothwell, et al., 2010). These

trends have also impacted American school systems.

Pressures related to global competition and a call for increased accountability

from the American public were reflected in the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary

and Secondary Education Act when President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind

(NCLB) Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], 2003) into law with

overwhelming bipartisan support. NCLB was designed around four pillars: (a) stronger

accountability for results, (b) more freedom for states and communities, (c) proven

education methods, and (d) more choices for parents. NCLB intended to close

achievement gaps; make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged,

achieve academic proficiency; and ensure that all students graduate from high school. To

help states achieve these goals, Congress significantly increased federal spending on

education and gave states and school districts greater flexibility to use federal funds.

NCLB also imposed new mandates, including requirements related to testing and

reporting, providing supplemental services in schools that do not make progress, and, for

chronically low-performing schools, making dramatic changes in the way the school is

run.

In March 2010, the Obama Administration proposed that the law be revised to

provide incentives for states to adopt academic standards that prepare students to succeed

in college and the workplace, and create accountability systems that measure student

growth toward meeting the goal that all children graduate from high school and succeed

in college. Setting a new goal—that by 2020 the U.S. will lead the world in college

completion—in *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and*

Secondary Education Act (U.S. Department of Education [ED], 2010) the Obama

administration outlined ED's current and proposed priorities in four areas:

1. improving teacher and principal effectiveness;

2. providing information to families to help them evaluate and improve their

    children's schools, and to educators to help them improve their students'

    learning;

3. implementing college- and career-ready standards and developing improved

    assessments aligned with those standards; and

4. improving student learning and achievement in America's lowest-performing

    schools by providing intensive support and effective interventions. (p. 3)

The fourth priority outlines four reform model options for the lowest performing schools:

(a) turnaround, (b) closure, (c) re-start, or (d) transformation. While one of the options

actually closes a school, the other three require the school to implement dramatic change,

including replacement of the principal, and to demonstrate results in a short time frame.

This dramatic change requires re-culturing of the school and collective responsibility and

accountability (i.e., leadership) to accomplish outcomes in ways that are unprecedented.

Leading this type of change is difficult because it is more abstract and is focused on the

humans in the system as opposed to structures or processes—a new way of thinking and

enacting change for most schools and educators.

Three ideas that have emerged during the late twentieth and early twenty-first

century within the broader field of organization change that are of particular relevance to

the subject of this study—social, behavioral, and cultural conditions in the school

environment that support leading significant change—are discussed below: organization

learning, organization culture, and expanded views of leadership.

Organization learning. Although theorists such as Chris Argyris and Donald Schon had been writing about organizational learning since the 1970s (Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Schon, 1974), this approach to organization change did not become dominant until the 1990s. During the last part of the twentieth century, organizations began to value knowledge more than ever (e.g., terms such as *knowledge management* and *knowledge economy* became popular); as a result, learning and innovation became central themes in the field (Demers, 2007). Key contributors to this area of organization change included individuals such as Chris Argyris, Donald Schon, Richard Beckhard, Edwin Nevis, and Peter Vaill. But it was Peter Senge who popularized the notion of learning organizations (and systems thinking) with *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* (1990).

Several of the leading thinkers mentioned above have taken an integrated look at organizational factors (e.g., culture, leadership) affecting the ability to implement and manage complex change (Argyris, 1976; Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992). For example, Argyris (1976) articulated the synergistic connections among organization change, leadership, and learning:

> Leadership has been defined as effective influence. In order to influence effectively, a leader requires on-line, repetitive learning about his influence. In order to solve ill-structured, complex problems, a leader also requires on-line, repetitive learning about how well substantive issues are being explored. Effective leadership and effective learning are intimately connected. (p. 29)

Argyris and Schon have differentiated between what they call "single loop" and "double loop" learning for individuals and organizations (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Single loop learning involves looking for solutions that fit within existing paradigms (i.e., doing things better without challenging our underlying beliefs and assumptions). Double loop learning, on the other hand, requires a complete shift in governing variables (e.g., goals, strategies, underlying norms and assumptions). Their framework helps us understand that single loop learning often suffices in situations with low levels of complexity, whereas more turbulent situations with high levels of complexity, which many organizations including schools face today, call for double loop learning.

Organization culture. In the early 1980s, there was a renewed interest in the role of culture in organizational performance and change (Beckhard, 1985; Collins, 1998; Deal & Kennedy, 1983a, 1983b; Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1985; Peters & Waterman, 1983; Schein, 1990, 1996; Waterman, Jr., Peters, & Phillips, 1980). Collins (1998) has argued that culture took a more central role in organizations during that time as a result of the human resource movement; that is, organizations recognized that their human capital, with all its untapped talent and creativity, potentially represented a company's key competitive advantage.

Deal and Kennedy (1983b) have defined culture as "a core set of assumptions, understandings, and implicit rules that govern day-to-day behavior in the work place" (p. 501). Schein (1990), another leading expert in organization culture, asserted that within organizations multiple subcultures exist in addition to an overall culture. Schein's (1990) more complex definition of culture appears to have been influenced by a systems

perspective of change and an acknowledgement of the dynamic relationship between organization culture and learning.

> *Culture* can now be defined as (a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b)
> invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to
> cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d)
> that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is
> taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel
> in relation to those problems. (p. 111)

Organization change, by nature, requires a shift from a current reality to some form of new reality, a process that depends not only on changes in the technical structures and processes (e.g., rules, policies, core technology, team structures) but "in the images and values that are to guide action" (Morgan, 2006, p. 145). This process requires both individuals and groups to make sense of or interpret various situations and events and actively construct new cultural realities (e.g., assumptions, beliefs, understandings, language) that are made meaningful through new action, dialogue, and reflection (Fullan, 2007; Gieijsel & Meijers, 2005; Morgan, 2006; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). According to Fullan (2007), an international authority on educational change, "[m]eaning is key, but only if it is shared. And you cannot get shared meaning without purposeful action on many fronts" (p. 19). Some theorists refer to this proactive process of continually creating the organizational reality as "enactment," or the "combination of *attention* and *action* on the part of organizational members" (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985, p. 726). In other words, the process of making meaning is central to the organization.

And since the "organization ultimately resides in the heads of the people involved, effective organizational change always implies cultural change" (Morgan, 2006, p. 145).

Expanded views of leadership. During the last two decades of the twentieth century, the increased turbulence and accelerated rate of change in the environment, coupled with a concern for maintaining competitive advantage, prompted organizational theorists to reconsider the role of leaders. Bass (1985), building on the concept originally introduced in the political context by James MacGregor Burns in 1978, argued that a shift in the type of change organizations were experiencing called for a new style of leadership—*transformational* (as opposed to *transactional*) leadership.

According to Avolio and his colleagues (1991), the transactional leadership style commonly had been considered effective since the post-World War II era and is one in which leaders communicate clear expectations and rewards, and workers are motivated by these rewards. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, "motivates us to do more than we expected to do" (Bass, 1985, p. 31) and rather than rely on contingent reinforcement, "inspires, intellectually stimulates, and is individually considerate" of followers (Bass, 1985, p. 9). It is important to note that proponents of transformational leadership generally did not call for an either-or scenario; rather they suggested augmenting transactional leadership approaches with transformational leadership to develop followers to their full potential (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Bass, 1999). Many saw this more visionary style of leadership as necessary to lead to the more fundamental change reflected in organizations at that time (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai, 1999). The study of transformational leadership paved the way for a variety of new ways

of thinking about leadership, including shared leadership—the focus of this study. The following section provides a review of research and literature related to this topic, especially as it relates to the educational context in which this study is conducted.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership can trace its early roots to the work of early organization theorists in the 1920s-1960s such as Mary Parker Follett, Rensis Likert, Cecil Gibb, and Chester Barnard, who generated foundational ideas such as

- the role of positional leader unleashing the "combined capacities of a group" (Follett, 1941, p. 248),

- participative management (Likert, 1967),

- leadership as a relational phenomenon involving multi-directional influence that can be distributed among different individuals as the situation requires (Gibb, 1954), and

- the influence and foundational nature of the "informal organization" (relationships and interactions among individuals in the organization) on the operations of the formal organization (Barnard, 1968).

However, the concept of shared leadership did not gain momentum until the 1990s. Within the recent organization literature, shared leadership is often used interchangeably with terms such as *distributed*, *collective*, *parallel*, and *collaborative leadership*; therefore, this section draws from all of these perspectives. According to Pearce and Conger (2003), shared leadership is "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of

group or organizational goals or both" (p. 1). In other words, shared leadership depends

on all individuals—leaders and followers—to influence and lead each other. According to

Bligh and her colleagues (2006), shared leadership "involves the ability to engage in

constructive lateral influence, to give and receive feedback, and be at times both an

effective leader and an effective follower" (p. 307). This definition highlights a common,

but not unanimous, perspective in the literature, which is the notion that a shared

approach to leadership blurs the line or even eliminates the distinction between leader

and follower (Angelle, 2010; Woods, Bennett, Harvey, & Wise, 2004). Although not all

theorists agree about the leader-follower distinctions, there is more agreement around the

idea that in a shared leadership situation, individuals often fluidly move between the roles

of leader and follower. Worley and Lawler (2006) have suggested that shared leadership

is advantageous in that it (a) "effectively substitutes for hierarchy" by spreading

knowledge and power throughout the organization, allowing for quick response to

information; (b) "builds a deep cadre of leadership talent"; and (c) enables multiple

leaders at all levels of the organization who are continually detecting important trends to

call for change before senior management does (p. 22).

Much of the literature points to the independent but simultaneous efforts of James

Spillane and Peter Gronn in bringing attention to the concept of shared or distributed

leadership to education research and practice. Spillane and Orlina (2001) have argued

that school leadership is a collective, socio-cultural function and "is best understood as a

distributed practice, *stretched over* the school's social and situational contexts" (p. 23).

Spillane and Diamond (2007) further explained this perspective on distributed leadership

as entailing two aspects. The "leader plus" aspect indicates many individuals lead schools in both formal and informal ways; the "practice" aspect of leading is "a product of the interactions of school *leaders*, *followers*, and their *situation*" (p. 7). Gronn (2002) has described distributed leadership from an additive perspective, suggesting that it means "aggregated leadership behaviour of some, many or all of the members of an organisation or an organisational sub-unit…[and that it is] dispersed rather than concentrated" (p. 655). More recently, education theorists Hallinger and Heck (2010) have suggested that a collaborative approach to leadership "focuses on strategic school-wide actions that are directed towards school improvement and shared among the principal, teachers, administrators and others" and entails "the use of governance structures and organisational processes that empower staff and students, encourage broad participation in decision making, and foster shared accountability for student learning" (p. 97). Firestone and Martinez (2007) have suggested that shared or distributed leadership is "carried out through a series of tasks or activities" that represent "means of influence" (p. 7). Although there is no consensus on the specific tasks, they identified examples that include "developing and maintaining a vision of an effective school or district; developing and managing a culture to support that vision; providing encouragement; procuring and distributing resources; supporting the growth and development of people in the organization; and monitoring instruction, innovation, and the overall climate" (p. 7).

Several researchers (Camburn, 2003; Gronn, 2002; MacBeath, 2005; Spillane et al., 2007; Woods et al., 2004; Youngs, 2009) have investigated how leadership is distributed within schools; that is, whether responsibilities are primarily delegated by

persons with positional authority and shared among formally designated leaders (e.g.,

teacher leads), dispersed widely and informally, or both. In a study of distributed

leadership involving hundreds of elementary schools in 17 U.S. geographical regions that

adopted externally developed comprehensive school reform models, Camburn and

colleagues (2003) found that leadership functions were primarily spread among several

formally designated leadership positions (e.g., leadership team, school reform coach).

However, there is growing consensus in the very recent literature that shared or

distributed leadership results from both designating formal roles and responsibilities and

creating the conditions for more informal leadership to emerge. For example, Youngs

(2009) has argued that distributed leadership can be either an intentional act or viewed as

emergent—"something that already exists across people in a school, either in a latent or

active, resistant or mutually agreed state" (p. 387). Spillane (2006) has found that

leadership spread both formally and informally. MacBeath (2005) has articulated a

taxonomy (six stages or levels) of distributed leadership—formal, pragmatic, strategic,

incremental, opportunistic, cultural—and has argued that each represents a different

process of distribution and that successful schools operate at the level "appropriate for the

task in hand" (p. 356). The taxonomy includes a range of levels from formally designated

to informally emergent. Likewise, Gronn (2002) has articulated a taxonomy of distributed

leadership with three levels ranging from more informal to formal (i.e., from spontaneous

collaboration to intuitive working conditions to institutionalized practice). For this study,

shared leadership is defined as a collaborative, mutually reinforcing process of influence

among individuals and groups in an organization who share responsibility and

accountability for achieving common goals. In school settings, it involves principals, teachers, and others, such as support staff and parents, exercising collective influence, sharing decision making, and assuming collective responsibility and accountability for improving outcomes for students.

Rationale for a shared approach to leadership. The relatively recent focus on shared approaches to leading organization change originates from two different veins of thought in the organization change literature. Some theorists, guided by democratic or participative principles, have argued that shared leadership increases employees' sense of inclusion and ownership, leading to enhanced job satisfaction and engagement. Others have argued that a shared approach to leading change is beneficial for purely pragmatic reasons; that is, involving more individuals in decision-making and other leadership functions increases organizational effectiveness. Within the field of education, recent studies have revealed a blend of democratic principles and pragmatic reasons for why traditional, hierarchical leadership may not be enough to transform today's struggling schools: (a) high rates of principal turnover, (b) increased accountability demands, and (c) collective ownership needed for sustainable change.

High rates of principal turnover. Principal turnover rates across the nation are high; often principals hold their positions in a given school for just three to four years (Danielson, 2007). Turnover is often voluntary; however it is also common practice to transfer or promote principals, especially those in low-performing schools who have been successful leading significant changes (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). In addition, for many low-performing schools replacing the principal is a stipulation for receiving reform-

related funding or can be mandated as a form of federal or state sanction as a result of continued low performance. In systems where principals are the primary source of leadership, changes tend to dissipate when they leave. In a 30-year study of U.S. and Canadian schools involving over 200 teachers and administrators, Hargreaves and Fink (2004) concluded that an effective strategy for sustaining change was to distribute leadership throughout the school so that others could carry on the vision and change after the leader moved on. Since teachers tend to hold their positions in schools much longer than principals, they are in a position to provide leadership for long-term initiatives and nurture a school culture that is conducive to reaching the school community's longer-term vision (Danielson, 2007).

Increased accountability demands. The pressure for schools to demonstrate their effectiveness by helping all students achieve proficiency has intensified over the last decade. Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), instituted in 2001, public schools are held accountable for meeting state-determined student achievement targets annually; if they fail to do so, there are various sanctions and rewards (NCLB, 2003). Achievement on annual assessments is made public each year, and parents and community members often review school ratings to make decisions. This increased focus on results has prompted an emphasis on the role of teachers in leading school change efforts. There is growing recognition that teachers—who are closest to impacting student achievement—should be recognized as a central resource, participate in substantive decision making, and be provided opportunities to develop as leaders (Birky, 2006; Cohen, 2002; Crowther, 2009; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2001; Katzenmeyer

& Moller, 2009; Louis, 2010). This shift in responsibility requires schools to operate differently than the traditional top-down manner. But, as Printy (2006) has described, increasing levels of teacher leadership may not be sufficient.

> Our investigations of shared instructional leadership show that principals alone cannot provide sufficient leadership influence to systematically improve the quality of instruction or the level of student achievement. Nor can teachers, even collectively, supply the required leadership to improve teaching and learning. Best results occur in schools where principals are strong leaders who also facilitate leadership by teachers; that is, principals are active in instructional matters in concert with teachers whom they regard as professionals and full partners. (p. 130)

Collective ownership needed for sustainable change. Sustainable change requires ownership among all school stakeholders (teachers, parents, community members, students), especially given the high rate of principal turnover. School reform efforts over the last several decades have largely failed to address the needs of or involve teachers—who are key to the success or failure of change—causing reform efforts to "proceed *despite*, not because of, the teacher" (Cohen, 2002, p. 532). Engaging teachers in meaningful ways can fuel momentum for change efforts by enhancing teacher motivation, energy, and enthusiasm (Barth, 2001; Birky, 2006; Cohen, 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009) and alleviating a sense of dissatisfaction that can develop when teachers are not engaged or feel that their input into decision making does not matter (Dozier, 2007; Ingersoll, 2003; Kaser & Halbert, 2009). All stakeholders,

including students, parents, and community members, need a voice in decision making

(Louis, et al., 2010). Engaging these stakeholders is also pragmatic; many researchers

have argued that principals alone cannot fulfill all of the leadership responsibilities

required for ongoing school improvement (Angelle, 2010; Barth, 2001; Danielson, 2007;

Marzano, et al., 2005). Many of the challenges schools face today are complex in nature,

and their solutions require shifts in stakeholder knowledge, beliefs, and values. These

cultural shifts—if they are to be sustained—require the involvement of all those who

contribute to the school culture (Duignan & Bezzina, 2006a).

Despite the rising tide of support among educational practitioners and policy

makers for shared or distributed approaches to leading change, some scholars have

suggested proceeding with caution and intentionality. For example, according to Harris

and Spillane (2008),

> distributed leadership is not necessarily a good or bad thing: it depends. It
>
> depends on the context within which leadership is distributed and the
>
> prime aim of the distribution. Flattening the hierarchy or delegation of
>
> leadership does not necessarily equate with distributed leadership, nor
>
> does it automatically improve performance. It is the nature and quality of
>
> *leadership practice* that matters….Moreover it raises the possibility that
>
> leadership has a greater influence on organisational change when
>
> leadership practice is purposefully distributed or orchestrated. (p. 33)

Shared leadership impact. A relatively recent but growing body of research

indicates that developing shared leadership leads to increased positive outcomes for

individuals and teams in organizations. Although some organizational theorists have argued since the early to mid-1900s for the possibility and importance of leadership functions and/or shared influence exercised by individuals and groups throughout the organization, regardless of position (Barnard, 1968; Follett, 1941; Gibb, 1954; Likert, 1967), few empirical studies on shared leadership emerged in the organizational literature until recently (Angelle, 2010; Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007). These recent studies demonstrate positive relationships between shared leadership and team potency/collective efficacy, effort, collaboration and coordination, innovative problem solving, satisfaction, citizenship behavior, and effectiveness/performance (Carson, et al., 2007; Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Within the field of education, much of the shared leadership literature has been limited to descriptive case studies. Recently, however, several large-scale empirical studies have found that shared leadership positively impacts student achievement (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Louis, 2010; Louis, et al., 2010; Pounder, 1995; Silins & Mulford, 2002). For example, in a four-year study conducted in 198 U.S. primary schools randomly selected to participate within one western state, Hallinger and Heck (2010) found that a collaborative approach to leadership positively impacted student learning in reading and math. In this study, the impact of leadership on student learning in reading and math was mediated by the school's capacity for leading improvement. A six-year study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation conducted in nine states with a total of 43 school districts, 180 schools, 8,391 teachers and 471 administrators using surveys, interviews, and observations found that a collective or

shared approach to leadership had a moderate but significant impact on student achievement (Louis, et al., 2010). From the first sub-study, which examined stakeholders' influence on decision making and the impact of collective leadership on teacher beliefs and student achievement, the researchers found that:

- Collective leadership has a stronger influence on student achievement than individual leadership.

- Almost all people associated with high-performing schools have greater influence on school decisions than is the case with people in low-performing schools.

- Higher-performing schools award greater influence to teacher teams, parents, and students, in particular.

- Principals and district leaders have the most influence on decisions in all schools; however, they do not lose influence as others gain influence.

- Schools leaders have an impact on student achievement primarily through their influence on teachers' motivation and working conditions; their influence on teachers' knowledge and skills produces less impact on student achievement. (Louis, et al., 2010, p. 19)

From the second sub-study, which was focused on the effects of principals and teachers sharing leadership, the researchers found that:

- Leadership practices targeted directly at improving instruction have significant effects on teachers' working relationships and, indirectly, on student achievement.

- When principals and teachers share leadership, teachers' working relationships are stronger and student achievement is higher.

- Leadership effects on student achievement occur largely because effective leadership strengthens professional community—a special environment within which teachers work together to improve their practice and improve student learning. Professional community, in turn, is a strong predictor of instructional practices that are strongly associated with student achievement.

- The link between professional community and student achievement may be explained by reference to a school climate that encourages levels of student effort above and beyond the levels encouraged in individual classrooms. (Louis, et al., 2010, p. 37)

The Wallace Foundation study is significant in that it is the largest and most comprehensive longitudinal study of shared leadership in education to date. The study is also significant in that the researchers examined a complex set of variables, including different levels of the system (school, district, state) and variables within the levels to pursue answers to a relatively large set of research questions. For example, at the school level they conducted seven sub-studies. In two sub-studies that inform this literature review, the researchers examined (a) the influence of various stakeholders (e.g., teachers,

principals, students, parents, community members) on school decisions and student

achievement, and (b) the effects of teachers and principals who assumed responsibility

for sharing leadership. The first sub-study assumed that the effects of leadership on

student learning are indirect and mediated by the school-level variables of teacher

motivation, capacity, and work setting. They found that collective leadership influenced

student achievement and that it operated through its influence on two of the three school-

level variables—teacher motivation and work setting. Another important finding from

this sub-study was that leadership is not a zero-sum concept; that is, any stakeholder can

have an increased level of influence without diminishing the influence of others. Finally,

schools that were achieving at high levels allowed more stakeholder influence on

decisions. The second sub-study examined the impact of principal-teacher and teacher-

teacher relationships on classroom practice, and the impact of principal and teacher

leadership practices on student achievement. Again, the researchers found that shared

leadership impacted student achievement, but the impact is indirect and influenced by the

extent of trusting relationships, professional community, and a climate of shared

responsibility in the building (Louis, et al., 2010).

       Relationship between shared leadership and cultural change. Hierarchical,

top-down leadership has been the norm since organizations, including public schools,

were first formed. However, a shared approach to leadership has "been found to be

effective in enhancing change leadership" (Duignan & Bezzina, 2006b, p. 3).

Implementing leadership and change from a shared perspective in most cases requires

deep cultural change that challenges existing norms, beliefs, and assumptions (Geijsel,

2007; Murphy, et al., 2009; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Sleegers, Geijsel, & Van den Berg, 2002). Staff members who are comfortable with top-down systems must adjust to collaborative interaction and become open to the possibility of being influenced by peers. A system that promotes competition is replaced with one that promotes collaboration (James, Mann, & Greasy, 2007). According to Duignan and Bezzina (2006a):

> [G]enuine shared or distributed leadership may require considerable cultural change, especially amongst teachers, in many schools. There will need to be a new value set and vision that is lived on a daily basis. The imperatives of greater openness, trust and collaboration, as well as acceptance of sharing the responsibilities for leadership, to name but a few, require that ways of thinking and doing in these areas will have to change considerably, if not substantially, in many schools. Indeed….Teachers can be very influential with their colleagues by taking ownership of and leading this reculturing process. (p. 12)

There are many examples in the literature that connect improved school outcomes with cultural change. For example, researchers who conducted a longitudinal study of 36 schools in twelve states in which schools were chosen for achieving above the state average despite high levels of student poverty and mobility found that teacher leaders, both formal and informal, demonstrated influence on the evolution of the school culture through their "credibility, expertise, and relationships" (Patterson & Patterson, 2004, p. 75). Similarly, in a cross-sectional survey research study involving 54 randomly selected secondary schools and 588 teachers in Hong Kong, Cheng (1993) examined the

relationship between school effectiveness and organizational culture and found that strong cultures were associated with positive student outcomes. School culture and change are mutually reinforcing, and it is clear that a supportive organizational culture and environment are critical to the success of a shared approach to leading change (Copland, 2003; Crowther, 2009; Harris, 2005, 2008; Louis, et al., 2010; Murphy, et al., 2009; Pearce & Conger, 2003). The remaining sections of this chapter address specific behavioral, social, and cultural conditions in the school environment that support a shared approach to leading school change.

School Environment: Behavioral, Social, and Cultural Conditions that Support a Shared Approach to Leading Change

Recognizing that the effect of school leadership on student outcomes is often mediated by other school-level variables such as teacher capacity and motivation, researchers have recently turned their attention to more closely examining the indirect effects of leadership on student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Louis, et al., 2010). However, these models are not always linear. For example, Hallinger and Heck's (2010) recent findings from a longitudinal study supported their proposed model in which leadership, the school's capacity for school improvement, and student learning mutually influence one another (i.e., growth in one area led to growth in another area over time). Importantly, these researchers also noted that the nature and impact of collaborative leadership is influenced by conditions in the school's socio-cultural environment (e.g., team-based collaboration, open communication, participation in decision making, resource allocation) and suggested that "[e]ffective leadership for school improvement

must be responsive to these contextual characteristics" (p. 106). Crowther (2009) has argued that teacher leadership, a necessary condition for shared leadership, "occurs most readily in supportive organizational environments" but that these environments "are not endemic to many schools" (p. 10).

Carson and colleagues (2007) have also emphasized the importance of school environment in facilitating shared leadership and have proposed that shared leadership is facilitated by an overall team environment that consists of three highly interrelated and mutually reinforcing dimensions: shared purpose, social support, and voice. Shared purpose exists when team members have a common sense of purpose and focus on collective goals. Social support involves team members' efforts to provide emotional and psychological strength to one another (e.g., encouragement, recognition of contributions and accomplishments). Finally, voice constitutes the level of participation and input (e.g., decision making, constructive discussion and debate about alternative approaches to tasks and goals) team members have in a team environment. Similarly, in a longitudinal study of distributed leadership in 16 schools Copland (2003) identified three organizational preconditions for successful distribution and sharing of leadership: (a) "the development of a culture within the school that embodies collaboration, trust, professional learning, and reciprocal accountability" (p. 379); (b) "a need for strong consensus regarding the important problems facing the organization" (p. 379); and (c) "a need for rich expertise with approaches to improving teaching and learning among all those working in the school" (p. 380).

Spillane and colleagues (2001), who have articulated a distributed leadership framework, have argued that leaders' actions are mediated by their environment (e.g., artifacts, tools, structures) (p. 26) and that "sociocultural context is a constitutive element of leadership practice, fundamentally shaping its form" (p. 27). Similarly, Louis and colleagues (2010), have argued that "leaders, to be successful, need to be highly sensitive to the contexts in which they work….such contexts moderate (enhance or mute) the influence of any given set of leadership practices" (p. 17). In a study of six English secondary schools, Arrowsmith (2007) identified several head teacher behaviors that support development of and sustained distributed leadership: "effective communication across the school, structures, advocacy to individuals, occasional encouraging words, staff appointments, systematic defining of required outcomes, developing trust,…shared vision, defining roles, [and] giving support after errors" (p. 24). Likewise, in a cross-case study of 13 elementary school principals' beliefs and aspirations for sharing leadership, Yep and Chrispeels (2004) found five interconnected environmental factors that principals believe assist shared leadership: principal support, a culture supportive of shared leadership, democratic processes, staff involvement and commitment, and leadership capacity of all (p. 173). Leithwood and colleagues (2007) studied factors that promote and inhibit patterns of leadership distribution and found eight positive influences, including

- establishing collaborative structures;
- keeping the numbers of people collaborating on an initiative manageable;

- exercising influence through expert rather than positional power;

- creating an organizational culture which is open, encourages strong

  staff commitment to students, and is free of favoritism and internal

  dissent;

- providing visible support and tone-setting from formal leaders;

- providing full explanations for decisions;

- going out of the way to ensure staff are aware of new directions and

  activities; and

- providing opportunities for staff to acquire the capacities they need to

  participate effectively, along with the autonomy and time to act in

  accord with their professional beliefs and values. (p. 61)

Finally, in a Delphi study involving 16 writers, superintendents, principals, and teachers,

Poff and Parks (2010) identified five essential elements of shared leadership:

collaboration, common focus, shared responsibility, supportive culture, and widespread

communication.

Proposed Framework of Organizational Conditions that Support Shared

Leadership

Given the important role that school environment plays in supporting shared

leadership, this research study focuses on better understanding those conditions in

schools that have intentionally used a shared approach to leading change and have

demonstrated improvement through gains in student achievement. Specifically, it focuses

on the behavioral, social, and cultural conditions in the school environment (as opposed

to physical elements of the school setting—such as textbooks, computers, financial resources, or equipment). This study tests the researcher's framework of factors that support a shared approach to leading school change. These factors, taken together, are proposed to be the necessary conditions for school staff to collectively exercise leadership for the purpose of improving their schools. The following sections provide a brief review of the literature to support the framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors:

1. communication and widespread participation;

2. clarity of roles and responsibilities;

3. feedback, recognition, and celebration;

4. mutually supportive and trusting relationships;

5. collaborative learning and inquiry;

6. collective mindsets conducive to school change; and

7. attention to shared purpose and focus of the whole school.

It is important to note that the framework elements, although described separately, are hypothesized to be interrelated. Two elements—mutually supportive and trusting relationships and clarity of roles and responsibilities—might be considered foundational, necessary pre-conditions for the remaining five elements (Angelle, 2010; Arrowsmith, 2007). All factors are responsibilities and conditions that schools foster to support a shared approach to leading change and, ultimately, positive outcomes for students.

1. Communication and widespread participation. Open, two-way communication encourages widespread participation. Collective participation in decision

making leads to shared ownership and commitment. The rationale for communication and participation stems from two distinct perspectives in the organization change literature—cognitive and motivational. The cognitive perspective is pragmatic in nature; widespread participation allows for more expertise and information to inform decision making, and communication flow throughout the organization increases employees' understanding of decisions and implications for implementation (Miller & Monge, 1986). The motivational, or affective, perspective stems from the human relations movement in the mid-twentieth century (Miller & Monge, 1986; Somech, 2010), which marked a fundamental shift in the philosophy guiding management—from mechanistic to humanistic. According to Bennis (2009), this shift resulted in an expanded view of humans as complex beings with a variety of needs, power based on collaboration rather than coercion, and organizational values that were humanistic and democratic rather than mechanistic and bureaucratic (p. 27). Management theorists during the human relations movement purported that widespread participation led to greater employee satisfaction (Blake & Mouton, 1967; Coch & French, 1948; Likert, 1967; McGregor, 2006). From a motivational perspective, participation in decision making and high levels of communication can impact levels of job satisfaction, morale, commitment, empowerment, ownership, and ultimately productivity. The basic argument from this perspective in the field of education is that by involving teachers more in key decisions related to their work—for example, those related to curriculum, instruction, or resource allocation— they will be more invested in school reform initiatives (Lee, 1996).

Communication. Henze and Arriaza (2006) have emphasized the cultural importance of communication.

> People express their mental models in words, and in the case of social
>
> organizations such as schools, language influences all actions. Educator's
>
> beliefs and values are encoded in their daily communication…[yet] there
>
> is surprising lack of attention to communication in recent efforts to reform
>
> schools. (pp. 161-162)

Increased levels of communication are especially important when schools implement second-order changes, or fundamental and discontinuous change that transforms the organization and leads to new ways of "doing business" that are significantly different from the old way (Waters & Cameron, 2007). It is important to ensure that communication about any complex innovation is clear and ongoing, and leaders should spend a great deal of effort "explaining, clarifying, training, seeking feedback, troubleshooting, modifying, reexplaining, [and] reclarifying," (Evans, 1996, p. 77) even long after it seems necessary. Several researchers have addressed the relationship between communication and shared leadership. For example, several case studies have noted the importance of effective communication processes and structures for facilitating shared decision making, problem solving, and discussion of critical issues (Henze & Arriaza, 2006; Herrity & Morales, 2004; Yep & Chrispeels, 2004). In one cross-case study of three Kentucky elementary schools that examined how principals conceptualized shared leadership and developed teacher leadership, the principals identified communication as "the most important element for sharing leadership with teachers"

(McDonald & Keedy, 2004, p. 227). Teacher leaders verified that assertion. Likewise, in a study of one large, urban/suburban Canadian school district's distributed leadership patterns, Leithwood and colleagues (2007) found that distributed leadership was supported by an open organizational culture. Finally, in a Delphi study involving 16 experts, superintendents, principals, and teachers, researchers identified widespread communication as one of five domains (comprised of characteristics, behaviors, and cultural conditions) that affect shared leadership and explained that "widespread communication ensures a constant flow of communication" so that "[a]ll members understand the goals and expectations for adults and students" (Poff & Parks, 2010, p. 32).

 Widespread participation. In the late twentieth century, the concepts of participative decision making and shared leadership were often used interchangeably in the literature due, in part, to the emphasis on empowerment and site-based management—a cornerstone of which was participative decision making. These early efforts to be inclusive in decision making processes paved the way for contemporary thinking about shared approaches to leadership. However, in recent organization change literature, shared, or distributed, leadership has been conceptualized as a broader concept involving mutual influence, responsibility, and accountability for change. In this study, participation in decision making is highlighted as just one essential element for a shared approach to leading change.

 According to Lambert (2005), broad-based participation "refers to who is at the table, whose voices are heard, and what patterns of participation exist," and participation

patterns (e.g., teams, learning communities, study groups) "form the structure through which the work of the school or organization is done that individuals develop lasting and respectful relationships" (p. 38). When it comes to implementation, "participation is a primary path to commitment: people are much more likely to invest themselves in something they help shape" (Evans, 1996, p. 232). Several qualitative studies of school change and distributed leadership echo this motivational perspective and emphasize the importance of participative decision making in supporting a collective approach to leading change (Angelle, 2010; Angelle & Schmid, 2007; Bedell & Burrello, 2006; Harris, 2002b; Park & Datnow, 2009). For example, in a case study of distributed leadership in a middle school, Angelle (2010) found:

> While teachers perceived that they were allowed to make decisions, most believed that these decisions were not made in isolation, referring to the process for decision making as a group effort. Moreover, teachers believed that their input was not only sought out but also valued by the school leadership. The organizational structure of the school, combined with the leadership philosophy of the principal, gave teachers permission to lead.…This method of operating the school organization instills a confidence in the teachers. In addition, teachers begin to feel ownership in the success or failure of that organization. (p. 11)

Evans (1996) has suggested that principals build optimal participation by providing: clarity about decision-making; informal outreach; opportunities for staff to assume leadership roles; flexibility in expectations around implementation of

improvement plans, allowing for adjustments as needed; leadership in dealing with conflict; and ongoing opportunities to "take the pulse of change" (pp. 246-250).

In summary, key aspects from the literature related to the communication and widespread participation factor include

- continual flow of information to inform decisions and implementation of decisions;

- shared decision making opportunities, processes, and structures;

- collective problem solving and discussion of critical issues; and

- enhanced ownership of and involvement in change-related initiatives.

2. Clarity of roles and responsibilities. Elmore (2000) has argued that a model of distributed leadership must describe "how leaders of various roles and positions would share responsibility in a system of large scale improvement" (p. 19) and that conceptualizing roles in a such a model can be complex because "roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement, not from the formal dictates of the institution" (p. 21). Several case studies on shared leadership have found role clarification and negotiation to be a significant support for sharing leadership (Herrity & Morales, 2004; McDonald & Keedy, 2004; Shiu, Chrispeels, & Doerr, 2004). To share leadership effectively, it is important that staff members are clear about their work and understand their responsibilities. This understanding involves ongoing negotiation and conceptualization of individual (e.g., teacher leader, principals) and group (e.g., leadership team) roles. This clarity is especially important in schools, where shared leadership requires a significant shift from traditional teacher and principal roles.

Schools are traditionally hierarchical in nature, and principals fulfill a variety of responsibilities from general management and resource allocation to ensuring that federal, state, and district mandates are implemented; they typically take a schoolwide perspective (Shiu, et al., 2004). Teachers, on the other hand, traditionally have been isolated from one another and largely responsible for focusing on students within their classrooms.

Despite the widespread practice of and call for distributed forms of leadership, schools often fail to clarify individual and team leadership roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority. And very few principals or teachers have received training in shifting from these traditional roles to more collaborative leadership roles. This lack of clarity can result in conflict among staff members or individuals feeling unrecognized and underutilized (Chrispeels, 2000; Supovitz, 2000). Chrispeels (2004) emphasized this point in an introduction to a series of case studies related to shared leadership: "Principals face considerable tensions and dilemmas as they try to manage and lead their schools. Furthermore, teachers themselves often have little experience with collaboration and shared leadership in a system in which top-down authority and management are the norms" (p. 6). This tension may be due, in part, to the fact that few scholars have studied the relationship between principal and teacher leadership (see, for example, Anderson, 2004), and not nearly enough is known about this type of role negotiation. For the purposes of this study, there are three primary sets of roles to consider: (a) the principal, (b) teacher leaders, and (c) the school leadership team.

Role of the principal. Although developing shared leadership offers promise, as discussed above, it does not eliminate the need for positional leadership. In fact, the role of the vertical leader is critical to the success of shared leadership (Harris, 2008; Manz & Sims, 2001; Pearce, 2004; Pearce & Manz, 2005; Spillane, et al., 2009), and "the paradox is that without stable, consistent leadership in schools distributed leadership will be incredibly vulnerable and ultimately fragile" (Harris, 2007b, p. 322). The primary role of the principal in shared leadership is to be a leader of leaders, which requires a willingness to share power, authority, and decision making (Silins & Mulford, 2002). Organizational theorists suggest several ways a formal leader can support shared leadership. Sims and Manz (1996) have proposed that a formal leader become a "SuperLeader," or an empowering figure who brings out "the effective self-leadership potential of others and leads others to lead themselves" (p. 7). They argued for shifting the focus of leaders from that of hero to "hero-maker" and have suggested the importance of using strategies such as listening more and talking less; asking more questions and giving fewer answers; fostering learning from mistakes; encouraging problem solving by others; encouraging creativity rather than conformity; encouraging collaboration rather than competition; fostering independence and interdependence; leading others to lead themselves; and establishing information systems (Manz & Sims, 2001, pp. 13-14). Pearce and Manz (2005) have emphasized that positional leaders need to visibly model and reinforce shared leadership behaviors in order to foster those practices throughout the organization. Similarly, Jim Collins (2001) has described Level 5 leaders (a type of "superleader") as people who "channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the large goal of

building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest.

Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—*but their ambition is first and foremost for the*

institution, not themselves" (p. 21).

Studies of shared leadership in schools that have addressed role clarification and

negotiation have found that principals use a variety of strategies to support teacher and

shared leadership, including

- listening actively,

- involving staff members in decision making,

- consistently following through on shared decisions,

- providing the right balance of pressure and support,

- being available,

- encouraging experimentation and risk taking,

- rewarding innovation,

- promoting ongoing development of staff,

- framing questions,

- supporting inquiry processes,

- learning with staff,

- modeling and leading by example,

- cheerleading,

- embracing change,

- promoting collaboration,

- developing trust, and

- providing affirmation and encouragement (Arrowsmith, 2007; Bedell &
  Burrello, 2006; Birky, 2006; Burke & Cavalier, 2004; Clift, Johnson,
  Holland, & Veal, 1992; Copland, 2003; Harris, 2002b, 2004).

Importantly, principals also create the conditions and structures to facilitate shared leadership (Arrowsmith, 2007; Bedell & Burrello, 2006; Crawford, 2005; Halverson & Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2006; Harris, 2008; Leithwood, et al., 2007; Murphy, et al., 2009; Printy, 2006) and often serve as the catalyst for both sharing leadership and for change (Copland, 2003). Successfully implementing a shared approach to leadership is dependent, in large part, on principals' beliefs about and willingness to share responsibility and power with others (Angelle, 2010; Bedell & Burrello, 2006; Copland, 2003; Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005); in other words, it requires a match between the principal's philosophy and the approach to leadership taken in the school. Although many principals have found successful strategies for supporting shared leadership, others struggle with sharing power and authority due to accountability demands, a lack of clarity about appropriate boundaries for decision making, or fear of power erosion (Leithwood, et al., 2007; Shiu, et al., 2004). A large-scale study on shared leadership conducted by Louis and colleagues (2010) found that the higher performing schools in the study were the ones in which stakeholders had the most widespread influence and, as a result, they suggested that "principals working to extend influence to others should not be unduly concerned about losing their own influence" (p. 35).

Role of teacher leaders. Despite the growing body of research related to and increasing emphasis on the importance of teacher leadership for improving schools since the mid-1990s, an agreed-upon definition of the concept does not exist (Angelle & Schmid, 2007; Firestone & Martinez, 2007; York-Barr, 2004). Most of the literature is related to teachers acting in formal roles (e.g., department chairs, coaches, district committee members) or as informal leaders (e.g., influence through relationships and expertise) and the impact that teacher leadership has on school outcomes. Some have argued that teacher leaders—whether formal or informal—have primary responsibility for and exert the most influence on areas most closely connected to the classroom, such as curriculum and instruction (Crowther, 2009; Firestone & Martinez, 2007). Others have emphasized the critical role teachers play when encouraging and supporting each other in implementing changes (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Williams, 2009). In a qualitative study examining teacher leadership roles from the perspective of teacher leaders, Angelle (2007) identified five categories of teacher leaders: (a) decision maker, (b) educational role model, (c) positional designee, (d) supra-practitioner, and (e) visionary (p. 771). Yet very few studies have examined the teacher leader's role in a shared leadership environment; that is, while the literature has examined the dynamics of teacher-teacher influence, there is a gap in the research related to the mutual influence and role negotiation between teachers and principals. Mutual influence is a critical element, because teacher leadership is necessary but not sufficient for shared leadership (Printy, 2006).

Role of the school leadership team. The use of school leadership teams is an increasingly common approach to leading school improvement efforts (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008) and is one of the structures in which mutual influence among teachers and principals occurs. Leadership teams are typically comprised of administrators (principal, assistant principal) and a representative cross-section of teachers. Teams might also include others such as instructional coaches, counselors, and parent representatives. Many argue that the principal cannot provide all of the leadership a school needs for a school to be successful (Arrowsmith, 2007; Chrispeels, et al., 2008; Marzano, et al., 2005; Printy, 2006). However, often leadership teams are established to lead school change efforts without members understanding the purpose, roles, or responsibilities of the group (Burke, 2004; Chrispeels, et al., 2008). As Clift and colleagues (1992) have noted, "shared leadership for school-wide initiatives is not a naturally occurring phenomenon, nor is it created simply by forming a leadership team" (pp. 904-905). A small but growing body of literature addresses the role of leadership teams. In a phenomenological study of ten teachers' perspectives from within a leadership team, Barker (1998) identified nine leadership team member actions: (a) leading by example; (b) taking responsibility through initiative and action which are grounded in moral purpose; (c) listening with the intent to understand and respond in meaningful ways; (d) facilitating collaborative learning processes, both formal and informal; (e) consistently working together toward a common vision for "all" students; (f) doing whatever is necessary to help the team accomplish its purpose; (g) taking an equitable role and responsibility in all team activities; (h) striving to live up to the

responsibility which has been entrusted to them by their colleagues; and (i) assuming the

mantle of leadership (pp. 175-176). Many studies emphasize the two-way communication

and decision-making role of the team. For example, researchers who conducted a case

study involving 25 schools in a southern California school district found that many of the

leadership teams described their role as acting as a "go between" to share information

with their grade-level teams and gather input from their peers to inform the next

leadership team meeting (Chrispeels, et al., 2008, p. 739). Angelle (2010) described the

role of one middle school leadership team in gathering information from grade level

teams to make decisions (e.g., curriculum, budget, policy) through consensus, with the

principal acting as an equal member of the team. Others have emphasized the important

role of creating action plans and leading schoolwide change initiatives (Hallvik, 2009;

Park & Datnow, 2009). In a case study designed to explore how a school leadership team

learned how to define their roles in order to share power and authority (leadership), Shiu

(2004) found that over time in meetings, principals and teachers shared group processing

roles, such as facilitator, recorder, and timekeeper, and were able to assume equal roles.

Leadership teams define and differentiate roles in many different ways, but several

researchers (Arrowsmith, 2005, 2007; Crawford, 2005; Thomas, 2009) have emphasized

the importance of clear role definition, which can enhance a sense of stability and

predictability. Yet Clift and colleagues (1992) made an important observation in their

study of five school leadership teams' journey to negotiate those roles: "[P]rogress in role

negotiation is more likely if all parties are willing to make the commitment to tolerate

ambiguity and communicate that tolerance in actions as well as words" (p. 905).

In summary, key aspects from the literature related to the clarity of roles and responsibilities factor include

- ongoing negotiation and conceptualization of new individual and group leadership roles;

- principal willingness to share power, responsibility, and decision making;

- principal as leader of leaders;

- teacher leadership as necessary but insufficient for shared leadership; and

- use of school leadership teams as a structure to support mutual influence among principals and teachers and to lead school change efforts.

3. Feedback, recognition, and celebration. Two early pioneers of the action research and survey feedback approach to organizational diagnosis and change—Kurt Lewin and Rensis Likert—helped the field understand the importance of feedback loops in complex systems change processes. According to open systems theory, feedback is the mechanism for determining whether or not a system change is on track and, if not, what adjustments need to be made (Hanna, 1997). Providing feedback to individuals and teams as they engage in new behaviors associated with shared leadership and change helps promote learning, informs adjustments to future efforts, and enhances a sense of accountability (Printy, 2006).

Embedding feedback, recognition, and celebration into the school culture can increase motivation. Engaging in school change requires adults in the building to be motivated; when they receive recognition (e.g., appreciation, visual and verbal support, gratitude, acknowledgement) and specific feedback on their performance, they are more

likely to be encouraged to continue engaging in new behaviors (Birky, 2006; Evans, 1996). In fact, according to Evans (1996), positive recognition is the "single best low-cost, high-leverage way to improve performance, morale, and the climate for change" (Evans, 1996, p. 254). It is important to note, however, that recognition should be based on effort rather than ability; this encourages people to think in a growth-oriented way and to continue challenging themselves (Dweck, 2006; Evans, 1996).

In two studies of how principals encourage teacher leaders, Birky and colleagues (2006) found that teachers also feel motivated when their principals showed appreciation for their work, "embraced change, [were] comfortable with mandated changes in the district or state, and allowed teachers to experiment and take risks" (p. 95). Providing teachers with a sense of psychological and physical safety for taking risks is important; to "succeed at change, people must be free to fail at it, to explore, experiment, err, and try again without penalty" (Evans, 1996, p.85). When changes are substantial and the intended outcomes high-stakes, it is especially important to provide teachers with feedback. According to Evans (1996):

> When demand rises, support must rise proportionately or else stress will. Without feedback confirming that what they are doing is important and telling them how adequately they are doing it, people have great difficulty developing a sense of efficacy, of genuine accomplishment, of making a meaningful difference. (p. 255)

Several studies highlight the importance of feedback, recognition, and celebration in supporting a shared approach to leading change. In a case study involving interviews

with teachers experienced in leading school change, Frost and Durrant (2004)

emphasized the importance of feedback, recognition, and celebration in recommendations

to principals interested in sharing leadership in their schools:

> Encouragement, praise, and recognition…are as important as active,
>
> practical support from senior managers….Teachers who have put their
>
> energy into the leadership of development work will be encouraged when
>
> they are provided with opportunities to share their insights, articulate their
>
> views, and acquire expert status. (p. 321)

In a study of effective leadership in multiple schools facing challenging circumstances,

Harris (2002b) found that positional leaders engaged in complex change invested in

developing others to lead and used praise as one strategy to bring out the best in staff. In

a recent qualitative case study of distributed leadership in a middle school, Angelle

(2010) found that when distributed leadership was practiced daily, there was a supportive

atmosphere "in which informed risks were taken, then celebrated, if successful, or

dissected, if not successful" (p. 13). Similarly, a study of distributed leadership in

primary schools found celebration of staff achievements to be a critical support for

nurturing teacher leadership and encouraging shared responsibility for school

improvement (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2006). In a longitudinal study of reform efforts in

California schools, Copland (2003) found the use of the inquiry process—including

elements of feedback and recognition—to be an important vehicle for developing

distributed leadership capacity. According to Copland (2003): "In these schools the

provision of support and encouragement takes place beyond formal role-bound rituals

(e.g., typical supervision and evaluation processes); day-to-day work is imbued with a spirit of support and encouragement of progress that is shared broadly within the professional community" (p. 391).

In summary, key aspects from the literature related to the feedback, recognition, and celebration factor include

- the importance of motivating staff to sustain change efforts;

- need for a safe and supportive environment; and

- development of a sense of accomplishment and efficacy as fuel for ongoing effort.

4. Mutually supportive and trusting relationships. Jack Gibb, one of the forefathers of the field of organization development and change, drew initial attention to the critical role of trust in leading organizations toward maximum productivity and health (Gibb, 1978). Levels of trust—often measured between supervisor and supervisee—have been shown to impact employees' attitude and commitment toward change initiatives and, ultimately, an organization's ability to implement and sustain change (Neves, 2006; Sackmann, 2009). Within the field of education, trust has been defined as a multi-faceted construct. Bryk and Schneider (2003), have defined four elements of relational trust—respect, personal regard, competence in core role responsibilities, and personal integrity (p. 42)—while Tschannen-Moran (2001) has articulated five facets of trust: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness (p. 318). The research conducted by Tschannen-Moran and Bryk and Schneider are complementary and form the basis of how trust is conceptualized for this study. Both lines of research emphasize three similar

aspects of trust. As individuals interact with one another, they continually gauge the extent to which (a) colleagues have the capacity to fulfill job requirements (competence) and, in the case of Bryk and Schneider's framework, to go above and beyond the call of duty as needed (personal regard); (b) individuals keep their word, act with integrity and consistency, and follow through (honesty, personal integrity, reliability); and (c) others engage in open and respectful dialogue that allows for authentic listening, sharing of relevant information, and valuing of one another's perspective (openness, respect). In addition, Tschannen-Moran has identified one unique criterion—benevolence—that is the confidence that others will not do an individual any harm.

Shared efforts to make significant changes require trust among stakeholders, including principals and teachers. Trust facilitates collaboration, shared leadership, a healthy school culture, and school improvement. Given that "[s]chools are networks of sustained relationships" and that "[t]he social exchanges that occur and how participants infuse them with meaning are central to a school's functioning" (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p. xiv), attending to improving the quality of trusting relationships is key when leading school change efforts (Bryk, 2010; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2007; Harris, 2002a). In the absence of trusting relationships, staff members will be less likely to engage in critical dialogue (e.g., about fears that arise related to their own competence as a result of the change) and collaborative work. Several researchers (Angelle, 2010; Arrowsmith, 2007; Copland, 2003; Daly, 2008; Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Louis, 2007; MacBeath, 2005; Woods, et al., 2004; Yep & Chrispeels, 2004) identify mutually trusting relationships as a necessary pre-condition for successfully

distributing leadership for change. In a cross-case study of 15 elementary school principals' beliefs and aspirations for sharing leadership, Yep and Chrispeels (2004) found:

> Many principals identified a culture conducive to sharing leadership as highly important. In such a culture trust was most commonly expressed as the key variable because it assists shared leadership and underpins the nature and structure of relationships in a school. Principals are historically patterned in directing others, checking up on them, or doing the job themselves. Building trust, therefore, was viewed as essential to openness, innovation, and a collaborative culture. (p. 175)

In a survey research study of four California school districts involving 292 teacher and administrator participants, Daly and Chrispeels (2008) found trust to be a significant predictor of leadership. In a qualitative case study of distributed leadership practice in a middle school, Angelle (2010) identified the important role of perceived principal trust in teachers; for example, teachers felt their opinions were heard and valued, that the principal treated them as professionals and believed they would provide quality instruction and opportunities students needed to be successful, and that decisions were made based on what was best for the school as a whole.

Although trust is identified as a fundamental premise for sharing leadership, it is not a sufficient condition on its own to allow shared leadership to prosper. Fostering trusting relationships does, however, play a critical role in supporting all other social, cultural, and behavioral elements impacting a school's ability to share leadership for

change (Angelle, 2010; Bryk, 1999; Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Halverson & Wisconsin

Center for Education Research, 2006; MacBeath, 2005; Mascall, Leithwood, Straus, &

Sacks, 2008; Yep & Chrispeels, 2004). For example, in a longitudinal study of 400

Chicago elementary schools, Bryk and Schneider (2003) found that collective decision

making occurred "more readily in schools with relational trust" and that the absence of

those trusting relationships made resolving even basic problems difficult and

controversial (p. 42). Enhancing the level of trusting relationships directly supports

school improvement efforts related to: risk-taking and innovation, collective problem

solving and decision making, clarity about role obligations that leads to collective action,

and moral imperative for change (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Louis, et al., 2010).

Furthermore, several researchers (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005; Printy, 2006) have

pointed out the reciprocal, mutually reinforcing relationship between trusting

relationships and distributed leadership. That is, trust is not only a necessary pre-

condition for developing shared leadership capacity, but engaging in distributed

leadership practices can provide opportunities to increase levels of trust.

In schools where trust is widespread, fostering trust is an explicit and implicit

expectation of all members of the community—teachers, administrators, and students

(James, Connolly, Dunning, & Elliott, 2006). This is especially true of leaders. According

to Evans (1996), "we admire leaders who are honest, fair, competent, and forward-

looking" (p. 184). Bryk (2010) led a 15-year study in the Chicago public schools to

determine the conditions that distinguished improving elementary schools from those that

failed to improve. He developed, tested, and validated a framework of essential supports

for school improvement and found that:

> Some of the most powerful relationships found in our data are associated
> with relational trust and how it operates as both a lubricant for
> organizational change and a moral resource for sustaining the hard work
> of local school improvement. Absent such trust, schools find it nearly
> impossible to strengthen parent-community ties, build professional
> capacity, and enable a student-centered learning climate. The reverse is
> also true. Low trust is linked to weaker developments across these
> organizational supports. (p. 27)

Within schools, there are "mutual dependencies" among key stakeholders,

including students, teachers, principals, administrators, and parents (Bryk & Schneider,

2002, p. 20). Trust within these relationships is based on the extent to which individuals

perceive others as meeting their role expectations (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). According

to Bryk and Schneider (2003):

> [S]chools build relational trust in day-to-day social exchanges. Through
> their words and actions, school participants show their sense of their
> obligations toward others, and others discern these intentions. Trust grows
> through exchanges in which actions validate these expectations. Even
> simple interactions, if successful, can enhance collective capacities for
> more complex subsequent actions. In this respect, increasing trust and
> deepening organizational change support each other. (p. 43)

In summary, key aspects from the literature related to the mutually supportive and trusting relationships factor include

- trusting relationships as a pre-condition for collaboration, openness and critical dialogue, risk-taking and innovation, collective problem solving, and decision making;

- mutually reinforcing relationship between trust and shared leadership; and

- use of criteria for gauging trusting relationships (respect, competence, personal regard for others, integrity).

5. Collaborative learning and inquiry. Developing a collaborative culture—one in which teachers and principals, for example, exchange ideas about teaching and learning, learn, and problem solve together—facilitates shared leadership and is considered critical for supporting school improvement efforts (Burke & Cavalier, 2004; Coburn, 2005; Copland, 2003; Duignan & Bezzina, 2006a; Geijsel, Sleegers, Stoel, & Kruger, 2009; Gieijsel & Meijers, 2005; Harris, 2002a, 2004; Herrity & Morales, 2004; Silins & Mulford, 2004). Lundberg (1985) has argued that inquiry, a process educators often use when collaborating, underlies cultural change in organizations. When organizational members reflect on their experiences, they examine underlying values and assumptions, which promotes a culture of inquiry (Lundberg, 1985; Morgan & Clonts, 2008) and can lead to innovative practices (Williams, 2009). The central role of cycles of inquiry is consistent with findings of a longitudinal study of 16 schools' reform efforts in the San Francisco Bay Area, in which Copland (2003) found that the "use of an inquiry process is centrally important to building capacity for school improvement, and a vehicle

for developing and distributing leadership" (p. 375). According to Duignan (2006a), creating this culture of learning and sharing together is "in essence, what is meant by sharing leadership in a school community" (p. 5).

If leadership teams intentionally reflect and learn together as they share responsibility for planning, implementing, and managing changes over time (Frost & Durrant, 2004), the process allows teams to experiment and "learn by doing" (Argyris, 1976; Argyris & Schon, 1996; Beckhard, 1969; Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Dewey, 1938; DiBella & Nevis, 1998; Freire, 1998; Fullan, 2010; Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Rogers, 1983; Senge, 1990). Often teams start with manageable changes to ensure early wins and build confidence, credibility, and momentum for further change (Adams, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 1997; Lippitt, Watson, & Westley, 1958; Warrick, 2005). Ongoing, collaborative repetition of these inquiry processes allows for "learning within the context of the cyclical process of dialogue, decision-making, action and evaluation" (Koliba, 2009, p. 105). Lippitt and his colleagues (1958) lent support for this approach as far back as the mid-twentieth century:

> It is generally assumed that a system can make progress by working on
> small and immediate problems first, thus gradually developing a capacity
> for dealing with the larger problems. Once this capacity exists, the system
> is able to face its larger problems, and the pressure to solve them, or to
> change, is clearly present. (p. 76)

As teachers engage in continual collaborative inquiry cycles, they not only sharpen instructional skills needed to address student learning needs but develop essential skills

for leading (e.g., communication, facilitation, dialogue) (Copland, 2003; Leithwood, et al., 2007; Printy, 2008).

Schools create a culture of inquiry and reflection by frequently discussing teacher practices and the resulting student work (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005; James, et al., 2006; Krovetz & Arriaza, 2006). These inquiry discussions are often guided by the examination of various data sources (Park & Datnow, 2009). Schools typically create systems to support these discussions, such as facilitating regularly scheduled grade-level or department meetings; this system, which allows organization members throughout the building to take on leadership roles and participate in decision making, can help promote shared leadership throughout the building (Herrity & Morales, 2004; Park & Datnow, 2009; Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007). These discussions should include "continuing opportunities for teachers to consider, discuss, argue about, and work through changes in their assumptions" (Evans, 1996, p. 65). Engaging in ongoing inquiry and effective collaboration can increase teachers' confidence, effectiveness in the classroom, connection to shared goals, and trust (Birky, 2006; Harris, 2003; Muijs, 2007).

It is important to note, however, that developing a culture of collaborative learning and inquiry can be a challenge for schools. As Hayes and colleagues (2004) have noted:

Paradoxically, while schools are places of institutional learning for young people, they are not necessarily learning organisations in the broad sense of the term as developed by Argyris and Schon (1978) and Senge (1992). They may have a low capacity for problem solving, for learning from their

experiences and their environments, and in changing themselves

accordingly. (p. 523)

In summary, key aspects from the literature related to the collaborative learning

factor include

- a culture of inquiry and reflection,

- systems to support ongoing collaboration, and

- use of manageable change initiatives to learn by doing and develop leadership

    capacity.

6. Collective mindsets conducive to school change. Individual psychological

states such as attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, values, and expectations impact behaviors.

These mental states are not fixed; rather, people make choices that influence their ways

of thinking, which then influence the social ways of thinking and doing that eventually

become ingrained in the overall culture of an organization and result in a collective

mindset. Schools can develop collective mindsets that are conducive to a shared approach

to school change, including:

- the belief that many things are within the school's realm of influence and that

    everyone influences the system every day,

- the attitude of risk-taking and innovation,

- the belief that by working together they can make a difference in student

    achievement (collective efficacy),

- high expectations for the quality of teaching and learning,

- optimism and hopefulness, and

- growth- and improvement-oriented mind frames.

Understanding that individuals' ways of thinking, such as attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, values, and expectations, inform behaviors is critical to understanding the powerful influence individuals and groups have on change efforts. Change comes down to individual choices and is driven by mindsets, or "a predominant way of thinking, a prevailing attitude. The mindset affects actions, shapes agency and underpins practices, which if engaged in recursively affects 'the way we do things round here'—the culture" (James, et al., 2006, p. 32). But people are often unaware of the power of their own influence and that they have a choice in changing their ways of thinking, or mindsets (Seligman, 2006). People often assume these ways of thinking are immutable, an ingrained part of who they are, but mindsets are simply beliefs and attitudes: "They are powerful beliefs, but they're just something in your mind, and you can change your mind" (Dweck, 2006, p. 16). In a cross-case study Welsh researchers James and colleagues (2006) examined common features of eighteen high-performing schools (as measured by national assessments) in disadvantaged settings. James and colleagues found that the *collective* mindset, or "way of working and the general attitude of the staff and headteacher in particular emerged as significant" (p. 98). They described the facets of mindset generally evident in schools as "an empowered and proactive optimism, a highly reflective approach, an 'accept and improve' outlook, a 'both-and' attitude, high levels of motivation, [high expectations for students and staff], a willingness to praise, a caring attitude and pride in the school" (p. 137). To facilitate change, leaders must intentionally cultivate cultures that lead to new ways of thinking—ways that (a) expand conceptions of

influence, (b) promote risk-taking and innovation, (c) enhance collective efficacy, (d)

engender high expectations, (e) are optimistic and hopeful, and (f) are growth- and

improvement-oriented (Angelle, 2010; Bedell & Burrello, 2006; Duignan & Bezzina,

2006a; Dweck, 2006; Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2007; Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy,

2004; Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005; Hoy, 2006, 2007; James, et al., 2006; Mascall, et al.,

2008; Murphy, et al., 2009; Poff & Parks, 2010; Printy, 2006; Seligman, 2006; Silins &

Mulford, 2002).

Of these belief systems, collective efficacy has received the most attention in the

education literature. According to Bandura (1993), a leading scholar in the area of

efficacy, teachers' belief that they can positively impact student learning has a significant

impact on the school's levels of academic achievement. Interestingly, Bandura (1993) has

also noted:

> There is a marked difference between possessing knowledge and skills and
>
> being able to use them well under taxing conditions. Personal
>
> accomplishments require not only skills but self-beliefs of efficacy to use
>
> them well. Hence, a person with the same knowledge and skills may
>
> perform poorly, adequately, or extraordinarily depending on fluctuations
>
> in self-efficacy thinking. (p. 119)

Applying this notion to the proposed framework of elements that support a shared

approach to leading change, it could be argued that simply possessing the knowledge and

skills for sharing leadership (e.g., how to collaborate, clarity around roles and

responsibilities) may not be enough. Leading change—especially in a high-stakes, high

accountability environment in which there is a great deal of pressure to increase student

achievement—requires not only the knowledge and skills to lead but high levels of self-

and collective efficacy for collaboratively producing change. According to Bandura

(1993), the level of collective efficacy in a school can have significant implications:

> Schools in which the staff collectively judge themselves as powerless to
>
> get students to achieve academic success convey a group sense of
>
> academic futility that can pervade the entire life of the school. School staff
>
> members who collectively judge themselves capable of promoting
>
> academic success imbue their schools with a positive atmosphere for
>
> development. (p. 141)

In summary, key aspects from the literature related to the collective mindsets

conducive to school change factor include

- an expanded conception of influence,

- attitude of risk-taking and innovation,

- collective efficacy,

- high expectations,

- optimism and hopefulness, and

- growth- and improvement-oriented mind frames.

7. Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school. A shared

approach to leading change is facilitated when organization members develop a sense of

collective ownership, responsibility, and accountability for the school's shared vision,

purpose, and goals (Angelle, 2010; Arrowsmith, 2007; Burke & Cavalier, 2004;

Chrispeels, 2000; Copland, 2003; Duignan & Bezzina, 2006a; Geijsel, et al., 2009; Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005; Hulpia, 2009; Lambert, 2005; Lee, 1996; McDonald & Keedy, 2004; Poff & Parks, 2010; Printy, 2006). It is important for leadership teams to reflect regularly on their decisions and approaches to school improvement as they monitor progress toward schoolwide goals, resolve issues, and make adjustments to school strategies (Copland, 2003; Herrity & Morales, 2004; McDonald & Keedy, 2004; Shiu, et al., 2004). In a cross-case study of thirteen elementary school principals' beliefs and aspirations for sharing leadership, Yep (2004) found that

> teachers who participated on the leadership teams were changing and
>
> shifting from a classroom perspective to a whole-school perspective, and
>
> they realized that this broader view was particularly significant in
>
> fostering shared leadership. The shift assists staff to be proactive and
>
> involved, particularly in schoolwide issues and in complex or difficult
>
> decisions. It supported the idea of teachers accepting shared responsibility
>
> for actions and outcomes across the school. (p. 176)

Fullan, an internationally recognized expert in leadership and school change, has emphasized the importance of cultivating a sense of collective ownership and involvement in experiencing and learning from change (Crow, 2009). Schools with a shared purpose and focus have schoolwide goals and a shared commitment and focus for change while assuming mutual responsibility and a collegial approach to accountability for results (McDonald & Keedy, 2004).

In summary, key aspects from the literature related to the whole-school

perspective factor include

- ongoing reflection about school improvement decisions and approaches;

- shift from classroom perspective to whole school perspective;

- collective sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability for school

  goals; and

- shared vision and purpose.

Summary of Literature Review

As summarized in Table 2, the literature supports a framework of seven factors

that support a shared approach to leading change: communication and widespread

participation; clarity of roles and responsibilities; feedback, recognition, and celebration;

mutually supportive and trusting relationships; collaborative learning and inquiry;

collective mindsets conducive to school change; and attention to shared purpose and

focus for the whole school.

Table 2

Factors that Support a Shared Approach to Leading School Change and Associated Key

Aspects from the Literature

Factor	Key aspects from the literature
1. Communication and widespread participation	• continual flow of information to inform decisions and implementation of decisions • shared decision making opportunities, processes, and structures • collective problem solving and discussion of critical issues • enhanced ownership of and involvement in change-related initiatives

Factor	Key aspects from the literature
2. Clarity of roles and responsibilities	• ongoing negotiation and conceptualization of new individual and group leadership roles • principal willingness to share power, responsibility, and decision making • principal as leader of leaders • teacher leadership as necessary but insufficient for shared leadership • use of school leadership teams as a structure to support mutual influence among principals and teachers and to lead school change efforts
3. Feedback, recognition, and celebration	• the importance of motivating staff to sustain change efforts • need for a safe and supportive environment • development of a sense of accomplishment and efficacy as fuel for ongoing effort
4. Mutually supportive and trusting relationships	• trusting relationships as a pre-condition for collaboration, openness and critical dialogue, risk-taking and innovation, collective problem solving and decision making • mutually reinforcing relationship between trust and shared leadership • use of criteria for gauging trusting relationships (respect, competence, personal regard for others, integrity)
5. Collaborative learning	• a culture of inquiry and reflection • systems to support ongoing collaboration • use of manageable change initiatives to learn by doing
6. Collective mindsets conducive to school change	• an expanded conception of influence • attitude of risk-taking and innovation • collective efficacy • high expectations • optimism and hopefulness • growth- and improvement-oriented mind frames
7. Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school	• ongoing reflection about school improvement efforts • shift from classroom perspective to whole school perspective • collective sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability for school goals • shared vision and purpose

The literature shows the importance of leadership in school reform, and a growing body of literature supports a shared approach to leading change efforts. However, there is a need to learn more about the conditions in the school environment—specifically the behavioral, social, and cultural conditions—that influence whether stakeholders are successful in taking a shared approach to leadership which results in positive outcomes for students. This study's research questions are intended to explore definitions of shared leadership in contemporary school settings in which leadership teams have focused intentionally on sharing leadership and to examine a proposed framework of organizational conditions—behavioral, social, and cultural—that the researcher hypothesizes support a shared approach to leading change.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview of the Study's Design

This study uses a qualitative research design to understand how school leadership team members make sense of their experiences using a shared approach to leading change and to identify behavioral, social, and cultural conditions in the work setting that support teams' ability to share leadership two to three years after beginning to focus on and develop this capacity. The methods employed included collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data from individual interviews and focus groups to shed light on the organizational conditions that support sustaining a culture of shared leadership in schools that have successfully impacted student outcomes. The research is inductive (exploratory) in nature and tests a framework of factors that support sharing leadership for school change (see Table 1 in Chapter 1).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred in February and March 2011. This section addresses several data collection issues: (a) site and participant selection, (b) types of data collected for the study, and (c) data collection instruments and forms.

Site and participant selection. The school sites and participants (leadership team members) for this study were purposefully selected from a group of elementary schools that participated in a previous study in which the researcher was involved. Fifty-two schools located in three different geographical areas participated in the original randomized controlled trial study, which evaluated the effects of a two-year school improvement initiative. Twenty-six schools received the intervention (Success in Sight),

which consisted of a combination of professional development and technical assistance

designed to increase school leadership teams' capacity to use data, share leadership,

identify and use research-based practices, develop and foster a purposeful community,

and use a continuous improvement process to positively impact student achievement (see

Appendix A for a summary of the study and study sampling criteria).

To participate in this study, schools met the criteria of having (a) participated in

the original Success in Sight intervention; (b) made achievement gains from 2008 to

2010; (c) operated during the 2010-11 school year; and (d) had consistency in staffing

from the 2009-10 to 2010-11 school year (i.e., the majority of staff members, including

the principal, remained in the building during the 2010-11 school year). Likewise,

individuals selected for one-on-one interviews from eligible schools met the criteria of

having (a) participated in the original Success in Sight intervention as a leadership team

member for at least 6 months from 2008-2010; and (d) been employed at the same school

during the 2010-11 school year.

Participant feedback gathered through large group professional development

session evaluations indicated that participants had high levels of satisfaction with the

original Success in Sight intervention (see Table 3). It is important to note that this study

is not intended to study the effects of the previous intervention. The researcher

acknowledges the previous intervention served as a catalyst for the school sites

developing shared leadership capacity; however the specific intervention is not

considered to be a necessary condition for a school to institute shared leadership. The

intent of the current study was to elicit lived, contextual experiences of using a shared

approach to leading change and took advantage of the previous work while pursuing a

new, separate line of inquiry. A key advantage to selecting sites from this pool was that

they shared a common experience and language related to leading change.

Table 3

Participant Satisfaction with Success in Sight Intervention

	Percent of participants rating the overall session quality as very good or good					
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
Area 1	97%	94%	95%	100%	96%	87%
Area 2	100%	95%	95%	100%	100%	100%
Area 3	100%	100%	90%	97%	100%	100%

The researcher assigned each of the twenty-six schools from the previous study a

letter (A-Z) and used existing intervention data on shared leadership and student

achievement to select a sub-set of schools that demonstrated (a) increased achievement

from the period between 2008 to 2010, and (b) increased capacity for shared leadership,

according to self-report and external consultant assessment. The researcher sorted the

twenty-six schools according to the following categories: (a) high shared leadership

capacity/increased student achievement; (b) high shared leadership capacity/decreased or

level student achievement; (c) low shared leadership capacity/increased student

achievement; and (d) low shared leadership capacity/decreased or level student

achievement. The schools sites for this study were drawn from the high shared leadership

capacity/increased student achievement category. Ultimately the purpose of leadership is

to improve organizational outcomes. However, the researcher did not intend to investigate a causal link between shared leadership capacity and increased achievement; rather, the site pool for this study was narrowed using both variables because the researcher was interested in more closely examining the conditions and lived experiences of the leadership teams in schools that have improved outcomes (i.e., student achievement) *and* used a shared approach to leading change.

The student achievement categorization was based on school mean performance in mathematics and language arts on state standardized tests in grades 3, 4, and 5 in 2008, 2009, and 2010. The scores are publicly available on state department of education web sites. The school's overall level of achievement was calculated using the percentage of students who met or exceeded state defined proficiency levels on the assessments. To calculate each school's achievement score, the researcher (a) averaged the percentages within grade levels by subject (math and language arts), (b) averaged percentages across grade levels to generate an aggregate percentage for math and language arts, and (c) averaged math and language arts aggregate percentages. To identify the change in achievement from 2008 to 2010, the researcher calculated the gain (or loss) in the average percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency levels. Thirteen out of twenty-six schools had an average gain in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency levels from 2008 to 2010.

Shared leadership categorization was based on school self-assessment of shared leadership capacity toward the end of the original intervention period (February/March 2010) averaged with their external consultants' assessment of school leadership capacity

using the same tool (see Appendix B). At the end of each of five out of six two-day large

group professional development sessions during the Success in Sight intervention, school

leadership teams self-assessed their schools' progress in developing shared leadership on

a nine-point scale with associated descriptors for three levels—initiating, building

capacity, sustaining. For this study, the overall shared leadership score for each school

was calculated as the average of each school's self-assessment rating from the last

session (February/March 2010) and the external consultants' rating at the end of the

intervention period (June 2010). Schools with an average rating of 6 or higher were

categorized as having high shared leadership capacity. Eighteen out of twenty-six schools

were identified as having high shared leadership capacity.

As illustrated in Table 4, a total of 10 schools had both increased average student

achievement from 2008 to 2010 and high levels of shared leadership capacity in 2010.

One of those schools (school P) closed after the 2009-2010 school year and two of the

schools experienced principal turnover prior to the 2010-11 school year; therefore, a total

of seven schools were eligible to participate in this study.

Table 4

Research Site Pool

	Schools with increased achievement	Schools with decreased or level achievement
Schools with high shared leadership capacity	Site pool for this study: C, E, F[1], G, P[2], R[3], S, U, X, Z	A, B, D, H, I, L, Q, V
Schools with low shared leadership capacity	N, W, Y	J, K, M, O, T

[a, c]New principal 2010-11 school year.
[b]School closed after 2009-2010 school year.

Data collection for this study took place in four schools from the target category; the school was the unit of analysis. The researcher invited the seven eligible schools to participate in the study, and the final sample consisted of the school sites that agreed to participate. The site pool from which sites were selected consists of elementary schools located in various towns and cities in two Midwestern states; the four schools that agreed to participate in the study were from Missouri. The schools in the site pool were all low- to moderate-performing schools in 2008 (as as indicated by having not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in any of the three years prior to 2008 or being at risk of not making AYP) and included at least average percentages of low-socioeconomic status, minority, and English language learner students. The locales for the four participating schools include two rural and two urban/suburban.

The research involved telephone interviews followed by focus groups. Study participants for the telephone interviews included the principal and two to three additional leadership team representatives from the school leadership team from each selected school site (for a total of 15 interview participants). Focus groups took place at each of the four school sites. Entire leadership teams—current members in addition to those who rotated off the team but served from 2008-2010—were invited to participate in the focus groups. Focus group participation ranged from 6 to 12 members per team, with a total of 34 focus group participants. The researcher spent between three and four hours in each school site. All data was collected by the researcher.

Types of data. Data addressing the research questions for this study were collected in both individual and focus group interviews. The researcher conducted 15

one-on-one, telephone interviews with three to four leadership team members from each

of the four schools (four total interviews from three schools and three interviews from

one school). The interviews included the principal and two to three additional leadership

team members. Principals guided the selection of leadership team members for the one-

on-one interviews; selection processes varied from principal nomination to asking

leadership teams for volunteers. The interviews were semi-structured and were

approximately one hour in duration. The researcher emailed interviewees the protocol in

advance of the interviews. A total of fifteen interviewees were asked a series of questions

related to their conceptions of shared leadership and the role of the leadership team. They

were also asked to relate a recent experience leading a successful change initiative (see

leadership team member interview protocol in Appendix C). It is important to note that

individual interviewees were not asked directly about elements in the proposed

framework of organizational conditions; rather, they were asked a series of broad

questions related to their experiences with and conceptions of shared leadership. The

questions were framed intentionally this way so as to determine whether the factors

would emerge from the data rather than providing the factors and asking the participants

to respond to them. Those responses were analyzed to determine the organizational

conditions leadership team members saw as most supportive for supporting their efforts

to lead change (see Data Analysis Procedures). The researcher completed interviews and

conducted a preliminary analysis of data from thirteen of the fifteen interviews before

conducting the focus group sessions to determine whether any changes needed to be

made to the originally proposed framework; no changes were made.

In addition, the researcher conducted on-site focus groups with the leadership team from each school site. Focus group interviews, which were approximately 90 minutes in duration, were intended to confirm or deny preliminary findings from the individual interviews. All interviews (including focus groups) were audiotaped and transcribed. During focus group sessions, leadership teams (ranging from six to 12 members), were asked three primary questions (see focus group interview protocol in Appendix D). The first two questions related to their understanding and operationalization of shared leadership and the conditions needed to support shared leadership. For the final question, the researcher distributed the draft framework of factors (see Table 1, Chapter 1) and asked participants the extent to which those factors represented the conditions they described as supporting shared leadership efforts. This final stage of the focus group interview is the first time study participants saw the framework of factors.

Instrumentation. Table 5 contains a summary of data collection types and corresponding instruments for the study.

Table 5

Data Collection Types and Corresponding Instruments

Type of data collection	Instrument
Leadership team member interview	Interview protocol (Appendix C)
Leadership team focus group	Focus group protocol (Appendix D)

Instruments were pilot tested with individuals not involved in the study but who held roles similar to those of study participants (e.g., teachers on a school leadership team). The researcher used the pilot test to determine the extent to which instruments had clear instructions and item wording and were thorough (i.e., asked a sufficient range of questions to address the research questions), relevant, and of the appropriate length to stimulate adequate responses. As a result of pilot test feedback, the researcher made minor wording revisions to improve the clarity of two interview questions and generated possible prompts to use, if necessary, to make the second focus group question more accessible and concrete.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected as part of this study were analyzed to examine the behavioral, social, and cultural work setting conditions that support a shared approach to leading school change. Analysis took place in two primary phases. For phase one, the researcher conducted a preliminary analysis of one-on-one interview results to determine whether the framework factors should be modified prior to the focus group interviews; the researcher determined from the phase one analysis that no modifications were needed. Phase two of the analysis involved a much more in-depth analysis of all data—one-on-one and focus group interviews. Prior to data analysis, data files were prepared and organized; interviews were professionally transcribed, and transcripts were reviewed for accuracy before being entered into QSR NVivo 9 software to aid with sorting, coding, and analyzing data. To begin the analysis, the researcher first read through all data to obtain an overall sense of the information. As transcripts were entered into NVivo, they

were auto-coded by research question. The researcher then proceeded with more detailed analysis and coding, using the elements in the study framework as a starting point for codes. After all one-on-one and focus group interviews were coded by the seven framework factors, the researcher analyzed the data coded for each factor and further coded into sub-codes. Frequency tables were created to track the number of times specific themes and sub-themes were mentioned during individual and focus group interviews. Finally, the researcher identified patterns and themes for each research question and generated narrative descriptions for all themes and sub-themes (i.e., study findings).

During the interpretation phase, the researcher used the themes that emerged in the study to generate major findings in response to the two study research questions: an understanding of leadership teams' conceptualizations of shared leadership and an evaluation of the proposed framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors. In addition, the researcher identified additional findings that were not directly related to the two research questions but emerged as important elements of participants' experiences. Finally, the researcher articulated implications for practice and for further research. All data management and analyses procedures were documented for quality control and reporting.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study involved the use of human subjects and, therefore, required approval from Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). An application for a claim of exemption for the use of human subjects in this study was submitted to the IRB upon approval of the research proposal by the researcher's dissertation committee in

November 2010 and before conducting the study. The researcher was granted approval to proceed with the study on January 31, 2011 (see Appendix E).

Care was taken to assure participant comfort, welfare, and well-being. Prior to the study, the researcher contacted each school principal (and, as needed, the school district) to obtain permission for conducting the study in the school site. The researcher explained the nature and purpose of the study to all participants. All participants (leadership team members) in the selected sites were asked for voluntary participation and given the choice to withdraw at any time. All study participants reviewed and signed a consent form (see Appendix F) prior to data collection. Participants were informed that all interviews and focus groups would be audio recorded and transcribed. Only the researcher and a confidential transcriber heard the recordings and saw the transcripts. Participant and school names were changed in the dissertation to protect the participants' privacy. For telephone interviews, participants were encouraged to select a time and location that allowed for privacy and minimal distractions. Focus groups were held in a private, quiet location chosen by the school. The potential risks associated with participating in this study were minimal. Leadership team members were asked to participate in interviews and focus groups. No risk to principal or teacher positions were anticipated or actualized. The researcher attended to minimizing risks for participation in the study. Careful attention was paid to protecting identifying information that was associated with collected data. No reference was made in oral or written materials which could identify or link participants to the study. Data were stored securely; only the researcher had access to them. Results were presented confidentially so that participants

and schools cannot be identified. Benefits outweighed the risks and include contributions
to the knowledge base in a developing research area and affirmation of the schools'
success.

Role of the Researcher

As a co-developer of and lead on the implementation of the school improvement
intervention in which study sites previously participated, the researcher in this study had
both a personal interest in the research topic and some familiarity with the study
participants and sites. As project director, the researcher did not conduct monthly
technical assistance work at the school sites; however, she did provide assistance to the
leadership teams three times per year for two years (2008-2010) during large group
professional development sessions. The professional development sessions were a
combination of presentation and school leadership team working sessions; the researcher
made portions of the presentations and assisted individual teams during the working
sessions. To avoid potential deception of purpose, the researcher clearly identified the
independent nature of the study and differentiated it from the previous study in which
participants were involved.

To gain entry to the sites, the researcher emailed each principal and followed up,
as needed, with a telephone call to gauge initial interest in participating. The researcher
outlined a brief proposal in the email describing the study, why the site was chosen, the
activities that would occur before and during the site visits (interviews, focus groups),
and in what ways the study could be disruptive (see Appendix G). The researcher
acknowledged that participation in the study could be minimally disruptive due to the

time involved in coordinating phone interviews and focus groups. The researcher also explained how the results would be reported and ensured that participants understood that the report of results would not include school or individual name identification.

The researcher's biases and values related to the research topic were accounted for and articulated, at least in part, in the study framework, which identified the factors the researcher had hypothesized support a culture of sharing leadership for schoolwide change. Perhaps the most prominent bias the researcher held is the belief that a shared approach to leading school change is a worthwhile option for schools to consider. Similarly, the researcher believed that the success or failure of sharing leadership—and implementation of change—hinged on the behavioral, social, and cultural conditions of the school. Although the researcher held these biases, the original intervention in which the school sites participated did not include the proposed framework of factors for supporting a shared approach to leading change. However, the researcher also held the assumption that schools that participated in a change intervention, such as Success in Sight, were more likely to embrace and develop shared leadership capacity and the conditions needed to support a shared approach to leading school change.

Summary

This qualitative research study sought to understand how school leadership team members made sense of their experiences using a shared approach to leading change and to test a framework of behavioral, social, and cultural conditions in the work setting that support teams' ability to share leadership. The methods employed included collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data from individual interviews and focus groups

to shed light on the organizational conditions that support sustaining a culture of shared

leadership in schools that have successfully impacted student outcomes. Findings that

emerged from the analysis are discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the results of the study and is organized by four major findings that address the two research questions posed in Chapter 1:

1. How do experienced school leadership team members conceptualize shared leadership?

2. What are the supportive factors that elementary school leadership team members experience in a shared approach to leading change?

This chapter begins with a brief review of data collection procedures, proceeds to an examination of how experienced school leadership team members conceptualized shared leadership, reports the supportive factors they experienced in a shared approach to leading change, and then discusses other findings related to the proposed framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors that support a shared approach to leading change. A summary of findings is provided at the end of the chapter.

Review of Data Collection Procedures

As stated in Chapter 1, this study examined the organizational conditions needed for principals and teachers to collectively lead significant change in their schools. Four Missouri elementary schools participated in the study; Table 6 provides demographic characteristics for the participating schools. Fifteen individuals participated in one-on-one phone interviews (three from school 1 and four each from the remaining three schools) from February 11-March 2, 2011. Phone interviewees included four principals, one counselor, and ten teachers (a combination of classroom and instructional specialists).

Thirty-four total leadership team members participated in the four focus groups, which

were conducted at school sites between February 23 and March 4, 2011.

Table 6

School Demographic Characteristics

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Locale	rural	rural	urban/ suburban	urban/ suburban
Grades	3-8	K-8	K-5	3-6
Student enrollment (#)	375-400	325-350	450-475	475-500
Low income (%)	80-90	70-80	<10	60-70
English language learners (%)	50-60	20-30	<10	40-50
Student ethnicity				
American Indian/Alaskan (%)	<10	<10	0	<10
Asian/Pacific Islander (%)	<10	0	<10	10-20
Black (%)	<10	0	10-20	10-20
Hispanic (%)	40-50	40-50	<10	<10
White (%)	40-50	50-60	80-90	70-80

The researcher spent between three and four hours at each school location. Before

conducting each focus group session, the researcher met with the principal, visited

classrooms, and spoke informally with staff members. All principals and leadership team

members were welcoming, eager to share information about school progress, and showed

great enthusiasm for discussing shared leadership and progress with change in their

buildings. Each of the schools expressed pride in their hard work and the results they

have seen for students, yet remains realistic about the challenges they continue to face

(which vary by context). A sense of hopefulness and commitment was evident in each of the participating schools. Researcher observations of leadership team interactions during the focus group sessions, as well as of other staff interactions, were consistent with perceptions individuals shared during one-on-one and focus group interviews.

Study Findings

The remainder of this chapter is organized around the four major study findings:

- Finding 1: School leadership teams expanded their views of and commitment to shared leadership.

- Finding 2: School leadership teams identified the seven proposed behavioral, social, and cultural factors as conditions that support a shared approach to leading change initiatives.

- Finding 3: School leadership teams did not identify any of the seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors for supporting a shared approach to leading change as pre-eminent; rather, all are equally important and mutually reinforcing.

- Finding 4: The framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors proved to be a useful tool to help leadership teams to make sense of their lived experiences.

Finding 1: School leadership teams expanded their views of and commitment to shared leadership. This finding was supported by (a) leadership team's definitions of shared leadership; and (b) a comparison of leadership team members' pre-conceived conceptions of and lived experiences with sharing leadership.

Participants' definition of shared leadership. During individual interviews, participants were asked to define shared leadership. During focus group interviews, leadership teams were asked to discuss together and draw a picture of their understanding of shared leadership (see, for example, Figure 1), then explain how their pictures reflect their conceptions of shared leadership. Definitions tended to include a combination of *what* is shared, *how* it is shared, and *who* shares it. Respondents described the *what* of shared leadership as key actions and responsibilities, including for example

- ensuring voice and shared decision making;

- communicating, building awareness, and championing ideas/initiatives; and

- engaging in shared planning and collaboration.

For the *how* component of shared leadership, 100% of leadership teams and 75% of individual respondents described shared leadership as a process of working together to take collective responsibility and accountability for common goals and the success of the whole school. For example, one principal defined shared leadership as "a collective responsibility for the good of the whole team or the good of the whole." Similarly, a teacher described shared leadership existing when "everybody is invested and responsible for that end result." An instructional specialist described shared leadership as "a group of people working together toward common goals to move an institution forward." Overwhelmingly the definitions shared by individuals and focus groups emphasized collective responsibility and a focus on outcomes for the whole school.

In terms of *who* shares leadership, interviewees were unanimous in conceiving of shared leadership as involving everyone in the school—principals, teachers, specialists,

support staff, counselors—some interviewees added students and community members to their definitions. For example, one leadership team member explained that with shared leadership "the leader is anyone in the building or anyone in the workplace." A respondent in another school shared that everyone in the school shares leadership, but added: "Then we are also connected to everybody on the outside as well because we're all sharing the responsibility of supporting our students." Several respondents noted that although everyone has a role in sharing, it does not mean everyone has equal roles. According to one leadership team member: "We all have different roles throughout the school, but we come together as a whole to do what's best for the kids." Several others explained that the role of leader shifts over time depending on the task or situation. Two leadership teams described a mental picture of the ripple effect a stone makes when thrown into water as a way to articulate the diffusion of leadership throughout the building—from the principal and leadership team to individual classroom teachers and beyond (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. One school leadership team's visual representation of shared leadership.

Lived experiences with sharing leadership exceeded pre-conceived expectations.
Most respondents' pre-conceived expectations of shared leadership were fairly limited; in
fact, many interviewees simply had no expectations. However, all respondents explained
that their lived experiences with sharing leadership over the last few years far exceeded
their original expectations in a positive direction. Several respondents' pre-conceived
expectations were based on experiences when they served on leadership teams in
different schools; previous experiences tended to center around serving as a
communication liaison for the principal and assisting with the development of the annual
school improvement plan. Many of those respondents said that their current experiences
included some of their original expectations but also went far beyond. To illustrate, Table
7 highlights some original expectations and lived experiences for individual leadership
team members.

Table 7

Examples of Individual's Expectations and Lived Experiences with Sharing Leadership

Pre-conceived expectations	Lived experiences
Leadership team as pseudo leadership structure without actual say in school decisions	Leadership team "really, actually leading the school": used to plan school focus for instruction, drive initiatives, facilitate writing of the school's vision and the mission statement with staff feedback, generate professional development ideas
	Principal listens to leadership team members and takes their ideas; teachers use leadership team members to be an avenue for voice
Leadership team members serve as communication liaison between principal and teacher teams	Leadership team shares the responsibility for determining a direction for the school, figuring out how to get there, and articulating schoolwide expectations

	Staff have a voice
"Zero expectations"	All share leadership responsibilities
Principal still takes responsibility for everything with the possibility of some additional committees	Staff teach each other and lead the whole parts of staff meetings
	Principal as one of many facilitators
	Leadership team drives school initiatives
Leadership team takes responsibility for writing the school improvement plan	Principal involves leadership team in all important school decisions
	Leadership team plans all school efforts
	Leadership "veins" run throughout the building; everyone, not just the principal, is "holding up the school"
Leadership team members assigned to work with grade-level cadres	Everyone works together on schoolwide implementation of a common goal
	A schoolwide focus on all kids

Individual leadership team members recalled a variety of initial reactions when they were first approached to serve on the leadership team, ranging from resistance or hesitation to willingness or even eagerness. However, when asked what it was like currently to be a teacher or principal on the leadership team responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring schoolwide change, all interviewees consistently responded that it was both exciting and, at times, overwhelming. In addition to *exciting*, respondents used words such as *energizing*, *empowering*, *enjoyable*, *rewarding*, and *important* to describe their experiences. And despite feeling at times stressed, challenged, or fatigued, 100% of leadership team members felt it was important to continue their efforts and were fueled forward by seeing student success. According to one teacher: "It's

stressful but it's empowering to know the things that you want to accomplish, the things that you want to implement, and then watch them happen, you know, it's a sense of accomplishment." This finding suggests that sharing leadership in schools today is operationalized differently than in the past and in ways that are more motivating and rewarding.

Finding 2: School leadership teams identified the seven proposed behavioral, social, and cultural factors as conditions that support a shared approach to leading change initiatives. This study focused on conditions that support schools in implementing a shared approach leading to change. The researcher entered the study with a proposed framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors that support a shared approach to leading change including

1. communication and widespread participation;
2. clarity of roles and responsibilities;
3. feedback, recognition, and celebration;
4. mutually supportive and trusting relationships;
5. collaborative learning and inquiry;
6. collective mindsets conducive to school change; and
7. attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school.

As discussed in Chapter 3, interview and focus group questions did not present the framework of factors until the very last question in the focus group session. Although participants sometimes used different words or terms when speaking to the organizational conditions (e.g., *shared decision making* or *input* rather than *widespread participation*),

as a whole participants spoke to each of the identified behavioral, social, and cultural factors. The remainder of this section describes these factors, or organizational conditions, found to support a shared approach to leading change. Each section addresses why leadership team members saw the organizational condition as important and how they developed it.

Condition 1: Communication and widespread participation is an essential condition for a shared leadership approach to leading change. There was strong support for communication and widespread participation in decision making as a factor to support a shared approach to leading change; 100% of interviewees and focus groups emphasized this organizational condition. Respondents found that promoting ongoing communication and widespread participation led to greater clarity around important issues, an open and safe environment, informed decisions, and increased support for and ownership of change initiatives. Study participants described several processes they used to develop communication and widespread participation which include

- use of leadership team members to clarify and reinforce important messages;
- emphasis on collegial, open, and honest dialogue; and
- use of multiple opportunities, processes, and systems to encourage staff input and shared decision making.

Interviewees highlighted the important role that leadership team members play in clarifying and reinforcing important messages about the change process in the school. In this communication role, leadership team members answered questions about change initiatives, clarified issues, and served as a sounding board for other staff. One teacher

likened her role as a leadership team member to that of a reporter, who spends a great deal of time responding to colleagues' questions and providing clarification.

Leadership team members also emphasized the importance of being able to communicate in an open and collegial manner—one that is respectful while encouraging consideration of diverse opinions. An important aspect of collegial, open, and honest communication that emerged was listening; respondents described the positive impact of developing good listening skills. Several interviewees mentioned the power of confronting difficult issues directly and openly—"putting them on the table" rather than leaving them unaddressed or to be surfaced through an anonymous vehicle (e.g., complaint or suggestion jar). As an environment with open communication emerged and took hold, leadership team members saw less fear and more collegial interactions, for example, teachers were not afraid to ask questions or seek assistance from peers; staff discussed issues during meetings rather than "in the parking lot" or behind closed doors; and classroom practices became more consistent across classrooms. One teacher recalled a new colleague's observation about the open feel of the school's environment: "You know, it just feels like it's safe to say anything. You're not worried about how the other people are going to take what you are saying, and I think that kind of becomes a school-wide culture." Leadership teams emphasized that a move to engaging in this more constructive dialogue required a great deal of time, practice, and the use of structured processes. Staff must learn how to create an open culture in which they address difficult issues and pose alternative views and overcome concerns about "rocking the boat." Staff must also learn to listen to critical feedback without taking it personally. In addition, an

environment with ongoing communication and widespread participation does not necessarily create a quiet or orderly professional environment; rather, when staff are engaged in open and honest dialogue, it "can get kind of wild sometimes" because teachers feel free to "speak their minds" but know that they will be listened to and responded to with respect.

Interviewees spoke about the use of various communication and decision making opportunities, processes, and systems as an important aspect of promoting ongoing communication and widespread participation in their buildings. Respondents emphasized allowing staff voices to be heard and gathering input from colleagues to support a shared decision-making process. Most teams recalled stumbling with communication processes when they first shifted to a shared leadership approach. Over time, however, they developed a variety of strategies for communicating with and engaging colleagues in decision making, such as surveys, faculty lounge bulletin boards, newsletters, memos distributed to mailboxes, staff meeting presentations and reflection sessions, emails, use of data to stimulate problem-solving discussions in collaborative groups, and one-on-one discussions between leadership team members and non-leadership team members. In fact, one teacher emphasized that because clear communication and good decision-making "go hand in hand," a variety of mechanisms are needed for communicating and gathering staff input. Some described shared decision making as central to shared leadership because "we're jointly making decisions that are better for the kids." Another interviewee echoed this sentiment by explaining "our biggest role in shared leadership means shared

decision making." One principal emphasized the importance of using collective input in the decision making process, even when the decision may not have been her first choice:

> If we're going to do it right, then that's how it needs to be….we really
>
> have to share it….[In fact] as a principal, I wouldn't want a school to
>
> expect me to make every decision because they wouldn't be good all of
>
> the time.

Leadership teams also emphasized the importance of involving all school staff members in a committee or team structure to elicit diverse opinions and perspectives to inform decision making while increasing schoolwide investment in and ownership of change initiatives. In all participating schools, leadership teams served as liaisons to grade-level, professional learning community, or other teams/committees to communicate messages and gather input to inform school-level decisions. Several interviewees emphasized the important role that establishing norms played in supporting their school's communication and decision making processes. Respondents felt that having established ways of communicating with each other during meetings provided a common language to "speak to each other, which makes it easier to share the leadership because you don't feel like you're out there by yourself." Likewise, other respondents emphasized the importance of procedural norms, such as rotating responsibility for planning and facilitating different portions of meeting agendas. As leadership teams established processes for communicating and encouraging widespread participation, they not only supported the process of sharing leadership, they also created practices that they used to clarify roles and responsibilities, the second organizational condition.

Condition 2: Clarity of roles and responsibilities is an essential condition for a shared leadership approach to leading change. All four leadership teams and 100% of individual interviewees identified clarity of roles and responsibilities as an essential condition for supporting a shared leadership approach. Several respondents explained that clarifying roles and responsibilities is especially important when implementing second-order, or complex, change that requires new learning, behaviors, and/or beliefs to implement; interviewees felt these changes require all staff members to clearly understand the part they and others play and levels of responsibilities needed for the change initiative to be successful. One teacher explained that clarity of roles and responsibilities is important because:

> Everyone gets very excited and wants to join in and do something. But nobody really knows what they're supposed to be doing. So it's just chaos … And I think that [having well-defined roles and responsibilities] really helps a lot; it helps me to know that this is my role, this is what I'm supposed to do. But I have all of these other people I can go to if I need help.

A leadership team member in another school recalled learning the importance of clarifying roles and responsibilities as a result of challenges faced leading previous initiatives:

> For some of our earlier initiatives we were maybe not so clear on our roles and what people's responsibilities were, and so those kind of flopped a little bit. And as we have gotten better at it…initiatives have been a little

more successful because people have been a little more clear on what are

they supposed to do, who is the champion of [it] so that I know where I

need to go if I have a question. So I think for this staff, it is *really*

important to be clear.

Study participants described several processes they used to clarify roles and

responsibilities which included

- use of explicit dialogue and negotiation to determine shared responsibilities;

- recognition of the role of the formal leader;

- identification of individual leadership roles and responsibilities based on strengths and expertise; and

- use of a representative group of staff members on the leadership team.

Many interviewees recalled a common experience that served as a turning point

for expanding their view of shared leadership. During an activity facilitated by the

external change agent, leadership teams examined 21 research-based principal

responsibilities and 66 associated practices significantly correlated with higher levels of

student achievement (Waters, et al., 2003). This exercise served as an "aha" moment in

helping teams (a) realize that the responsibility for leading a school is more than any one

person can take on, and (b) clarify which responsibilities they felt should be the

principal's alone and which responsibilities they felt they could share. In fact, according

to one respondent, it not only provided awareness of "what it takes to run a school" but

helped the leadership team in "changing that mindset that maybe school is not necessarily

totally hierarchical." Each of the teams felt that determining which responsibilities would

be shared by whom took a lot of explicit dialogue and negotiation in the beginning; in

fact, "because a lot of roles were being shared with other people that hadn't necessarily

been [shared] to that extent before, it was scary for a lot of people."

Many interviewees expressed the importance of recognizing the role of the formal

leader, or principal, within a shared approach to leading change. In other words, taking a

shared approach to leading change does not negate the principal's role. None of the

principals interviewed felt that their position or authority was minimized by sharing

responsibility with others; on the contrary, they felt that it made them better principals

and built a stronger collective force in the school. For example, one principal explained

that the shift to involving others in decision-making helped her transition "from a

manager to more of an instructional leader." Respondents saw the overarching role of the

principal as a leader of leaders and suggested that there are a multitude of specific actions

principals can take to support a collective approach to leading change, including, for

example, attending carefully to open and ongoing communication throughout the

building, modeling leadership for others, providing time for and sitting in on team

meetings, seeking feedback, articulating a compelling need for change, and providing

staff with positive encouragement. See Appendix H for an expanded list of actions

participants suggested principals can take to support a shared approach to leading change.

Interviewees did note that there are some responsibilities for which the principal bears

sole responsibility such as making decisions that need to be made quickly, daily

management or facilities decisions, staff placement and supervision, personnel issues,

resource allocation, or certain types of parent concerns. Exact items mentioned varied

between schools. However, both principals and teachers identified some level of shared responsibility for most leadership activities, with staff roles ranging from input and feedback on decisions to taking full responsibility with principal support. Principals often mentioned that, although it has been a challenging journey to learn to share these leadership responsibilities, they have seen tremendous benefits—from increased staff morale and engagement to increased student achievement.

When describing the process for negotiating individual roles and responsibilities, the majority of respondents discussed using individual strengths and interests as the basis. For example, some teachers take on responsibilities for leading aspects of change initiatives related to their content expertise, such as math, reading, or technology. Others take on responsibilities that are more process-oriented, such as collecting and organizing data, note-taking, reflective questioning, championing specific initiatives, modeling, and/or presenting at faculty meetings. Most felt that this fluid, voluntary approach tended to result in relatively equal contributions among staff members. For example, one principal described an experience during which she asked for volunteers to chair various committees. When asked if anyone wanted to lead the various committees, she noticed:

> People kind of had a passion for different things, so they said "I'll lead that; I want to lead that!" So it doesn't seem to be a problem to get people to volunteer to do it. That's something. That's a huge difference from when [we first started sharing leadership]….And I think people really like being in that leadership role and feeling that they can use their skills and help move the staff along.

In addition to being asked to lead different efforts, several respondents noted examples of staff members throughout the school taking on leadership responsibilities when they saw the need arise, such as offering additional tutoring, creating afterschool clubs, or stepping in to handle an everyday procedure such as dismissal when teachers are occupied in a meeting. Additional examples of how individual teachers—leadership team and non-leadership team members—demonstrated leadership include exhibiting a positive attitude and showing support for school efforts, actively participating in or leading committees, sharing opinions or raising issues for the whole staff to consider in a constructive manner, and sharing resources and instructional and/or content area expertise (see Appendix I for additional examples).

Each of the participating schools had an established leadership team that represented the staff as a whole and consisted of, at a minimum, the principal, teacher representatives from various grade levels (ranging from early childhood to grade 8), instructional specialists (e.g., reading, math, English language learner, special education), and various special area teachers (e.g., art, music, physical education, technology, library). Two leadership teams also included the school counselor. Teams periodically involved other staff members in meetings (e.g., using an "open chair" for anyone to join meetings, inviting staff members to join for specific discussions requiring their expertise). The roles and responsibilities of participating leadership teams tended to be multi-faceted and included

- planning and leading school improvement initiatives (examining school-level student achievement results and other data, setting goals, identifying research-

based strategies, monitoring implementation, planning schoolwide reflection and celebration activities),

- coordinating and leading school-wide professional development activities,

- mentoring new leadership team members and other staff members,

- modeling leadership throughout the building,

- identifying and solving problems,

- setting schoolwide expectations (for individuals and teams),

- championing initiatives and keeping the momentum going,

- anticipating implications of change for colleagues and supporting staff through change, and

- recognizing individual and group accomplishments.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities helped leadership team members distribute leadership tasks in both formal and informal ways which ultimately helped them to build the momentum for change.

Condition 3: Feedback, recognition, and celebration is an essential condition for a shared leadership approach to leading change. There was strong support for the organizational condition of feedback, recognition, and celebration; nearly three quarters of interviewees and 100% of focus groups identified this factor as an important condition for supporting a shared approach to leading change. Interviewees found that providing feedback, recognition, and celebration increased morale, built confidence, and fueled momentum and ownership for change initiatives. As one interviewee explained, "the

more you celebrate, recognize, and validate people…the more they are going to be encouraged and motivated." Leadership teams fostered this condition by

- incorporating schoolwide feedback, recognition, and celebration as routines in day-to-day operations and ongoing improvement cycles, and

- providing individual feedback, validation, and encouragement to lead.

Each of the leadership teams noted that schoolwide feedback, recognition, and celebration had not been a normal part of the school culture before shifting to a shared approach to leading change, and incorporating it into their improvement cycles played a significant role in shifting the culture over time. Some respondents found that recognizing schoolwide strengths and celebrating successes was just as important as schoolwide problem solving. Examples of schoolwide recognition and celebrations include intercom "shout outs" from the principal to recognize classroom successes, monthly celebrations in the staff lounge, and end-of-year celebrations involving staff and students tied to achievement of school goals. One principal used regular classroom walkthroughs as a way to generate building-wide feedback and inform the leadership team's decisions about professional development support. Another respondent noted the beneficial role of using faculty feedback to inform staff meetings and professional development: "The feedback has been amazing. [Staff] have just never felt like we were wasting time and were so touched by some of the things we did." In fact, one teacher noted, incorporating peers' feedback can be a great strategy for preventing negativity or resistance. Others noted that publicly sharing and examining student achievement data was a great way to provide collective feedback and incentive to keep efforts going.

Another good source of affirmation comes when people outside of the school (e.g., parents, other schools) recognize a school's efforts and progress. One interviewee recalled a discussion during a leadership team meeting when the group was trying to determine why an initiative was not being implemented at the level they had hoped: "We felt like we got more success with what we were doing [in previous initiatives] when we were providing more feedback and recognizing and celebrating. And we felt like that was an area that we needed to keep pursuing."

Leadership teams also incorporated the use of individual feedback, recognition, and encouragement. Examples included providing positive feedback to peers who were willing to share challenges they faced when implementing new instructional approaches and recognizing individual teacher's hard work. Several interviewees, especially those newer to the teaching profession, described the critical role that peer and administrator encouragement played in their individual development and confidence to engage in shared leadership. For example:

> I was a second year teacher when I was asked to join this team and
> thought, "what in the world would they ask me for? I have nothing to
> offer." But it's given me a voice and a confidence to know that I do have
> things to offer. I mean it's more than just confidence I suppose. Being a
> rookie I can still be an example.…And my opinion is respected—beyond
> my colleagues in this room, my opinion is respected further out.

As indicated by this teacher and echoed by one of the leadership teams, the more leaders recognize and celebrate individual successes, the more it spreads to the whole school.

Condition 4: Mutually supportive and trusting relationships are an essential condition for a shared leadership approach to leading change. Leadership team members repeatedly stressed the importance of mutually supportive and trusting relationships; 100% of focus groups and more than 90% of individual interviewees identified it as a supportive condition for a collective approach to change. Respondents identified several positive outcomes that result from developing mutually supportive and trusting relationships, including increased collaboration, staff willingness to generate and try new ideas, and increased levels of open communication. Study participants frequently described ways of interacting that enhanced their relationships, such as having fun and enjoying one another, helping each other accomplish tasks, and challenging one another's ideas. Additional strategies they used to develop mutually supportive and trusting relationships included

- openly sharing ideas and opinions with each other;

- listening to and avoiding talking over one another;

- providing encouragement to one another;

- connecting with, caring about, and having warm interactions with each other and students;

- assuming others are honest, responsible, and capable;

- learning how to learn together (as a team and as a whole staff);

- working proactively together on solutions for the building;

- trying to understand others' perspectives and realities;

- recognizing and valuing each others' strengths;

- communicating that mistakes are okay and acknowledging the "messiness" of change;

- making life easier for others in small, supportive ways;

- using structured protocols and outside facilitators, when possible, to address issues of mistrust; and

- establishing and follow group norms.

Several interviewees likened the environment to that of a "family." A teacher newer to the profession reflected on her experience within a supportive environment:

> I think it's just…a very supportive atmosphere….Everyone knows that
>
> their contributions, their opinions are valued and respected. And I think
>
> that's become true of pretty much everyone on the staff, even when we've
>
> had new staff come in. We had a new teacher come on board this year
>
> [who] had taught in a lot of other schools and he says, "You know, it just
>
> feels like it's safe to say anything. You're not worried about how the other
>
> people are going to take what you are saying or, you know, anything like
>
> that." And I think that that's kind of become a school-wide culture.

Mutually supportive and trusting relationships provided a safe and nurturing environment for all staff and supported leadership teams as they developed other organizational conditions necessary for sharing leadership, including communication.

    Condition 5: Collaborative learning and inquiry is an essential condition for a shared leadership approach to leading change. All individuals and teams (100%)

emphasized the supportive nature of collaborative learning and inquiry in shared leadership. Interviewees identified a variety of benefits to engaging all staff in collaborative learning and inquiry, such as supporting staff leadership development, providing an opportunity for staff input to directly impact decisions, building a sense of team, promoting teachers working together who otherwise might not, and minimizing negativity and resistance to new initiatives. Study participants described several processes they used to foster collaborative learning and inquiry which included intentional use of

- collaborative structures and processes to engage all staff in schoolwide change,

- teacher-led professional development to promote a culture of learning, and

- data-driven continuous improvement and manageable cycles of inquiry to ground schoolwide learning.

Participating schools simultaneously used a variety of collaborative structures and processes—informal and formal, planned and spontaneous—to support schoolwide involvement in change. In addition to a variety of team structures previously discussed, examples included

- peer observations,

- peer coaching,

- use of faculty meetings to share successful practices,

- informal sharing of ideas with one another,

- collaborative lesson planning, and

- use of discussion protocols to examine student work together.

Interviewees emphasized the use of teacher-led professional development as another key indicator for shared leadership. Respondents noted that engaging staff in planning and leading professional development leads to a variety of positive outcomes, such as maximizing internal expertise and enhancing collective ownership. According to one leadership team member:

> I feel like I experienced the best professional development ever. And it
> was led by our team and other staff members. And planned and presented
> right here at our very own school by our very own people. That's when I
> began to realize that we had really bought in.

Interviewees discussed using a data-driven continuous improvement process, or ongoing cycles of inquiry, as an important indicator of the "way they do things." Each of the teams used data regularly to identify strengths and weaknesses, determine a schoolwide direction (goals and strategies), and monitor and adjust their efforts during implementation. Participating schools were introduced to a continuous improvement process that helped them to develop and implement manageable change initiatives as part of the professional development experience common to all schools. As a result, participating schools have been explicit in their use of a continuous improvement, or inquiry, cycle, and language that indicated ongoing and seamless use was evident throughout the interviews (e.g., "taking stock," "monitoring and adjusting"). By choosing manageable change initiatives that could be completed in relatively short amounts of time (e.g., 8-10 weeks), participating schools were able to repeat the inquiry cycle multiple

times to learn the process itself as well as drive change through ongoing, collective

learning. One instructional specialist explained:

> When we planned our [manageable change initiatives], we did the whole
>
> continuous improvement cycle multiple, multiple times....constantly
>
> looking at the data, constantly looking at what do we need to do to change,
>
> planning professional development, things for staff meetings, etc. We did
>
> things in PLC's [professional learning communities] to support
>
> them…[we] identified kids in subgroups. I mean, it was big. And I think
>
> teachers and the school improvement team felt very empowered by it.

Others echoed the power that collectively engaging in repeated data-driven cycles of

inquiry provided in (a) ensuring staff followed through on the entire cycle, including

implementation, and maintained focus; and (b) allowing staff to see the impact of their

efforts on student outcomes. According to one leadership team member:

> We were watching our data, watching the difference it was making for our
>
> kids, the difference it's made in our instruction. And I just think that the
>
> continuous improvement model, that was really big, because in our
>
> district, we do get a lot of initiatives, and maybe all districts do, I don't
>
> know, but what was nice, what we learned, was here we were given an
>
> initiative, but we were actually following through with it. So a lot of it I
>
> think is the [inquiry] model.

Leadership team members often credited early success with their manageable change

initiatives as critical to building momentum for change and support for a shared

leadership approach. When asked to give advice to another school, many interviewees

made suggestions similar to one principal's: "You've got to find something that is doable.

And then, once you have success, then you can add to that….And build on your

successes. Don't try to conquer the whole world all at once, because you just can't."

Another leadership team member in that school explained:

> I witnessed the whole staff implementing [manageable change initiatives]
>
> and looking at the available data that we had. And being open to other data
>
> gathering…and then analyzing the new data, to see if the [initiative] goals
>
> had been met…. The leadership team began by learning to plan and
>
> implement a [manageable change initiative]…and to begin a step-by-step
>
> process that would enable our school to be more successful [and] so that
>
> our students could highly achieve. The team helped identify by
>
> researching the available data that we had, and we decided what
>
> [manageable change initiatives] needed to be planned, implemented,
>
> monitored, and evaluated. And then gathering and analyzing data
>
> throughout the process was crucial.

Finally, multiple interviewees highlighted the sustainability aspect of ongoing use of

inquiry cycles. For example, one leadership team member emphasized the need to "come

back to the table to consistently look at what we are doing—looking at data to find out if

it's working" to keep from becoming complacent and "losing the benefit of all the great

thinking that went into planning the initiatives." Although teams identified the

schoolwide use of a standard inquiry process and embarking on manageable change

initiatives as a key lever for facilitating shared leadership and sparking authentic change, several interviewees cautioned that schools need to understand that it is still "messy" and "a major undertaking." According to one teacher:

> I think there was a lot of messiness [with] the first several rounds of the [inquiry cycles]. We came back with more questions [in addition to] "these things worked." Each round of the [manageable change initiative] we had to monitor and adjust. Adjust our approach and adjust the way we're collecting data and adjust based on grade level expectations and needs. It was messy that whole first year … and then it got easier. So persistence would be the other condition that, so often in education we try something for not a long enough time and we don't get good at it. And with this we did, we kept going. We kept going.

Finally, when asked to give advice to another school, one teacher spoke to the notion of using the inquiry process to take small steps that can result in big changes:

> Well first of all, realize that, yes, this is going to be a major undertaking. But realize you're taking it a step at a time. And so, don't feel like you're going to be overwhelmed with it. Just realize that you need to take it a step at a time to make the change. And, you know, like we did—we started with a very minor step which, to us, seemed very small. Which was basically to improve basic math skills. You know, just addition, subtraction, multiplication, division. But [with] just that one step, we saw

our math scores on the math test come up. Just from doing that one thing.

So every little change can make a big difference.

Leadership teams learned that by using the continuous improvement process they not only addressed the focus of the manageable change initiative (e.g., vocabulary focused instruction in all grades) but also developed their knowledge of and skill with *doing* continuous change.

Condition 6: Collective mindsets conducive to school change is an essential condition for a shared leadership approach to leading change. All focus groups and over 90% of individual interviewees highlighted beliefs and attitudes necessary to support a shared approach to leading change. Several interviewees argued that having collective mindsets conducive to change was one of the most instrumental factors in the proposed framework. The attitudes/beliefs discussed most frequently included

- collective efficacy,

- an attitude of risk-taking and innovation,

- high expectations,

- positivity, and

- growth- and improvement-oriented mind frames.

Many leadership team members discussed the role that collective efficacy, or the belief that by working together staff can make a difference in student achievement, played in fueling and supporting continued efforts to engage collectively in change. Representatives from three of the schools expressed the belief that, despite factors such as challenging home environments, teachers and administrators can do many things on a

daily basis within the school's realm of influence to impact student outcomes positively. According to one leadership team member:

> Well I guess that there are so many things that really are able for us to influence, you know, so we don't get to blame our parents anymore, or blame our language issues or economic status anymore. We have realized…that by just changing little things that we can make a huge influence as a school.

It has not always been easy for these leadership teams to initiate change and engage colleagues, but "then they see success and so they're willing to keep going with that initiative." A common strategy these schools used to build collective efficacy was to plan and implement manageable change initiatives as discussed above. When they saw positive results from early efforts, they built the sense that their efforts wore worthwhile and that, by working together, they could accomplish anything. According to one teacher:

> When we specifically had a chance to look at [our assessment data], we realized that vocabulary was an area where improvement has been made. And, that's just huge and it makes me feel great because everybody had to do [the initiative] to see that kind of a gain, not just five people or six people. And I also think, the belief that, again, we can do more together than we can by ourselves really has to take hold in order for shared leadership….and I think that, you know, really speaks to the belief that we're all here to do what's best for kids.

Another teacher described a turning point in their ability to collectively embark on change: "I really think that they started to see that what we had implemented was working, and it was good for the kids. And if we kept doing it, then it can only be positive."

Respondents emphasized that they collectively—and the principal, in particular— established an environment that was safe for staff to experiment with new ideas without fear of "being crushed by an administrator" or "being shot down" by peers. One principal explained:

> I always try to tell teachers, "Look, if you have something that you want to try, you know what, let's try it. And we'll look at the data and problem solve and do all those things." So, it's good to hear that you know people aren't afraid to think outside the box because they are trying to do what's best for kids.

Within these environments, staff have embraced an attitude of risk-taking and tried a variety of new strategies to meet student needs. Others have volunteered to run extra activities such as character-related assemblies or afterschool clubs. Finally, several teachers noted that they have been able to take risks as leaders, "putting themselves out there more" to offer potential solutions or champion initiatives.

Each of the schools talked about having high expectations for each other and students. One interviewee described her principal's expectations as holding all staff to a "professional standard." Others provided examples of staff establishing schoolwide expectations for both faculty and students. As one leadership team member explained:

"It's that we're trying to do something so we can help kids reach their highest potential. I think that's the ultimate belief. It's what guides everything that we do that's successful." Others noted that consistency is a key complement to high expectations. For example, according to one teacher:

> I would say that there was an expectation. You know, a lot of things in education, we say initially this is what the district expects, or this is what the school expects, but there's no follow-up to whether you've done it or not. And, the message from the school improvement team and from [our principal] kept being, "you are expected, this is expected, this is expected." So, even the people who kept dragging their feet eventually thought, "Okay, this isn't going away. I'm going to have to do it." And then they got to see the success in their own classroom.

Many interviewees saw positivity as an important attitude to support collective change efforts. Several also mentioned that leadership team members and others played a supportive role as "cheerleaders" of various initiatives and worked actively to positively influence others. Several respondents, for example, talked about reframing negative discourse into more positive discourse and sharing alternative views to curb negativity. Several other leadership team members echoed the importance of being a positive force in the building when things are challenging.

> That's been one of the hardest parts, I think….We need to be the example that people can come and see and understand and learn from. And then, I think on our teams we have been the kind of calming voice like "ok, don't

freak out, we are going to do this [initiative], it's going to be messy." I've

said "It's going to be messy" probably a hundred thousand times since we

started this [shared leadership] process, because teachers' natural instinct

is to freak out when something's not going well. And I've learned from all

this that you've got to muck through it first. And so being that calming

voice has been part of our leadership role here, too.

Each of the schools described cultures that reflect deep and authentic commitment

to students. Many interviewees described staff as truly believing that all students could be

successful and a commitment to "doing what's right for kids and doing it well" through

continuous improvement. Although each school acknowledged staff members who were

more reluctant to change or who exhibited more of a "fixed mindset" than others, they

felt the majority continually exhibited a willingness to change and take on new

challenges. Interviewees described their schools as solutions-oriented and continually

seeking ways to improve outcomes for students. Several respondents emphasized that

their leadership teams tried to intentionally focus on generating solutions instead of

fixating on problems. One teacher noted that persistence is important—sticking with

improvement until teachers can build their skills and see success. Another interviewee

described the leadership team as "being that driving force that keeps people moving

forward and growing," and other teacher leaders in the building as those who have a

"desire to constantly learn and grow."

Finally, one leadership team member summarized her experience encouraging a

collective growth- and improvement-oriented mindset among staff:

I think that it's okay for it to be messy. That's another thing we don't do in

schools—it's not okay to fail the first time. It's not okay for it to not work

out. And that was something…as we were rolling out [the initiative] in the

beginning…and then I took it back to my classroom, and I was flopping

all over the place. And we came back together as a team and they were

flopping, and she was flopping, and she was flopping, too. And suddenly,

it was like yeah, this is new, this is different. We're inventing this really.

It's going to be messy. And so that was our message to our teammates—

it's not going to work the first time. We've got to figure it out. And that

was really important.

Leadership teams had to cultivate their own collective mindsets and work to spread these

mindsets across their schools. Learning to be comfortable with the messiness of the

process was a big factor in creating this organizational condition.

Condition 7: Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school is an

essential condition for a shared leadership approach to leading change. All four focus

groups and 100% of individual interviewees described facets of attending to the whole

school as necessary to support a shared approach to leading change. Respondents found

that promoting attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school led to the

development and use of a common language, a sense of "being in it together," and a

system of supportive peer accountability. As one leadership team member explained:

I think when we're all focused on something common and we have that

language to speak to each other, it makes it easier to share the leadership

because you don't feel like you're out there by yourself. So even though

you're taking a risk, it's not you out on the tight rope alone; there are other

people there to support you.

Study participants described several strategies they used to attend to shared purpose and

focus for the whole school which include

- an unwavering focus on common purpose and goals,

- a shared sense of responsibility and accountability throughout the building, and

- a shift in view beyond the classroom.

Each of the participating leadership teams were clear in articulating their

overarching purpose—a focus on students and high quality instruction. Teams

underscored the importance of maintaining a steady focus on initiatives and not

abandoning them when they hit a stumbling block; rather, they continually monitored and

made adjustments as needed in order to persist. Several schools in the study—like many

schools—had a history of starting initiatives, then abandoning them for the "latest and

greatest." However, for the past several years, maintaining a clear focus on a manageable

number of school-defined priorities has increased their capacity to implement initiatives

well and build on and extend them naturally rather than continually jumping to a new

focus. For example, one school began with a focus on building background knowledge

through vocabulary development. This year, the district began focusing on the Sheltered

Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) as an approach to ensure delivery of high quality

instruction for their English language learners. Rather than considering this a new

initiative and starting over, staff members have maintained a focus on vocabulary development—one component of SIOP—while intentionally and incrementally extending their focus to include the additional components of SIOP. This particular example represents another point leadership teams made—the importance of maintaining a focus on initiatives well after they have seen success. As one leadership team member warns:

> If it's not stressed or looked for, it will be forgotten. Before we didn't purposefully talk about stuff that we had done in the past. So it was like, well if we did that you should be an expert, and you should go on and do that forever. And I guess we sort of brought the reality to the table that we, we still need to be talking about it if it's going to be a focus of ours.

Participating schools were unanimous in their emphasis on the importance of shared responsibility and accountability for reaching common outcomes in an environment of shared leadership. They described the two concepts as closely related but different and complementary; that is, according to one participant, "responsibility is innate….accountability is more measurable…you want people to be responsible but unless you make them accountable you don't know if they've been responsible or not." One leadership team member recalled when his school's culture first began to shift to one of shared responsibility:

> In the very beginning I remember [the principal] saying something to the staff about the fact that we need to work for improvement: "It's going to happen, so we can either not do anything and have somebody else come tell us how to do it, or we can do it ourselves."

When asked who is responsible for accountability in their buildings, the consistent response was, "we hold each other accountable." A typical example participants provided to demonstrate shared responsibility and accountability in the schools involved identifying a change initiative with a common goal and improvement strategy, articulating individuals' responsibilities for implementing the strategy in their classrooms (including timelines and specific criteria), identifying data sources such as periodic student assessments to collect, and finally, sharing the data publicly to discuss implications of the results as a group (such as adjustments to the strategy or professional development needs). One leadership team member highlighted several aspects of this process when reflecting on a successful change initiative. The school identified math as a priority focus area and designed a series of manageable change initiatives over the course of the year; as a result, students made significant gains in math proficiency (as reflected in classroom assessments in addition to the annual state assessment):

> Everybody in the school, not just teachers and principals, but every
>
> employee—the secretary, custodians, bus driver—everybody would work
>
> on these "math moments" everyday. Everybody did something for five
>
> minutes every day. We made that commitment as a staff. But then, beyond
>
> that and beyond the assessment, those kids who were struggling got a
>
> math buddy. And everybody committed to work with their math buddy
>
> every day. Everybody had a responsibility, and we made each other
>
> accountable for that. And kids kept us accountable because, for example,
>
> my math buddy showed up at my door every day before school; he

> expected to do math facts with me, whether I had something else on my plate or not. So, we were really purposeful with that, and, as a result, we have made AYP [adequate yearly progress on the state assessment] in math.

A teacher in a different building described an example of how shared responsibility and accountability have manifested in her school through cross-grade level discussions about student progress:

> As a grade level we looked at our data, and even across grade levels, and talked about what worked, what didn't. And those conversations were actually *so, so* valuable to really helping us to decide where to focus our professional development from then on and making decisions about how to continue to perfect and change the [initiative].

Several interviewees mentioned that, over time, the sense of shared responsibility has extended beyond the leadership team and staff to family members and students. One leadership team member provided an example:

> People are willing to step up. And if they see something that needs to get done, they get it done. Because they know that sitting around and waiting for a specific person to be assigned that role isn't always going to happen. And I've seen students do that with taking on responsibility in the school for their activities or planning assemblies. They know that they have a voice in the leadership roles.

Teams shared a commitment to doing whatever it takes to help all students be successful.
Although this commitment might sound straightforward and expected, interviewees did
not take it for granted. Several interviewees compared previous work experiences in
buildings without shared leadership to their current experiences. One individual noted:
"A difference between my old school and this school is that at my old school it was my
kids and your kids. At this school it's *our* kids." These shifts are reflected in one
respondent's view of shared leadership and responsibility:

> We're all responsible for the success of whatever it is that we're
> [implementing]—so, just that group investment in what we're doing and
> making sure that it's going forward as planned….Before, it would have
> been [our principal's] responsibility, in the eyes of the staff, that that got
> accomplished and now it's really even moved beyond just the leadership
> team having that responsibility to everyone in the school having that
> responsibility. So…a common thread for all of us is that we're responsible
> for the implementation and success of whatever it is that we're working
> on.

Respondents often pointed out that shifting to a culture of shared responsibility
and accountability took time and, in the beginning, could even be "a little bit of a sore
spot…[because colleagues] felt like they were having to report out and that we were
checking up on whether or not they were teaching the [instructional strategy] or not."
However, several interviewees noted that over time accountability has become "a part of
who we are and how we do things," simply "routine and just the way it is."

As respondents described their journeys learning to share leadership, they repeatedly spoke about shifting their thinking from themselves as experts in their classrooms to recognizing that individuals could demonstrate expertise at a school-level. Taking this whole-school perspective helped teachers shift to a shared sense of responsibility. For example, one teacher explained:

> I think when you're *not* looking at things in the viewpoint of I do have say, and I can have input, I can make things happen for the school, you're sort of just focused on doing what your immediate job is. You know, you take that mentality of, these are my kids that I work with, those are your kids that you work with, that's your classroom. And I think when you're looking at yourself and you have that mentality of I'm a leader, that kind of goes away a little bit. You see the bigger picture more.

Some respondents spoke to a duality between their classroom responsibilities and view as leaders beyond the classroom, with one leadership team member even arguing that teachers play "two different roles." A teacher from another school reflected:

> When you come to a new school and you're a relatively new teacher, you start to live in a bubble, and you only think about your classroom. But I think one of the roles of a leader is to really think schoolwide. What are things that affect the students? What are things that are affecting safety? What are things that are affecting climate and teachers and just logistics of how things work and scheduling? And getting a much, much bigger picture of things.

A leadership team member in yet another school echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that "you've got to be able to think beyond your classroom and your grade level….You need to be able to look at the school from above." Taking a view beyond the classroom has allowed teachers to take a systemic perspective of their schools; that is, they are better able to see the interconnections between parts of their system. One teacher illustrated:

> Even if you are the type that wants to just go in and shut your door, you can't shut out the rest of the school. Everything you do is going to be affected by the whole school. And not just your classroom, not just your students….[As a specialist] I get students from all different grades….Now I only have grades 6 through 8. So, I don't have the little ones, but I still go down on my plan time and visit with [the teacher] who has the little ones. And I always stop and talk with the younger ones, because I know that I'm going to have them. And so for me to say, "That's not my student, they're not with me yet," doesn't make sense, because they are going to be with me. But also, every student, say, in the eighth grade, affects all of my eighth graders that I do have, so how can I shut them out and say, "I'm just going to concentrate on mine?"

Finally, many interviewees emphasized creating and working toward a common vision for the school. As one leadership team member emphasized:

> It is so important to have everybody on the same page, with the same vision—having a shared vision of "this is where we want our kids to be," and being more specific than "we want all of our kids to learn and do

well." I think us having that made it more like a team approach. And then

it's like, we'll do whatever we need to do to get it done.

This expanded view beyond the classroom supports teachers in their ability to share leadership, and sustained practice with a share leadership approach reinforces this perspective. According to one experienced teacher and leadership team member:

I think this experience [sharing leadership] for me has changed me as a

person. I mean, I am a different person now than I was three years ago.

I'm even more invested in my school and my kids and the kids as a

whole….I always cared about all the kids, but I really only focused on my

22. And now what's going to work best in third grade is important to me,

too. And therefore what the third grade teachers are doing is important to

me. So it has given me a much broader vision of the school, of our goals

as a whole, and then my role in it.

Creating a common language was an important element of creating shared purpose and focus for the whole school that helped staff to develop common and concrete goals that extended beyond the walls of individual classrooms. This process helped staff see the school as a whole as well as their own places and roles in the school.

Finding 3: School leadership teams did not identify any of the seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors for supporting a shared approach to leading change as pre-eminent; rather, all are equally important and mutually reinforcing. The study intended to test the presence and importance of each of the seven factors in the proposed framework in supporting a shared approach to leading change. The data

analysis indicated that participants identified all of the seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors, so none of the factors were dropped from the framework. Likewise, data analysis indicated that all factors were important but none were overwhelmingly identified as more important than the others. Within focus group sessions, some individuals argued for different factors being foundational for the others; however, no leadership team reached consensus that any factor was more critical or foundational than others. In the end, however, each focus group did agree that there was a mutually reinforcing aspect to the factors and that no factor could be considered or addressed in isolation. For example, one focus group participant explained:

> It's kind of like the cycle [of continuous school improvement]. You can't have one without the other, and they're all really important. And it's like, you can't [attend to one factor] first and then the other. You could do one a little bit and then you've got to add this. So, I mean it's just a big cycle and I think that they're all equally important in their own ways.

Numerous examples of the interrelated nature of the conditions emerged throughout the interviews. For example, one leadership team member suggested that if a school could "get the trust as a first step, then the other [factors in the framework] can work in back and forth." Other leadership team members specified the need to establish a foundation of trust (Condition 4) before they could collaborate effectively (Condition 5), engage in open and honest communication (Condition 1), clarify roles and responsibilities (Condition 2), and provide each other with feedback (Condition 3). However, others felt that it would be difficult to create trusting relationships before addressing the other, more

tangible conditions. One leadership team member, for example, argued that widespread and transparent communication is a prerequisite condition for trust while another individual suggested that there are some actions—such as providing some feedback, celebrating, engaging in two-way communication, or setting up experiences to allow for collective ownership (Condition 7)—that are precursors to building trusting relationships, while others, such as collective mindsets (Condition 6) and collaborative inquiry, require a foundation of trust.

Interviewees often related the notion of shared responsibility and accountability (Condition 7) to other factors in the framework. For example, one teacher explained that the use of a variety of collaborative structures and the meeting formats lent themselves to opportunities for staff members to "share responsibility and emerge as leaders." Others emphasized the foundational role that developing supporting and trusting relationships (Condition 4) played in allowing them to reach the point of shared accountability; similarly, many interviewees described a "safe climate" that allowed all staff to take ownership of change initiatives. There were also three major mindset shifts (Condition 6) respondents described having had to make from focusing on

- accountability as the principal's responsibility to accountability as everyone's responsibility,

- accountability as punitive to accountability as pragmatic, and

- individual responsibilities and what is best for a group of students to focusing on the good of the whole school.

Several interviewees noted that a shift to differentiating roles and responsibilities based on strengths (Condition 2) required high levels of trust (Condition 4) and a shared sense of responsibility (Condition 7). It can be challenging for some teachers to acknowledge that they need help in some areas and equally as challenging for others to see themselves as leaders or experts in particular areas. In one school, for example, a leadership team member was identified as the school expert for a reading program, which initially took her out of her comfort zone. Over time, however, her comfort level increased as she recognized her role within the collective responsibility of the team: "I didn't need to know all the answers, I knew that I could go to [my colleagues] who are very familiar with the program if I had a problem. I knew I had support, I wasn't on my own." Other interviewees described regularly grappling with how to help individuals see themselves as leaders. For example, one teacher stated:

> The thing is, I think every teacher in this school is a leader and they don't
>
> realize it…. I mean, I think as a teacher you have to be a leader. You are a
>
> leader of your classroom. And, you influence everyone who's around you.
>
> I think a lot of people don't realize the power that they have.

In summary, analysis of the data did not demonstrate one or more of the factors as more important or pre-requisite for developing the others; rather all of the factors were identified as important, inter-connected, and mutually reinforcing conditions necessary for supporting a shared approach to leading change.

Finding 4: The framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors proved to be a useful tool to help leadership teams to make sense of their lived experiences. As discussed in Chapter 3, interview and focus group questions did not present the framework of factors until the very last question in the focus group session. The seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors were evident in leadership team members' examples of conditions that supported their collective change initiatives, but they were not necessarily the descriptors participants used. During interviews (before seeing the proposed framework), participants repeatedly used many words and phrases consistent with the factors such as *open communication*, *responsibilities*, *feedback*, *celebration*, *support*, *trust*, *collaboration*, *learning*, *mindset*, *purpose, focus*, and *whole school* when answering interview questions and describing supportive conditions. Participants tended to use the phrase *shared decision-making* and *input* more than *participation,* and *fractal* (a term learned through a common professional development experience) in lieu of *inquiry*. Every focus group spoke to the importance of each factor in the framework, provided concrete examples of what each factor meant to the school, discussed whether any factors were more important or foundational than others, and considered whether there were any extraneous or missing factors. There was agreement within all four groups that there were no factors missing and that all factors were important. However, no participant was able to articulate a set of behavioral, social, and cultural conditions that support a shared approach to leading change without prompting; in other words, participants did not have a common language or framework for thinking about the conditions prior to the interviews. When finally presented with the draft framework of

factors, the respondents in all four focus groups (34 total interviewees) affirmed that the seven proposed factors were a good representation of conditions they described as necessary in a shared leadership environment. Their comments responded to the "fit" of the framework as a whole: "they all make great sense to me"; "you just described our culture"; "I think you got them, by golly"; "you boiled it down"; "I don't know how you could better sum it up—each of those is a key point"; and "I mean all of these really resonate with our team because this is *all* of what we do." Participants showed appreciation for what they felt was a synthesis of collective ideas; most requested to keep the handout.

Alignment of Findings with Research Questions

There are four major findings for this study:

- Finding 1: School leadership teams expanded their views of and commitment to shared leadership.

- Finding 2: School leadership teams identified the seven proposed behavioral, social, and cultural factors as conditions that support a shared approach to leading change initiatives.

- Finding 3: School leadership teams did not identify any of the seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors for supporting a shared approach to leading change as pre-eminent; rather, all are equally important and mutually reinforcing.

- Finding 4: The framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors proved to be a useful tool to help leadership teams to make sense of their lived experiences.

Table 8 provides an alignment of study findings with research questions.

Table 8

Alignment of Study Questions and Findings

Research questions	Finding 1	Finding 2	Finding 3	Finding 4
1. How do experienced school leadership team members conceptualize shared leadership?	X			
a. How do leadership team members define shared leadership?	X			
b. What are the various roles principal and teacher leadership team members play while sharing leadership for school change?	X	X		
c. What is the relationship between individual and team leadership?		X		
d. How do leadership team members' lived experiences compare to their pre-conceived expectations of sharing leadership?	X			
2. What are the supportive factors that elementary school leadership team members experience in a shared approach to leading change? *Specifically, how do elementary school leadership team members describe:*		X	X	X
a. Teacher and principal actions (e.g., specific behaviors, events, critical incidents) that support a shared approach to leading change?		X	X	X
b. The nature of relationships (e.g., principal-teacher, teacher-teacher) and other social conditions that support a shared approach to leading change?		X	X	X
c. Teacher and principal attitudes and beliefs that support a shared approach to leading change?		X	X	X

Additional Findings

In addition to the findings directly related to the research questions, two other findings worth noting emerged in the data: (a) district influence on ability to take a shared approach to leading change, and (b) the need for outside assistance.

The district influences a school's ability to take a shared approach to leading change. All four schools provided examples of challenges faced when initiatives or directives come down from the district level to be implemented in the schools. When discussing this topic more theoretically (e.g., as something that might happen in the future), interviewees tended to see this as a potential threat to shared leadership. However, all the interviewees who provided recent lived experiences with facing this external challenge spoke to the principal and leadership team's ability to thoughtfully and strategically incorporate the district initiatives into existing school priorities. So, rather than responding to a new district office directive by saying "this is something we have to do, so let's do it," teams took the time to talk through the purpose, how it might address their current needs, how it might fit with current school-level initiatives, and ways to roll it out in a way that was consistent with the way they roll out any other initiative, paying special attention to gaining collective ownership. The schools used what they had learned about sharing leadership and implementing a continuous improvement process to make district mandates a part of their every day initiatives. Whereas they seemed to view district imperatives as a potential threat, they had learned to address these challenges. The schools seem to have developed a resiliency to respond to external challenges—a

flexibility to constantly adjust and make things work—that they may not consciously understand yet (as evidenced by the lingering concern of the potential threat).

Outside assistance is useful for schools shifting to a shared approach to leading change. Interviewees from three out of the four participating schools emphasized the importance of obtaining outside assistance—such as professional development, consulting, and technical assistance—to support their efforts to shift to a shared approach to leading change. They noted that although the teacher-led professional development was an essential element of their success, more formal training and guidance provided the base from which they could proceed on their own. It provided them with structured opportunities to build shared understanding and a common language/framework from research-based guidance about leadership and the change process, exchange ideas with other schools with common needs and interests, do concrete planning, and be accountable. It also helped them prioritize and commit to the much-needed time to work together that they might have reduced otherwise in the beginning stages. As one leadership team member explained

> I agree with the time commitment piece. I mean, we would spend half of a
> day once a month and two days together three times a year….I feel if we
> didn't have outside help, we would have just said, "well, let's just do it in
> a day." We would have lost that accountability piece unless we had to
> report to an outsider. I feel like initially there needed to be something,
> even if it was reporting to another school.

Several interviewees noted that there are likely many different types of assistance that would serve this purpose—ranging from a partner school to external providers who specialize in leadership and change. The important thing is to find an evidence-based system of support that they feel confident can help them learn "how to function as a leadership team, make decisions, and lead positive change."

Chapter Summary

Participants' definitions of shared leadership suggest that sharing leadership in schools today is operationalized differently than in the past and in ways that are more motivating and rewarding. The major findings from the study supported the researcher's proposed framework of organizational conditions—behavioral, social, and cultural—of shared leadership. In fact, all of the seven conditions were supported by the data, and each was important—none of the factors emerged as more important than the others; each condition reinforces a shared leadership approach and each of the other conditions. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of these results, including relationships to the existing literature and potential implications for practitioners and researchers.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter presents a brief summary of the study followed by conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter 4 and discusses the relationship of the findings to the framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors presented in Chapter 1 and the associated literature presented in Chapter 2. It concludes with a discussion of the implications for professional practice and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

This study examined the overarching challenge education practitioners face—knowing how to lead significant change collectively in their schools. There is a gap in the literature about collectively leading school change: the field needs to know more about the human-centered conditions in the school environment that have been successful in making significant changes toward influence-sharing leadership processes. This study contributed to filling that gap by examining the experience of elementary school leadership teams who learned to share leadership while working to transform their schools. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to understand the organizational conditions—behavioral, social, and cultural—they created to enable and support their efforts to lead change collectively.

This study used a qualitative research design to understand how school leadership team members made sense of their experiences using a shared approach to leading change and to identify behavioral, social, and cultural conditions in the work setting that supported teams' ability to share leadership two to three years after beginning to focus on and develop this capacity. Specifically, the research study tested the researcher's

hypothesized framework of seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors that facilitate a shared approach to leading school change. The central research questions and associated sub-questions for this study were:

1. How do experienced school leadership team members conceptualize shared leadership?

   a. How do leadership team members define shared leadership?

   b. What are the various roles principal and teacher leadership team members play while sharing leadership for school change?

   c. What is the relationship between individual and team leadership?

   d. How do leadership team members' lived experiences compare to their pre-conceived expectations of sharing leadership?

2. What are the supportive factors that elementary school leadership team members experience in a shared approach to leading change? Specifically, how do elementary school leadership team members describe:

   a. Teacher and principal actions (e.g., specific behaviors, events, critical incidents) that support a shared approach to leading change?

   b. The nature of relationships (e.g., principal-teacher, teacher-teacher) and other social conditions that support a shared approach to leading change?

   c. Teacher and principal attitudes and beliefs that support a shared approach to leading change?

The methods employed included collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data from fifteen individual interviews and four leadership team focus groups in four

Missouri schools that had demonstrated high levels of shared leadership capacity and increases in student achievement from 2008 to 2010. The research tested a framework of seven factors, drawn from the literature and from practice, that support a shared approach to leading change

1. communication and widespread participation;

2. clarity of roles and responsibilities;

3. feedback, recognition, and celebration;

4. mutually supportive and trusting relationships;

5. collaborative learning and inquiry;

6. collective mindsets conducive to school change; and

7. attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school.

Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. The researcher coded the data by research question and framework factors to identify patterns and themes for each research question (see narrative description in Chapter 4). There were four major findings in the study:

- Finding 1: School leadership teams expanded their views of and commitment to shared leadership.

- Finding 2: School leadership teams identified the seven proposed behavioral, social, and cultural factors as conditions that support a shared approach to leading change initiatives.

- Finding 3: School leadership teams did not identify any of the seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors for supporting a shared approach to

leading change as pre-eminent; rather, all are equally important and mutually reinforcing.

- Finding 4: The framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors proved to be a useful tool to help leadership teams to make sense of their lived experiences.

Findings Related to the Literature

This section discusses the study findings as they relate to the two primary research questions and the literature. Specifically, it highlights how this study's findings fit with, contradict, and contribute new understandings to previous studies.

Finding 1: School leadership teams expanded their views of and commitment to shared leadership. Two primary ideas emerged when considering Finding 1 in relation to the literature. First, participants' conceptualizations of shared leadership echoed the lack of agreed-upon definition in the literature. Second, sharing leadership responsibilities appears to result from both formal distribution of these responsibilities and more emergent processes.

Participants' conceptions of shared leadership echoed, at least to some extent, the lack of agreed-upon definition in the research and confirmed the assertion in the literature that practitioners have varied conceptions of shared or distributed leadership. Their individual definitions also mirrored the variability in the literature and the education field about the dimensions of shared leadership. That is, some definitions tended to emphasize what responsibilities or tasks tend to be shared, others defined the process of sharing, while others emphasized the individuals involved in patterns of sharing; however, all

participants' definitions tended to include some mix of the what, how, and who of shared leadership. In addition, a few prominent themes emerged from the interviews around key concepts—collective action, shared responsibility and accountability, and common goals. These concepts are similar to those most commonly found in the literature (Chrispeels, 2004; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Watson, 2007) and support the definition proposed for this study in Chapter 2: "A collaborative, mutually reinforcing process of influence among individuals and groups in an organization who share responsibility and accountability for achieving common goals."

The findings from this study align with existing literature that has argued that responsibilities in a shared leadership environment are both dispersed among formally designated leaders and emerge more informally and widely (Gronn, 2002; MacBeath, 2005; Spillane, 2006; Youngs, 2009). Participating schools used formal leadership positions and structures, such as the principal and school leadership team, to facilitate schoolwide change and "create the conditions where leadership is distributed" (Crawford, 2005, p. 213). However, staff members throughout each building also took on key leadership responsibilities in more informal, emergent ways; and as more teachers took on leadership roles and responsibilities, additional teachers became engaged. The balance of formal and informal leadership patterns and influence in each of the buildings varied according to the context. This finding reinforces the notion that a "both-and" perspective on leadership approaches might be useful—considering individual (e.g., principal) leadership *in conjunction* with collective leadership (as opposed to considering *either* a principal-focused *or* shared leadership approach) (Gronn, 2009; Spillane, 2006). In

participating schools, individual and collective leadership were both part of the mix. In some cases, the principal was a central driver of change and a force for creating the conditions for others to engage in leading change; in others, the school leadership team took more of the lead in driving improvement initiatives with the principal serving as guide on the side. Developing both individual and collective leadership capacity is key; but in the end there is a wide range of ways in which leadership responsibilities can be balanced among the principal, school leadership team, and whole staff.

Finding 2: School leadership teams identified the seven proposed behavioral, social, and cultural factors as conditions that support a shared approach to leading change initiatives. As discussed in Chapter 4, schools were unanimous in their agreement with the seven proposed behavioral, social, and cultural conditions that support a shared approach to leading change. In large part, the themes that emerged in the data around the seven proposed factors are consistent with the organization change and education literature. However, a few distinctions and dissimilarities are worth noting. First, the researcher originally hypothesized that participants would view mutually supportive and trusting relationships and clarity of roles and responsibilities as foundational to the other factors in the proposed framework. However, consistent support did not emerge for that hypothesis. Rather, leadership teams were unanimous in seeing all factors as equally important and mutually reinforcing. In terms of trusting relationships, this finding seems to contradict previous studies that found that creating trusting relationships is a pre-condition for other supportive factors such as collaboration, open communication, and shared decision making, and risk-taking (Angelle, 2010; Bryk, 1999;

Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Halverson & Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2006; MacBeath, 2005; Mascall, et al., 2008; Yep & Chrispeels, 2004). The results of this study suggest that (a) all conditions are important and should be addressed in order to create a culture conducive to shared leadership; and (b) there is likely not a specific order in which to attend to the conditions.

A somewhat unexpected theme emerged related to clarity of roles and responsibilities in these high-capacity shared leadership systems. Many of the roles and responsibilities of participating individuals and groups were operationalized by cultivating the remaining six conditions; that is, the condition of role and responsibility clarity was not only related to but defined by its relationship to the other conditions. Table 9 contains examples provided by study participants of principal, individual, and leadership team roles and responsibilities crossed with the remaining framework factors to illustrate how various conditions might be created and fostered on an ongoing basis to support a shared approach to leading change.

Table 9

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities for Cultivating Organizational Conditions to Support a Shared Approach to Leading Change

Conditions	Sample leadership roles and responsibilities		
	Principal	Individual teacher	Leadership team
Communication and widespread participation	Attend to open, ongoing communication throughout the building.	Share opinions or raise issues for the whole staff to consider in a constructive manner.	Facilitate two-way communication and ensure that all staff members' voices are represented in decision making.
	Provide opportunities for staff to have input.	Listen to colleagues.	Provide peers with in-depth information about
	Sit in on teacher team meetings to listen to staff	Communicate	

Conditions	Sample leadership roles and responsibilities		
	Principal	Individual teacher	Leadership team
	discuss what they are trying to do and what they need. Provide district- and state-level context and information, as needed, to inform decisions.	effectively with colleagues.	decisions. Field questions and alleviate concerns about change initiatives. Serve as a sounding board and avenue for staff to provide input. Identify points of confusion that need additional clarification.
Feedback, recognition, and celebration	Recognize staff strengths and expertise in particular areas. Encourage teachers to seek assistance from peers. Seek feedback, even when it is difficult to hear. Avoid taking things personally or being defensive.	Encourage and recognize others.	Recognize individual and group accomplishments.
Mutually supportive and trusting relationships	Provide positive encouragement. Regularly check in with people 1-1 to see how things are going. Demonstrate a willingness to support others in being leaders.	Go above and beyond to help peers. Demonstrate reliability.	Mentor new leadership team members and other staff members. Anticipate implications of change for colleagues and support staff through change.
Collaborative learning and inquiry	Engage staff in problem solving; let the leadership team and other teams help determine what is best for students and what direction to go. Help the leadership team to seek clarity and obtain information needed to	Share resources and instructional and/or content area expertise (demonstrate instructional expertise). Engage in continuous learning for the purpose of improving	Coordinate and lead school-wide professional development activities. Plan and lead school improvement initiatives (examine school-level student achievement results and other data, set goals, identify research-

(continued)

| | Sample leadership roles and responsibilities | | |
Conditions	Principal	Individual teacher	Leadership team
	inform adjustments to schoolwide initiatives. Provide ultimate oversight to ensure schoolwide initiatives are on track. Encourage teachers to lead professional development and collaborative meetings; be present and supportive without being center stage. Provide structures and time to facilitate collaboration. Increase comfort level with not always having or providing "the answer."	practice. Generate creative solutions.	based strategies, monitor implementation, and plan schoolwide reflection and celebration activities). Chair or participate on other teams to serve as a link between various committees and the work of the leadership team.
Collective mindsets conducive to school change	Promote risk taking and creative thinking. Demonstrate open-mindedness. Intentionally shift and maintain commitment to shared leadership beliefs and attitudes. Be self-reflective	Exhibit a positive attitude. Be proactive and take initiative.	Serve as champions and cheerleaders of initiatives to keep the momentum going.
Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school	Articulate a compelling need for change. Encourage staff to take collective ownership and share responsibility. Make shared leadership a priority. Be focused and purposeful. Use language intentionally to reinforce a collective perspective (e.g., *we* think, *our* kids).	Be willing to do anything to support the school and students. Volunteer for activities or responsibilities, including participating on or leading committees.	Set schoolwide expectations (for individuals and teams). Connect with key influencers in the building.

It was also notable that many interviewees identified a specific experience in which they examined a set of leadership practices and responsibilities as a key turning point in their shift to using a shared leadership approach. Each of the leadership teams had participated in this activity as part of the Success in Sight professional development. Principals receive formal leadership training. Although teachers and other school staff members typically do not, they take on both formally designated and informal leadership roles every day. Providing these teams with a list of leadership responsibilities gave them a common framework and language to use as they grappled with what it meant to *share* leadership and helped the teams understand how individuals could take on various leadership roles and responsibilities. This experience underscores the need articulated by many study participants to provide professional development opportunities for school staff to develop an understanding of what shared leadership means and how to share it.

Finally, in relation to communication and widespread participation in decision making, participants' lived experiences were much different than many representations in the literature of earlier site-based management initiatives (and participants' pre-conceived notions). The body of literature on site-based management indicated that participants had relatively superficial or compliance-driven participation in shared leadership; in this study, participants' descriptions of their lived experiences emphasized thoughtful communication and engagement in decision making. Shared leadership today is operationalized very differently than in the days of site-based management because it is not limited to just shared decision-making, and the shared decision making aspect itself is much more meaningful. Shared leadership today means coming to the table to grapple

collectively with issues and find solutions using the best thinking of the whole system, whereas under site-based management approaches decisions were often made and brought to the group for their "approval." The majority of participants were initially skeptical or indifferent about shifting to a shared leadership approach because their pre-conceived expectations were based on a site-based management perspective of shared leadership. But after creating this more authentic level of communication and participation in decision making, they could not conceive of making decisions in any other way; the key is overcoming the pre-conceived expectations and getting to that level.

Finding 3: School leadership teams did not identify any of the seven behavioral, social, and cultural factors for supporting a shared approach to leading change as pre-eminent; rather, all are equally important and mutually reinforcing. The research related to shared or distributed leadership is relatively sparse and fragmented. Although there is growing recognition of the role that culture, or individual socio-cultural conditions such as trust, play in supporting this approach to leading change, very few studies have been designed to systematically examine those conditions, and even fewer have described the nature of the relationship among conditions (Carson, et al., 2007). This study differs from most previous studies in that it focused squarely on those conditions and found a mutually reinforcing relationship among them. It does complement one previous study that found a mutually reinforcing relationship among such conditions. Carson and colleagues (2007) conducted a study of shared leadership with 348 MBA students engaged in team consulting tasks and found support for their hypothesis that the three "mutually reinforcing and complementary" dimensions (shared

purpose, social support, voice) facilitate shared leadership and "work together to create an internal team environment that is characterized by a shared understanding about purpose and goals, a sense of recognition and importance, and high levels of involvement, challenge, and cooperation" (p. 1223). These researchers noted that theirs was the first study, to their knowledge, that had "explored the conditions that give rise to shared leadership" (Carson, et al., 2007, p. 1218). The same year, Leithwood and colleagues conducted a study of distributed leadership patterns in eight schools in a large urban/suburban Canadian school district, and found eight the factors that promote distribution of leadership (Leithwood, et al., 2007); however, they did not have any findings related to the interrelatedness of factors.

Extending beyond the shared or distributed leadership research, this finding also fits with previous research related to the complexity of changing school cultures; that is, researchers have long argued that changing an organization's culture is systemic in nature and, therefore, "must be done in a comprehensive way if it is to be effective and of lasting significance" (Copland, 2003, p. 379). In a study of the relationships among school climate, teacher empowerment, and school effectiveness, Sweetland (2000) concluded that a variety of organizational properties "are likely reciprocal"; for example, "school climate, teacher empowerment, and norms of efficacy interact and reinforce each other" (p. 724) to impact student achievement. Taken together, the seven conditions in this study represent significant elements of school cultures; as such, they are factors that will be conditions that not only influence schools' ability to share leadership but the success of change initiatives themselves. Because they are reflective of the norms, values,

and beliefs of the school stakeholders, they will also evolve over time. School leaders, including principals and leadership team members, must attend to the evolving nature of the interrelated conditions because these conditions impact their ability to lead change while they are simultaneously shaping those conditions to positively influence their change efforts. While many researchers have argued that you cannot impact an organization's culture (attitudes, beliefs, assumptions) quickly—and some have made the case that cultural change can only happen as a result of changing behaviors—this researcher posits that organizations can get further faster by intentionally attending to both. Taking a shared approach to leading school change—one in which leaders simultaneously attend to cultivating the system conditions needed to support collective action while driving needed changes—is one way to make immediate changes that improve student outcomes while building system capacity and momentum for sustained, meaningful, and flexible long-term change.

Finding 4: The framework of behavioral, social, and cultural factors proved to be a useful tool to help leadership teams to make sense of their lived experiences. As discussed in Chapter 2, only a handful of studies published since 2003 have investigated sets of conditions in the school environment that facilitate a shared leadership approach to leading change. A summary of the findings from those studies and the framework of seven factors in this study provide the basis for a brief comparison (see Appendix J). First, there is a great deal of overlap among studies for five of the factors. Communication and widespread participation in decision making is identified in all five comparison models. Three of the factors—mutually supportive and trusting relationships,

collaborative learning and inquiry, and attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school—are identified in four out of five models. Three of the comparison models highlight clarity of roles and responsibilities. Two factors in this study's model—collective mindsets conductive to change; and feedback, recognition, and celebration—appear in just one or two other models. Two of the studies, including the most recent study of the group (Poff and Parks, 2010), reflect the most overlap with this study's findings, with characteristics overlapping in six out of seven of the factors; however, neither study addressed the feedback, recognition, and celebration factor. It is also important to note that most of the studies highlighted in Appendix J, with the exception of Carson et. al. (2007) and Poff and Parks (2010), articulated organizational conditions as a smaller aspect of a larger study; therefore, there is little in-depth information available to researchers and practitioners related to such frameworks. The framework tested and supported in this study may provide new ground for a robust conceptualization of conditions that support a shared approach to leading school change.

Conclusions

The researcher conducted this study to answer two practical questions frequently posed by education practitioners: (1) what exactly *is* shared (or distributed) leadership?; and (2) how do we really put shared leadership into practice in our school? As a result of the study, this researcher concludes that (a) shared leadership involves a combination of formal and emergent processes to develop collective responsibility and accountability for common goals; (b) shared leadership flourishes in an environment where there are several mutually reinforcing behavioral, social, and cultural conditions to support it; and (c) the

conditions are mutually reinforcing not only with each other but also to shared leadership itself; that is, each of the conditions supports the others, those conditions support shared leadership, and they are co-created and supported by the individuals in the environment.

Contemporary organizations—including schools—are responding to an increasingly complex array of environmental forces and changing circumstances (e.g., globalization, accountability, resource constraints). Given that the primary context for today's leadership is rapid and sustained change, it is infeasible to separate the constructs of leadership and systems change. Lived experiences of participants in this study extended far beyond the notion of leadership and, interestingly, did not always emphasize a key dimension of leadership (i.e., influence). Participants' experiences focused less on influencing one another and more on taking collective responsibility to fuel system momentum and ongoing commitment for change. Taken as a whole, across the four school sites studied, the descriptions of lived experiences with shared leadership offer a picture of a critical mass of individuals who persistently attended to forward movement and momentum for change until there was a rising tide and eventual "tipping point" for mass movement in the system. This compelling picture has led the researcher to re-think the original definition of shared leadership proposed for this study: a collaborative, mutually reinforcing process of influence among individuals and groups in an organization who share responsibility and accountability for achieving common goals. Although this definition captures critical elements of shared leadership, it is not quite complete. Given the picture that emerged, shared leadership, then, might be considered taking collective action, responsibility, and accountability for achieving common goals

while cultivating the conditions needed to promote change. In other words, shared leadership might be considered a process of creating the demand for, commitment to, pursuit of, and conditions for *collective change*. The behavioral, social, and cultural conditions that were the subject of this study, then, could be considered the conditions needed to promote collective capacity for school change.

Implications

This qualitative research focused on four elementary schools in one Midwestern state; therefore, the findings may not be generalizeable to all school settings. However, the researcher does suggest implications for education practitioners and researchers to consider.

Implications for action. This study draws attention to several possible implications for the professional practice of educators interested in or already implementing a shared approach to leading change.

1. Schools might consider using the framework of factors, or organizational conditions, identified in this study as a model to better understand and assess their own organizational conditions and the extent to which those conditions support a collective approach to change. The researcher suggests school staffs consider the behavioral, social, and cultural conditions they wish to further cultivate by examining them individually and as they interconnect with one another; then identify the structures and/or policies that support their efforts (rather than initiating from the structural or policy angle). For example, a school leadership team might first articulate criteria for each of the conditions in an ideal state for the school, and then periodically self-assess the extent to which the

school makes progress in cultivating the conditions. Similarly, the team could use the framework as a tool to identify various leadership roles and responsibilities to support specific change efforts. Given the interrelated and mutually reinforcing aspect among factors, schools should attend to fostering all seven conditions simultaneously and resist the temptation to focus on them individually and sequentially.

2. Schools and districts should consider the time and resources (e.g., meeting time, professional development, coaching) needed to support school staff in shifting to a more collective change perspective. It takes time, consistent focus, commitment, and outside support to develop a culture that supports a shared approach to leading change. A common argument against a shared leadership approach is that teachers do not have additional time to assume responsibilities in addition to teaching, especially in an environment of high-stakes accountability (Barth, 2001). Teacher unions can also discourage teachers from engaging in shared leadership, as it can be interpreted as taking on additional duties without compensation (Barth, 2001). In addition, implementing a shared approach to leading change usually necessitates deep cultural change that challenges existing norms, beliefs, and assumptions (Pearce & Conger, 2003). For example, staff members who are comfortable with top-down systems must adjust to collaborative interaction and become open to the possibility of being influenced by peers. However, as indicated in this study, creating the behavioral, social, and cultural conditions that support sharing leadership for change may be motivating and rewarding to teachers in ways that supersede the perceived burden of additional duties or discomfort that may accompany adjustments to existing expectations, norms or beliefs. But

organizations that choose to shift in this direction must commit time and training and development resources to seeing it through.

3. Given the time and development needed to shift to a shared approach to leading change, it is important for schools to consider ways to experience early success. Schools might consider as a starting point the three early critical events, or turning points, each of the participating schools in this study experienced that fueled momentum for both change and shared leadership: (a) a structured activity in which leadership teams reviewed a set of possible leadership responsibilities; (b) the first success with implementing a manageable cycle of inquiry, and (c) use of teacher-led professional development. When they reviewed the research-based leadership responsibilities, teams were able to discuss and contemplate which ones they might share, which led to insights about operationalizing shared leadership in their schools. Schools' first success with leading implementation of a manageable change initiative helped positively reinforce their efforts and contribute to leadership teams' confidence to guide collective change. Finally, while each of the participating schools emphasized the importance of having outside assistance to help them make a shift to a collective approach to leading change (e.g., by assisting with learning the change process, providing professional development), school leadership teams were also unanimous in identifying teachers' roles in translating and leading others through the change process and developing peer content-area expertise as both a critical turning point for and a key to sustaining widespread engagement in change efforts. Therefore, school leadership teams and external service providers might consider ways to create early opportunities for schools to engage in explicit dialogue about leadership

responsibilities, experience success with implementing a manageable but meaningful change, and make teacher-led professional development the norm.

Recommendations for further research. There are several ways in which this study might be extended and improved upon for future research.

1. The researcher recommends additional research be conducted to test the framework of factors validated in this qualitative study using a quantitative or mixed methods research design, including development of a set of instruments (e.g., questionnaire, observation protocol). Many of the available shared leadership instruments—with the exception, for example, of the survey instrument used by Poff and Parks (2010)—are weighted entirely or heavily on the dimension of shared decision making. There is a need for more robust instruments to measure the complexity of the construct of shared or distributed leadership, and the supportive organizational conditions, that are emerging in the literature.

2. The current education change literature focuses considerably on the role of the principal in leading significant change in schools. Even as there is growing support for shared or distributed leadership, recent literature has also called for a more traditional, "heroic" style of principal leader to turn around low-performing schools (Currie, Lockett, & Suhomlinova, 2009). Findings from a qualitative study of the institutionalization of distributed leadership in thirty secondary English schools seem to support this argument; Currie and colleagues (2009) found that, in contrast to schools located in more affluent areas that perceived they had more flexibility to experiment with distributed leadership approaches, in "poorly performing schools, predominantly located in socially deprived

areas, the pressures to address other more urgent matters preclude the distribution of leadership" (p. 1750). The study of this dissertation, however, seems to contradict the contemporary argument that shared or distributed leadership is most appropriate for situations in which schools are facing relatively low levels of immediate accountability pressures. The schools that participated in this study were all low- to moderately-performing when they shifted to a more shared approach to leading change; they not only identified external accountability pressure as one way they created initial demand for shared leadership but credited a shared approach to leading change for transforming their cultures, creating more accountability within their schools, and, ultimately, improving their performance. Future research might be conducted to provide more clarity on this issue (e.g., examining a range of approaches—from traditional to shared—in these high-pressure, high accountability environments; conducting a series of in-depth studies of the leadership approaches used in high-poverty and/or low-performing schools that have successfully made gains).

3. This study captured school leadership teams' perceptions at one point in time—on average three years after beginning to shift to a shared approach to leading change. A longitudinal approach might be taken in the future to examine (a) the development of organizational conditions over time, (b) the developmental continuum for principals, teacher leaders, and others as they shift from more traditional to collective approaches to leading change, and (c) the balance between principal-centered and collective leadership within a school over time and in relation to a variety of situations.

4. Finally, given the critical role that districts play in supporting and setting direction for schools, the researcher recommends future research related to the district role in fostering these supportive organizational conditions.

Concluding Remarks

This study contributes to the much needed literature about the organizational culture needed to support school staff as they collectively and actively engage in change. Although organization change theorists drew attention to the human side of change in the mid-twentieth century, research and practice continue to focus on the more technical aspects of change. The complex change today's organizations, including schools, face requires significant socio-cultural shifts in addition to more technical or structural changes, yet those aspects of change are often avoided or left unattended to. It is likely that this avoidance is due, in part, to the complexity, interconnectedness, and seemingly intangible nature of the behavioral, social, and cultural factors that impact change. But working hard to change a system without attending to the necessary socio-cultural conditions is wasted energy and leads to a sense of endless "doing" without results. On the other hand, mindful attention to creating the human organizational conditions that support change coupled with a simultaneous focus on the target of change (e.g., instructional improvement), can lead to significant and sustainable change. To date there has been limited guidance in the education change literature about ways to create the behavioral, social, and cultural conditions that are supportive of change, making it even more difficult for educators to address. However, we are getting clearer about ways to think strategically about—and therefore act upon—these conditions. And, ultimately,

acting is what is important—shifting from a more passive acceptance of culture as "the way we do things" that exists outside our realm of influence to a view of organization culture as something that we actively create, nurture, and impact through our daily actions and interactions to support collective movement toward common goals.

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APPENDIX A

Overview of Randomized Controlled Trial Study of Success in Sight

This study builds, in part, on a federally funded study conducted from 2008-2010, A Study of the Effectiveness of a School Improvement Intervention (Success in Sight) (hereafter referred to as "Success in Sight"). This section provides a an overview of the Success in Sight study, including design, sample and site selection, treatment procedures, measures, instrumentation, data collection, analysis, research questions, and data sources summarized from the original study research plan (Palmer & Apthorp, 2008).

Purpose of the Study and Design

The purpose of the Success in Sight study was "to provide an unbiased estimate of the effect of the intervention, Success in Sight, on school-level student achievement in reading and mathematics," or, in other words, "to determine whether or not the Success in Sight whole-school intervention is effective in raising the academic performance of students in low- to moderate-performing schools by building school capacity for comprehensive school improvement" (Palmer & Apthorp, 2008, p. 34) over a two-year intervention period. It was an experimental design involving 52 elementary schools randomly assigned to either treatment or control groups.

Research Questions

In addition to estimating the impact of Success in Sight on increasing student's academic performance in reading and mathematics, the study was also designed to provide an estimate of the effects of Success in Sight on building school-level capacity in the areas of data-based decision making, purposeful community, and shared leadership—

three school change capacity areas intended to lead to improved student achievement.

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Does implementation of Success in Sight significantly improve student achievement?

2. Does implementation of Success in Sight have a significant impact on the extent to which schools engage in data-based decision-making?

3. Does implementation of Success in Sight have a significant impact on the extent to which schools develop and maintain a purposeful community?

4. Does implementation of Success in Sight have a significant impact on the extent to which leadership is shared in schools? (Palmer & Apthorp, 2008, p. 36)

Additional exploratory questions addressed the following questions:

1. Does teacher capacity in data-based decision making affect student achievement in reading or mathematics?

2. Does teacher capacity in purposeful community practices affect student achievement in reading or mathematics?

3. Does teacher capacity in shared leadership affect student achievement in reading or mathematics? (Carol Haden, researcher, personal communication, August 2010)

Sample and Site Selection

The 52 elementary schools that participated in the study were low- to moderate-performing schools in two Midwestern states. To be eligible, schools had to meet the following selection criteria: (1) public elementary school serving at least grades 3 through

5 (e.g., K-5, K-6, 3-6); (2) low or moderate performance as indicated by having not made

adequate yearly progress (AYP, as measured by state annual standardized assessments) in

any of the three years prior to the intervention, or being at risk of not making adequate

yearly progress; (3) at least two classrooms each in grades 3, 4, and 5; (4) average student

demographics (e.g., percent low socio-economic statue, English language learners,

minority); (4) not already engaging in a comprehensive school reform model that

included an emphasis on the change process and collective efficacy and had no plans to

do so; and (5) availability and readiness to complete all the study requirements, including

random assignment (Palmer & Apthorp, 2008, p. 17-18). Once schools agreed to

participate in the study, they were matched on key characteristics (i.e., average school

reading score for 2007 and the percent of students eligible for free or reduced price

lunch); within each matched pair, one school was randomly assigned to the control group

and one was randomly assigned to the intervention group. Intervention schools received

Success in Sight services for two years while control schools continued with their normal

school improvement practices (Palmer & Apthorp, 2008).

Treatment Implementation Procedures

During the course of two school years (2008-10), eight external facilitators

(working in pairs) provided consulting and technical assistance to 26 schools in three

geographic areas. Each pair of facilitators served between six and seven schools. Over the

course of two years, participating intervention schools engaged in six, two-day large

group professional development sessions. Between large-group sessions, the teams of

facilitators provided technical assistance and consulting to schools during site visits (six

in year one; five in year two) and electronic/phone support. During site visits, facilitators assisted schools with efforts such as establishing leadership teams, planning and implementing manageable change experiences, establishing and enhancing their shared leadership structures and processes, using data to drive decision making, selecting research-based improvement strategies, reflecting on change initiatives, and using collaborative meeting time (e.g., grade level meetings, faculty meetings, study sessions) effectively. Facilitators also met during monthly on-site visits and via phone with building administrators to provide distance support to them as they implemented change.

Measures

To assess the effectiveness of Success in Sight in building school capacity for school improvement, the study measured changes in student achievement (reading and mathematics) and capacity for school improvement. In the area of school improvement, three outcomes associated with organizational change were measured: the extent to which schools could (a) use data to establish and monitor goals for improvement at the individual student and school level (*data-based decision-making*); (b) develop and maintain a purposeful community (*purposeful community*); and (c) share leadership for school improvement (*shared leadership*). Student achievement data were obtained from regularly administered state assessments in reading and mathematics in grades 3, 4, and 5. The three outcomes related to school improvement capacity were measured after years one and two using an online survey administered after years one and two. (Palmer & Apthorp, 2008)

Data Collection

Researchers collected data from control and intervention schools by administering an online survey to all teachers and administrators and collecting end-of-the year state assessment scores at three points: baseline (summer 2008), mid-intervention (spring 2009), and end of study (spring 2010). Researchers also conducted brief interviews with key contacts in each of the participating schools before the study began and near the end of the study to determine profiles of "local conditions."

Data sources

Data collected throughout the study was used to (a) describe the local context of all participating schools, (b) estimate the impact of Success in Sight on student achievement and school-level improvement practices, (c) describe the sample characteristics, and (d) describe the fidelity of implementation of the intervention. A description of data collection instruments follows.

Site visits. The research team conducted baseline site visits to all participating schools to document local conditions and context by conducting a focus group with the school leadership team and interviewing the principal. At the conclusion of the study, the research team conducted a short phone interview with key contacts to determine whether there was any change in local conditions.

Student achievement tests. Student achievement scores from state assessments were used as the measure of student reading and mathematics achievement. Scores were obtained for grades 3, 4, and 5 at baseline and at the end of years 1 and 2 (as state assessment data became publicly available).

Teacher survey. An online teacher survey was used to assess the extent to which the school engaged in the three key reform practices over the two-year period. All classroom teachers and specialists in participating schools completed the survey at baseline and at the end of years 1 and 2.

Sample information. Background information (e.g., school size; characteristics of the student population such as percent of English Language Learners, percent minority, and percent eligible for free and reduced price lunches; teacher characteristics such as years of teaching, certification) on schools, teachers, and students were gathered from state databases, the teacher survey, and state student achievement databases to describe the treatment and control group samples.

Intervention implementation records. The Success in Sight intervention team maintained program records throughout the study that included data regarding fidelity of implementation. For example, the intervention team tracked dates, duration, and participation in professional development sessions and dates and content of onsite mentoring sessions.

Analysis

Data collected as part of this study were analyzed to determine the impact of participation in Success in Sight and whether it, as a whole-school intervention, was effective in positively impacting students' reading and mathematics achievement in low- to moderate-performing schools by building school capacity for school change for two years (primary analysis). Secondary analyses were conducted to examine the effects of three specific school improvement practices on student achievement: (a) data-based

decision making, (b) purposeful community, and (c) shared leadership (secondary

analysis). Finally, exploratory analyses were performed to determine whether teacher

capacity in the areas of data-based decision making, purposeful community, and shared

leadership affect student achievement.

Findings.

Data analysis is still underway. Findings are expected to be released in late 2011.

APPENDIX B

Shared Leadership Assessment

Success in Sight Participant Manual

Shared Leadership

Initiating

- A school leadership team has been established, but few, if any, other structures exist to support shared leadership.

- Communication and information flow among groups in the building is limited.

- The principal assumes primary responsibility for planning and facilitating leadership team and other staff meetings.

- Some staff are recognized as leaders, though their leadership and positive influence may be underutilized.

- Many teachers operate fairly independently and do not always feel that there is a common direction or purpose.

- Individuals provide one another with informal social support (e.g., encouragement), though this support is not necessarily an established part of the school culture.

- Decision-making processes are not formalized or articulated.

- Staff are aware that changes are more difficult to implement for some people than others, but there are no formal strategies for helping individuals manage the personal transitions that accompany change.

Building Capacity

- The school leadership team is established, meets regularly, and intentionally focuses on increasing its capacity to lead improvement efforts. The school is putting other structures in place to support shared leadership throughout the building.

- Shared leadership structures are used to increase communication throughout the building.

- Staff have established and follow agreements about open and honest communication.

- There are formal facilitation structures (e.g., note taker) used in leadership team and other meetings.

- The principal and other school leaders intentionally foster a school environment that is conducive to shared leadership (i.e., it promotes a common sense of purpose and focus on collective goals and social support).

- Groups use different decision-making processes (e.g., consensus, majority) for different decisions.

- A core group of school leaders understands how to use transition management strategies (e.g., creating time and a psychologically safe environment for dialogue, "pressuring" people to act but backing off when people are overwhelmed).

Sustaining

- The school leadership team and several other structures (e.g., ad hoc design teams, collaborative learning groups) are in place and used effectively to increase productivity.

- Staff communicate openly, honestly, and professionally with one another, without fear of reprisal, and there is a continuous flow of information among groups that facilitates progress toward collective goals.

- Staff members share responsibility for planning and facilitating the leadership team and other staff meetings and implement formal facilitation structures without outside assistance or prompting.

- All staff members foster a school environment that is conducive to shared leadership. The school culture is one that promotes risk taking and innovation on behalf of positive outcomes for students.

- Individuals throughout the school see themselves as leaders who want to share responsibility and influence actions for change. They are able to tap into each other's underlying motivations for change and create a collective sense of meaning, purpose, and alignment for change.

- Decision-making processes are clearly defined and there is collective understanding of who (e.g., team, individual teachers) makes different decisions.

- All staff understand and use transition management strategies.

| Initiating | | | Building Capacity | | | Sustaining | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Module 6 Segment 6.3   11

Figure B1. Shared leadership assessment. From "Success in Sight: A Comprehensive Approach to School Improvement (Module 6, Segment 6.3)," by C. B. Dean & D. Parsley, 2010, p. 11. Copyright 2010 by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). Reprinted with permission of McREL.

APPENDIX C

Leadership Team Member Interview Protocol

Thank you for talking with me today. As you know, this interview contributes to a study I am conducting about shared leadership. I am hoping to identify common factors in school work settings that support using a shared approach to leading change. To do this, I will ask you a series of questions (that you have already seen) regarding your experience with sharing leadership and change. I may ask you additional questions that stem from your responses to gain additional detail or seek clarity. As a reminder, your identity will be kept confidential, this interview is voluntary, and you can discontinue the interview at any time. The interview is expected to take 60 minutes or less. Do you have any questions about the study before we begin?

Personal Information

Position: Length of time on school leadership

Length of time at this school: team:

Shared Leadership & Role of the Leadership Team

1. Before you began focusing on shared leadership as a school, what did you expect it would be like? In what ways did your original expectations play out? In what ways did they not play out as expected?

2. What does being a *leader* mean to you?

3. How do you define shared leadership?

4. Describe the membership and role of the leadership team in the school.

   a. What kind of role do you typically take on the leadership team?

   b. How is your leadership role similar and different from (the principal/teachers)?

   c. How do you, as a team, clarify and negotiate roles and responsibilities?

   d. Describe the nature of relationships among leadership team members (teacher-teacher, principal-teacher)? between non-leadership team members and leadership team members in this school? How have those relationships changed, if at all, over time?

   e. Describe the nature of communication and decision making within the leadership team and schoolwide.

5. Talk about your experience developing as a leader in this school.

    a.   In what ways (if at all) has your own development as a leader influenced the school leadership team's development?

    b.   In what ways (if at all) has your personal leadership development been influenced by the school leadership team? Others in the school?

6. Who are the (other) teacher leaders in this school? How do they demonstrate leadership?

7. What is it like to be a (teacher/principal) on the leadership team responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring schoolwide change initiatives?

    a.   If you were to give advice to a newly formed leadership team in a different school, what would you tell them to help them be successful?

Recent Experience Leading Change Initiative

Think about a recent change effort that resulted in positive outcomes for students. For example, it might be one of your recent fractal improvement experiences. [Note to reviewers: the term *fractal improvement experience* is familiar to the school sites from participation in the Success in Sight intervention. It refers to a manageable systemic improvement experience that includes all of the required parts of a major school improvement initiative.]

8. What was the nature and extent of the improvement effort?

9. Please tell me the story of your experience with that change effort, including any thoughts, action, or feelings you had. Be sure to highlight what you think were the most important factors that supported you and your team's ability to lead this effort, including the nature of:

- Teacher and principal behaviors/actions
- Relationships among staff and other social conditions
- Teacher and principal beliefs and attitudes

APPENDIX D

Leadership Team Focus Group Protocol

Thank you for meeting with me today. As you know, this focus group interview contributes to a research study I am conducting, under the supervision of my faculty advisor Dr. ███████, about shared leadership. I am hoping to identify common factors in school work settings that support using a shared approach to leading change. I have identified an initial set of factors from the phone interviews and would like you to provide feedback. To do this, I will ask you a series of questions regarding your experience with sharing leadership and change. I may ask you additional questions that stem from your responses to gain additional detail or seek clarity. As a reminder, your identity will be kept confidential, this interview is voluntary, and you can discontinue the interview at any time. The interview is expected to take approximately 90-120 minutes. Do you have any questions about the study before we begin?

1. To begin, I would like you to take 15-20 minutes (as a group) to discuss your understanding of shared leadership and draw a picture that represents shared leadership in your school. [Possible prompt: have them identify the leadership team, principal, etc. in the picture]

    a. What are the different roles that various team members take?

    b. How do you, as a team, determine who is responsible for various tasks?

    c. Who is responsible for holding the team and others accountable for school improvement activities? What are some examples of how accountability plays out day to day?

    d. How does this picture and your current experiences compare to what you originally expected shared leadership would mean for your school?

    e. What do you see as the relationship between individual and team leadership? In what ways does your membership on this team support your development as a leader and vice versa?

2. If you were consultants working with another school in your district that was interested in taking a shared approach to leading change, what would you describe as being key to successful shared leadership? [Possible additional prompts:]

    a. *Scenario 1*: *Because of declining enrollment, your school has to close. You have the opportunity to visit several schools over the next year to determine where you would like to work next. Assuming that you would like to continue*

taking a shared approach to leading change in your new school…What kind of environment would you look for (possible probe: What kind of indicators would there be that shared leadership already existed in the school?)? What questions would you ask others who work there to determine if it is a good fit?

b. *Scenario 2: Next year, your school will be combined with another school, Adams Elementary. Adams is a traditionally run school with hierarchical, top-down leadership. However, the principal is curious about moving to a more shared approach to leading change. What do you tell her is most essential for building and sustaining schoolwide leadership capacity? What do you do on a daily basis to shift the culture to a more collective approach to leading change?*

3. Now I would like you to share your thoughts about the ways in which the following factors, or conditions, support your ability to take a shared approach to leading change in your school.

    a. Communication and widespread participation

    b. Clarity of roles and responsibilities

    c. Feedback, recognition, and celebration

    d. Mutually supportive and trusting relationships

    e. Collaborative learning and inquiry

    f. Collective mindsets conducive to school change

    g. Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school
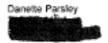
APPENDIX E

IRB Approval Letter

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

January 31, 2011

Danette Parsley

Protocol #: E1210D01
Project Title: *A Qualitative Study of the Behavioral, Social, and Cultural Factors that Support a Shared Approach to Leading School Change*

Dear Ms. Parsley:

Thank you for submitting the revisions requested by Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools IRB (GPS IRB) for your study, *A Qualitative Study of the Behavioral, Social, and Cultural Factors that Support a Shared Approach to Leading School Change.* The IRB has reviewed your revisions and found them acceptable. You may proceed with your study. The IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46 - http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

> (b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:
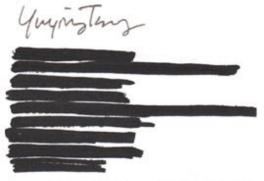
> **Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a Request for **Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact me. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Associate Provost for Research & Assistant Dean of Research, Seaver College
        Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs
        Dr. Yuying Tsong, Interim Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
        Ms. Jean Kang, Manager, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
        Dr. Susan Nero

APPENDIX F

Participant Informed Consent Form

I understand that Danette Parsley, a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University, is conducting a research study, under the supervision of faculty advisor Dr. Susan Nero, of shared leadership and that I have been asked to participate in the research. Specifically, I understand that:

1. Participation in this study is independent of my involvement in McREL's previous study of Success in Sight and is being undertaken independently by Danette for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements of her dissertation.

2. The overall purpose of this research is to understand behavioral, social, and cultural factors in the school work setting that support elementary school leadership teams in successfully sharing leadership for change. Danette is interested in my perspective as a member of the school leadership team. Specifically, she is interested in my thoughts and stories about my experiences as a school leadership team member responsible for leading change in my school.

3. My participation will involve a maximum of one telephone interview and one focus group. The one-on-one telephone interview will take approximately 60 minutes and take place between January and March 2011. The focus group (involving other leadership team members) will take place at my school between January and March 2011 and last approximately 90-120 minutes.

4. I understand the interview and focus group will be audio recorded and transcribed for the purposes of this study. Data will be stored securely; only the researcher will have access to them.

5. I understand that the results of the study, once accepted by Pepperdine University, will become publically available to all interested parties. Results of the study may also be made public through follow-up publications. I understand that the investigator will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity (and my school's identity) will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

6. I understand that the possible benefits to myself or society from this research include contributing to the knowledge base in a developing research area and affirmation of our leadership team and school success.

7. I understand that there are minimal risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include adverse psychological, emotional, or behavioral reactions to interview questions. I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions with which I am uncomfortable.
8. I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.
9. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
10. I understand that the researcher is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Danette Parsley if I have additional questions or concerns about this research in the future (███████████████████████████). I may also contact Danette's faculty advisor for this research study, Dr. ████████████████████ █████████████. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I may contact Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB) at (310) 568-5753 or at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.
11. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All 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.

Name of Participant	**Signature of Participant**	**Date**	**School**

Name of Researcher	**Signature of Researcher**	**Date**

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX G

Site Participation Proposal

The purpose of this study is to understand behavioral, social, and cultural factors in the school work setting that support elementary school leadership teams in successfully sharing leadership for change. Your school was selected from the pool of schools that originally participated in the two-year study of the Success in Sight intervention (2008-2010) and for meeting the following criteria: (a) showing increased levels of student achievement from 2008 to 2010, and (b) having high levels of shared leadership capacity. Participation in this study as a school site involves:

- Working with the researcher to collaboratively identify leadership team members for telephone interviews.
- Scheduling and participating in a site visit during which the researcher will make informal observations, collect any documents the site deems appropriate and informative for the purpose of the study, and conduct a focus group with the school leadership team.

The study may be minimally disruptive in that it will require coordination of a site visit, three to four interviews, and a focus group. To lessen the disruption on site, the interviews will be conducted over the telephone and coordinated with individual participants. Each study participant will review and sign a consent form prior to data collection that describes the purpose of the study, participation requirements, and plans for reporting results.

APPENDIX H

Suggested Principal Actions to Support a Shared Approach to Leading Change

The following are suggestions for principals for supporting a shared approach to leading

change that emerged during focus group and individual interviews, organized by

framework factors.

Communication and Widespread Participation

- Attend carefully to open and ongoing communication throughout the building

- Provide opportunities for staff to have input

- Sit in on teacher team meetings for the purpose of listening to staff members
  discuss what they are trying to do and what they need

- Provide district- and state-level context and information, as needed, to inform
  decisions

Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

- Articulate non-negotiables

- Set expectations for individuals and teams in the building

- Play different roles as needed for the situation—e.g., facilitator, guide, information
  provider, participant, learner, advocate, devil's advocate, thoughtful questioner

- Model leadership for others

Feedback, Recognition, and Celebration

- Recognize staff strengths and expertise in particular areas

- Encourage teachers to seek assistance from peers

- Seek feedback, even when it is difficult to hear

- Avoid taking things personally or being defensive

Mutually Supportive and Trusting Relationships

- Provide positive encouragement

- Regularly check in with people 1-1 to see how things are going

- Demonstrate a willingness to support others in being leaders

Collaborative Learning and Inquiry

- Engage staff in problem solving; let the leadership team and other teams help determine what is best for students and what direction to go

- Help the leadership team seek clarity and obtain information needed to inform adjustments to schoolwide initiatives

- Provide ultimate oversight to ensure schoolwide initiatives are on track

- Encourage teachers to lead professional development and collaborative meetings; be present and supportive without being center stage

- Provide structures and time to facilitate collaboration

- Increase comfort level with not always having or providing "the answer"

Collective Mindsets Conducive to Change

- Promote risk taking and creative thinking

- Demonstrate open-mindedness

- Intentionally shift to and maintain commitment to shared leadership beliefs and attitudes

- Be self-reflective

Attention to Shared Purpose and Focus for the Whole School

- Articulate a compelling need for change

- Encourage staff to take collective ownership and share responsibility

- Make shared leadership a priority

- Be focused and purposeful

- Use language intentionally to reinforce a collective perspective (e.g., *we* think, *our* kids)

APPENDIX I

Examples of How Individual Teachers Demonstrate Leadership

The following are examples provided by interviewees of how individual teachers—

leadership team members and non-leadership team members—demonstrate leadership in

a shared leadership environment. Examples are organized by framework factors.

Communication and Widespread Participation

- Share opinions or raise issues for the whole staff to consider in a constructive

    manner

- Listen to colleagues

- Communicate effectively with colleagues

Feedback, Recognition, and Celebration

- Encourage and recognize others

Mutually Supportive and Trusting Relationships

- Go above and beyond to help peers

- Be reliable

Collaborative Learning and Inquiry

- Share resources and demonstrate instructional/content area expertise

- Engage in continuous learning for the purpose of improving practice

- Generate creative solutions

Collective Mindsets Conducive to Change

- Exhibit a positive attitude

- Be proactive and taking initiative

Attention to Shared Purpose and Focus for the Whole School

- Be willing to do anything to support the school and students

- Volunteer for responsibilities, including participating on or leading committees

Comparison of Study Framework with Previous Studies

Table J1

Comparison of Study Framework with Previous Studies

This study	Communication and widespread participation	Clarity of roles and responsibilities	Feedback, recognition, and celebration	Mutually supportive and trusting relationships	Collaborative learning and inquiry	Collective mindsets conducive to school change	Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school
Copland (2003, pp. 379-80) [a]	A need for strong consensus regarding the important problems facing the organization			Culture of trust	Culture of collaboration and professional learning; A need for strong consensus regarding the important problems facing the organization; A need for rich expertise with approaches to improving teaching and learning among all those working in the school		Culture of reciprocal accountability
Yep (2004,	Democratic	Principal support		Culture	Staff involvement and	Staff	Staff

This study	Communication and widespread participation	Clarity of roles and responsibilities	Feedback, recognition, and celebration	Mutually supportive and trusting relationships	Collaborative learning and inquiry	Collective mindsets conducive to school change	Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school
p. 173) [b]	processes; Culture supportive of shared leadership			supportive of shared leadership	commitment; Leadership capacity of all	involvement and commitment	involvement and commitment; Culture supportive of shared leadership
Carson et al. (2007) [c]	Voice (participation and input)		Social support (recognition of individual and team accomplish-ments)	Social support (efforts to provide emotional and psychological support to one another)			Shared purpose (similar understanding of and focus on collective goals)
Leithwood et al. (2007, p. 61) [d]	Providing full explanations for decisions; Going out of the way to ensure staff are aware of new directions and activities; Creating an organizational culture which is open, encourages	Keeping the numbers of people collaborating on an initiative manageable; Exercising influence through expert rather than positional power; Providing visible support and tone-setting from formal			Establishing collaborative structures; Providing opportunities for staff to acquire the capacities they need to participate effectively, along with the autonomy and time to act in accord with their professional beliefs and values		

This study	Communication and widespread participation	Clarity of roles and responsibilities	Feedback, recognition, and celebration	Mutually supportive and trusting relationships	Collaborative learning and inquiry	Collective mindsets conducive to school change	Attention to shared purpose and focus for the whole school
	strong staff commitment to students and is free of favoritism and internal dissent	leaders					
Poff & Parks (2010, p. 32) [e]	Widespread communication; Shared responsibility (group decisions and involvement)	Shared responsibility (administrative willingness to give up and delegation of authentic power)		Supportive culture (mutual trust; honesty among staff members)	Collaboration; Shared responsibility (teacher-led professional development)	Supportive culture (collective efficacy as a critical value)	Common focus

[a]Identified three organizational preconditions for successful distribution and sharing of leadership. The elements of the precondition, "Culture of collaboration, trust, professional learning, and reciprocal accountability," were distributed for the purposes of this comparison.

[b]Found five interconnected environmental factors that principals believe assist with shared leadership.

[c]Proposed that shared leadership is facilitated by an overall team environment that consists of three highly interrelated and mutually reinforcing dimensions.

[d]Found eight factors that positively promote patterns of leadership distribution.

[e]Identified five essential elements of shared leadership. Sub-elements of "Supportive culture" were distributed for the purposes of this comparison.