LOUISIANA HIGH PERFORMING, HIGH POVERTY PROJECT

A STUDY INITIATED BY

COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SALLY CLAUSEN

AND

SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, PAUL PASTOREK

SUBMITTED BY PROJECT MANAGER/RESEARCHER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examined successful leadership practices that led to student achievement in schools with concentrated levels of poverty and minorities. A primary focus of the study was to identify common leadership behaviors which have a substantial outcome on improving student learning and to ultimately influence practices of all school leaders.

The Louisiana Department of Education declared 21 schools to be high performing, high poverty (HPHP) schools. These schools were selected in February 2008 for their students' academic success according to the following criteria: (a) minority membership 50% or greater (b) free/reduced lunch participation at 82% or above, and (c) a School Performance Score (SPS) of more than 80.

The study consisted of two survey instruments - *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-Ed)* and *Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire* - onsite interviews with the principals, and a statistical analysis of the *VAL-Ed* findings with specific teacher, principal, and school factors.

Results from *VAL-Ed* (72 items rating leadership behaviors in learning-centered environment; 1= ineffective, 2=minimally effective, 3=satisfactorily effective, 4=highly effective, and 5= outstandingly effective)

- 21 HPHP principals had an overall effectiveness rating of 4.01 on a 5-point effectiveness rating.
    - Principals generally rated themselves lower than did the teachers and supervisors.
    - Supervisors gave the highest overall rating.
    - In general, the three respondent groups agreed on overall effectiveness.
- Six Core Components – *High Standards for Student Learning*, *Rigorous Curriculum (content)*, *Quality Instruction* (pedagogy), *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*, *Connections to External Communities and Performance Accountability*.
    - Highest rated - *Quality Instruction* and *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*
    - Lowest rated - *Connections to External Communities*
- Six Key Processes – *Planning*, *Implementing*, *Supporting*, *Advocating*, *Communicating,* and *Monitoring*.

- Highest Rated– *Supporting*
- Lowest Rated – *Advocating*
- National Norms – 91% scored proficient or distinguished
  - Distinguished: above 4.00 - 14 principals (67%); overall for 21 is 4.01
  - Proficient: 3.60-3.99 – 5 principals (24%)
  - Basic: 3.29-3.59
  - Below Basic: below 3.29 – 2 principals (9%)

Findings from *Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire* are consistent with *VAL-Ed* results and interviews. The open-ended questions in the *Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire* supported *Quality Instruction* and *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* as leadership behaviors prominent in the 21 HPHP schools. The results also reinforced a relationship between *Quality Instruction* and engagement as well as a connection between *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* and structure.

Five of the top rated *VAL-Ed* principals were selected to be participants in a multi-case study to delve deeper into their leadership behaviors as well as processes used to implement them. One of the products of the interviews was an insight into the first three years of the HPHP principal's journey as a successful leader.

- Year One - implemented a highly structured environment and established rapport with students
- Year Two - began building trust with teachers and instituted strong collaborative groups
- Year Three – committed to reflection and refinement

A statistical analysis was performed using *Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)* to evaluate for a significant relationship among teacher and principal years of experience at the current school and the size of the school against the results of the *VAL-Ed* study.

- Principal and teacher years of experience at current school were not found to be significant.
  - o Significant differences and positive mean differences between the small schools (less than 300 students) and the large schools (500 or more students) in the core components (all except *Connections to External Communities*) and in all the key processes.

- Significant differences and positive mean differences between mid-size schools (300-499 students) and large schools in high standards, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, and performance accountability, and in all six key processes.
- No significant difference found in the overall effect of small schools when compared to mid-size schools in both core components and key processes.

Based on Lee Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge, the term Pedagogical Leadership Wisdom (PLW) was coined to describe the "secret weapon" of these successful principals. PLW defines the wisdom of a school leader who has the academic foundation to make decisions about the instructional program and monitor the progress of the teachers and students. A leader with PLW has a deep understanding of the instructional programs, teaching strategies, and student achievement, also has the ability to support teachers and students toward academic and social success. PLW is evident when structure is based on engagement; i.e., structure with a purpose. Examples of PLW include:

- Changing the lunch schedule to allow an extended time for a reading block;
- Placing the same teachers on early morning duty so that they are aware of potential problems;
- Instituting a policy that does not allow interruptions (checking out students, announcement, etc) during a reading block;
- Requiring auxiliary staff to make their schedules so that they are in classrooms to work with small groups during reading block;
- Expecting teachers to keep notebooks handy to record notes about student's progress during the instructional day;
- Creating flexible schedules for paraprofessionals so that they can help a student when the need is first recognized;
- Providing transportation for parents to attend school meetings;
- Making home visits to pick up a student who did not show up for an important test;
- Creating lesson plans so teachers can focus on student data and identifying strategies to help them succeed;
- Setting up a new teacher's classroom, including decorating bulletin boards so that the new teacher can concentrate on the district meetings held at beginning of school year;

- Changing the time to report absences and lunch counts to the office allowing for teacher instruction at the beginning of the school day; and
- Organizing parent groups to serve as communicators for other parents to ensure important information is received by all parents.

The principals participating in Louisiana's High Performing, High Poverty Project have demonstrated their PLW ability. Their wisdom surrounds and supports all of the effective leadership behaviors identified by the authors of *VAL-Ed* while ultimately resulting in increased academic and social learning for all students. In summary, when effective leadership is present, students from low socioeconomic families can be academically and socially successful. An appropriate statement from the interview session captured the essence of the project – "We [students in this project] might be poor, but we sure are smart!"

STUDY OF HIGH PERFORMING, HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS

High Performing, High Poverty Project

In February, 2008 the Louisiana Department of Education declared 21 schools to be high performing, high poverty (HPHP) schools. These schools were selected for their students' academic success in the school year 2007-2008 according to the following criteria: (a) minority membership 50% or greater (b) free/reduced lunch participation at 82% or above, and (c) a School Performance Score (SPS) of more than 80. See Appendix A for a complete listing of the schools.

Commissioner of Higher Education, Sally Clausen (formerly President of University of Louisiana System), and Louisiana State Superintendent of Education, Paul Pastorek initiated the study to identify common qualities and attributes of these successful high performing, high poverty school leaders. The study consisted of two survey instruments, onsite interviews with the principals, and a statistical analysis of the *VAL-Ed* findings including specific teacher, principal, and school factors.

The first step of this research project was to identify a valid and reliable instrument that measured leadership behaviors of learning-centered principals. The tool selected was the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-Ed)* instrument. The survey was purchased from the authors of the instrument and an agreement was secured for the surveys to be scored.

The Deans of Education agreed to administer the instrument to the principals, their faculty, and supervisor in the High Performing, High Poverty project. This survey was administered in April and May of 2008 at faculty meetings either before or after the instructional day. Once the surveys were completed, the university representative sent them to the University of Pennsylvania to be scored. The state received individual principal reports and the state data set; the data was aggregated and analyzed at the state level using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (*SPSS*) by the project manager/researcher. For the overall descriptive statistics, the data set was weighted equally between the three groups by taking the mean of the teachers' responses for each school and averaging that value with the principal and supervisor responses for the same school. This was done to ensure that the overall statistics reflected the beliefs of all three groups. Respondents included 21 principals, their certified teaching staff, and 20 supervisors. The supervisor of the charter school did not participate in the survey.

During the same time frame, an online survey was also administered to gain demographic information (eight questions) as well as to pose open-ended questions (six questions) about educational policies and student success. The unstructured questions were divided into two groups: three questions relative to the respondents' current school and three were designed to gather information about policies and programs. Of the 21principals, 18 (86%) answered questions one through eight and 15 (71%) completed the *Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire*.

Onsite interviews with the principals were conducted in August 2008. The Interview Protocol was semi-structured to allow a free discussion; however, it included common questions, tailored questions, and detailed questions that ascertained important experiences that led to their success as a school leader of high poverty students. When interviews were scheduled, three of the principals had been moved from their original school in the project and two were unavailable; therefore, 76% (N=16) were interviewed.

Survey and interview data was coded and unitized to select a teacher, principal, and school factor that might have a relationship with the leadership behaviors as identified by *VAL-Ed*. These factors were part of a quantitative analysis. Data from the *VAL-Ed* instrument was used to select five of the top scoring principals to be participants in a multi-case study to gain further insights into successful practices that might be shared with other principals and educational leaders. These selected participants were interviewed at their schools in October 2008.

<center>*Instruments Used In the Study*</center>

Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education

In 2005 researchers, originally from Vanderbilt University, began work on an instrument to measure the effectiveness of educational leadership that was grounded in literature. The researchers, Ellen Goldring, Andrew C. Porter, Joseph Murphy, Stephen N. Elliott, and Xin Cravens, identified specific leadership behaviors and key processes linked to effective leadership. The six leadership behaviors and six key processes form the framework for the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-Ed).* The structure for *VAL-Ed* is rooted in research studies on educational leadership related to creating an effective school climate, based on Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, and is unique from other leadership assessment tools currently in practice.

VAL-Ed consists of 72 items that are divided into six core component subscales and six key process subscales designed to provide a 360-degree, evidenced-based measurement of leadership behaviors through the perceptions of principals, teachers, and supervisors. Each behavior is rated on a Likert scale of one to five, with five meaning "outstandingly effective" and one representing "ineffective." Not only must the respondents rate the leader's effectiveness in the 72 behaviors, but they must also identify the source from which the principal applies the behavior.

VAL-Ed's six core components are defined as the characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach. The core components are:

- *High Standards for Student Learning* – Individual, team, and school goals for rigorous student academic and social learning.
- *Rigorous Curriculum* (content) – ambitious academic content provided to all students in core academic subjects.
- *Quality Instruction* (pedagogy) – effective instructional practices that maximize student academic and social learning.
- *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* – integrated communities of professional practice in the service of students' academic and social learning. A healthy school environment in which student learning is the central focus.
- *Connections to External Communities* – linkages to family and/or other people and institutions in the community that advance academic and social learning.
- *Performance Accountability* – leadership hold itself and others responsible for realizing high standards of performance for student academic and social learning. There is individual and collective responsibility among the professional staff and students.

The methods through which effective school leaders produce these core components are referred to as key processes. The intersection of core components and key processes mark an effective tool for measuring learning-centered leadership.

The six *VAL-Ed* Key Processes are as follows:

- *Planning* – articulate shared direction and coherent policies, practices, and procedures for realizing high standards of student performances.
- *Implementing* – engage people, ideas, and resources to put into practice the activities necessary to realize high standards for student performance.

- *Supporting* – create enabling conditions; secure and use the financial, political, technological, and human resources necessary to promote academic and social learning.
- *Advocating* – promotes the diverse needs of students within and beyond the school.
- *Communicating* - develop, utilize, and maintain systems of exchange among members of the school and with its external communities.
- *Monitoring* – systematically collect and analyze data to make judgments that guide decisions and actions for continuous improvement.

<div align="center">Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire</div>

The *Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire* was administered online and was an adaptation of *Characteristics of Successful Schools Survey*. The *Characteristics of Successful Schools Survey* was developed by Victoria Bernhardt and posted on the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory website. The *Characteristics of Successful Schools Survey* was designed to assess staff perceptions about their school and school leader based on characteristics found in effective schools research. This survey was field-tested and determined to be valid and reliable.

Three of the six open-ended questions were taken from this survey; only one was modified from a closed-ended item to an open-ended question. The additional two open-ended questions were placed in the survey to gain specific information about leadership preparation; one of the questions was an effort to determine how the role of a higher education policy maker could improve conditions for school leaders. The open-ended questions were included to allow respondents to answer from their own viewpoints.

<div align="center">

Louisiana Results

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<div align="center">VAL-Ed</div>

Source of Evidence

The respondents were asked to indicate the source of the principals' ratings. The small percentage of *no evidence* indicates that more than 95% of the leadership behaviors identified by *VAL-Ed* were discernable at the 21 schools. Below is breakdown of how the decisions to rate the principals were based.

- 40.2% on personal observations;
- 26.3% on school documents;

- 18% on school projects and activities;
- 11.9% on other sources; and
- 3.5% could find no evidence of the leadership behavior. *Note: If the respondents could not document the behavior, they were instructed to not rate the core component.*

Evidence Used to Answer Questions

What evidence was used to answer questions?

- Reports from Others
- Personal Observations
- School Documents
- School Projects and Activities
- Other Sources
- No Evidence
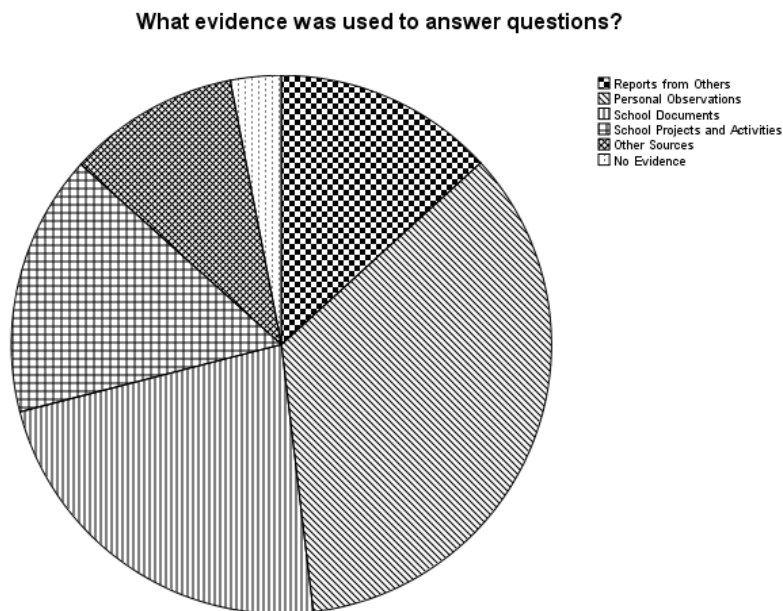
Core Components

Highest Rated Core Components

For principals, the averages for core components were between 3.84 and 4.03, except for *Connections to External Communities*, which had a mean of 3.53. Principals in the study viewed themselves less effective on *Connections to External Communities* core component.

An area of relative strength among core components for the participating principals was *Quality Instruction*, which was rated highest by the principals and the teachers and second highest by the supervisors. The highest rated core component by the supervisors was *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*.

An examination of the overall mean for the core components by the three respondent groups indicates *Quality Instruction* and *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* are the highest rated for the Louisiana principals. *Quality Instruction*, which includes pedagogy,

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was the most highly rated leadership behavior. The concern of principals that they understand and support their students and faculty was reinforced by interviews with the principals. The establishment of a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* received the next highest rating. Establishing an orderly environment in which teaching and learning is the focus was clearly a goal of the principals interviewed.

Lowest Rated

The attribute receiving the lowest rating was *Connections to External Communities*. This was rated lower by all three respondent groups and was generally the same across schools. Twelve of 21 principals rated themselves lowest on *Connections to External Communities*; the other nine principals rated themselves lowest on *High Standards for Student Learning* (three), *Performance Accountability* (three), *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* (one), *Rigorous Curriculum* (one), and one principal self rated equal rankings across all behaviors.   Likewise, 11 of 20 supervisors rated their principals lowest on *Connections to External Communities*, the other nine supervisors rated the principals lowest on *High Standards for Student Learning* (one), *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* (three), *Rigorous Curriculum* (two), one supervisors had equal ratings across all behaviors, and two supervisors rated two behaviors as lowest (*Rigorous Curriculum* and *High Standards for Student Learning).* Teachers overwhelmingly rated their principals lowest on *Connections to External Communities*, while two groups of teachers rated their principals lowest on *Rigorous Curriculum.*

Overall Rating

Variable	Valid N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Quality Instruction	62	2.17	5.00	4.13
Culture of Learning	62	1.58	5.00	4.09
Performance Accountability	62	2.27	5.00	4.06
High Standards	62	2.33	5.00	4.07
Rigorous Curriculum	62	2.17	5.00	4.02
Connections to External Communities	62	1.83	5.00	3.70
Overall	**62**	**2.21**	**5.00**	**4.01**

Principal Rating

Principal Rating		
	Mean	**Range**
Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior	4.03	2.67-4.83
Quality Instruction	3.98	2.17-4.92
Performance Accountability	3.94	2.58-5.00
High Standards for Student Learning	3.93	2.92-4.75
Rigorous Curriculum	3.84	2.17-4.58
Connections to External Communities	3.53	1.83-4.92

Teacher Rating

Teacher Rating		
	Mean	**Range**
Quality Instruction	4.14	3.6-4.77
High Standards for Student Learning	4.07	3.45-4.63
Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior	4.04	3.54-4.64
Rigorous Curriculum	4.03	3.43-4.72
Performance Accountability	4.00	3.36-4.63
Connections to External Communities	3.73	3.21-4.54

Supervisor Rating

Supervisor Rating		
	Mean	**Range**
Quality Instruction	4.30	2.41-5.00
Performance Accountability	4.25	2.27-5.00
High Standards for Student Learning	4.22	2.33-5.00
Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior	4.19	1.58-5.00
Rigorous Curriculum	4.19	2.33-5.00
Connections to External Communities	3.84	1.89-5.00

<center>***Key Processes***</center>

Highest Rating

   Supporting was the most highly rated key process for the Louisiana principals. *Supporting* must be evident for quality instruction to occur and also key to the establishment of a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*. The principals were clear in the interviews that the most important characteristic they could have was support for the faculty and students.

Lowest Rating

   The lowest rating for principals and teachers was *Advocating*. Of the 21 principals, eight rated *Advocating* as their lowest key process and another two rated it as one of their two lowest ratings. Thirteen of the teacher groups rated it as the lowest as well. The supervisors were less united in their evaluation of key process used by principals. *Planning* (six), *Monitoring* (five), *Communication* (four), *Advocating* (three), one supervisor rated all key processes the same and one had two lowest ratings (*Planning* and *Implementing*).

   The definition of *Advocating* in the *VAL-Ed* instrument makes reference to the principal's ability to advocate for students in the external community. Through the interview process, the researcher discerned that the reference to *Connection to External Communities* was the probable reason *Advocating* was rated as the lowest.

Overall Rating

Variable	Valid N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Planning	62	2.00	5.00	3.97
Implementing	62	2.33	5.00	4.01
Supporting	62	2.25	5.00	4.13
Advocating	62	2.08	5.00	3.94
Communicating	62	1.92	5.00	4.02
Monitoring	62	2.08	5.00	3.99
Overall	**62**	**2.21**	**5.00**	**4.01**

Principal Rating

	Principal Rating	
	Mean	**Range**
Supporting	4.00	2.25-4.91
Communicating	3.90	2.50-4.92
Monitoring	3.88	2.50-4.83
Planning	3.84	2.33-4.67
Implementing	3.83	2.33-4.67
Advocating	3.75	2.42-4.58

Teacher Rating

	Teacher Rating	
	Mean	**Range**
Supporting	4.08	3.60-4.68
Communicating	4.01	3.42-4.58
Implementing	4.01	3.52-4.65
Monitoring	4.00	3.44-4.66
Planning	3.98	3.48-4.66
Advocating	3.92	3.26-4.57

Supervisor Rating

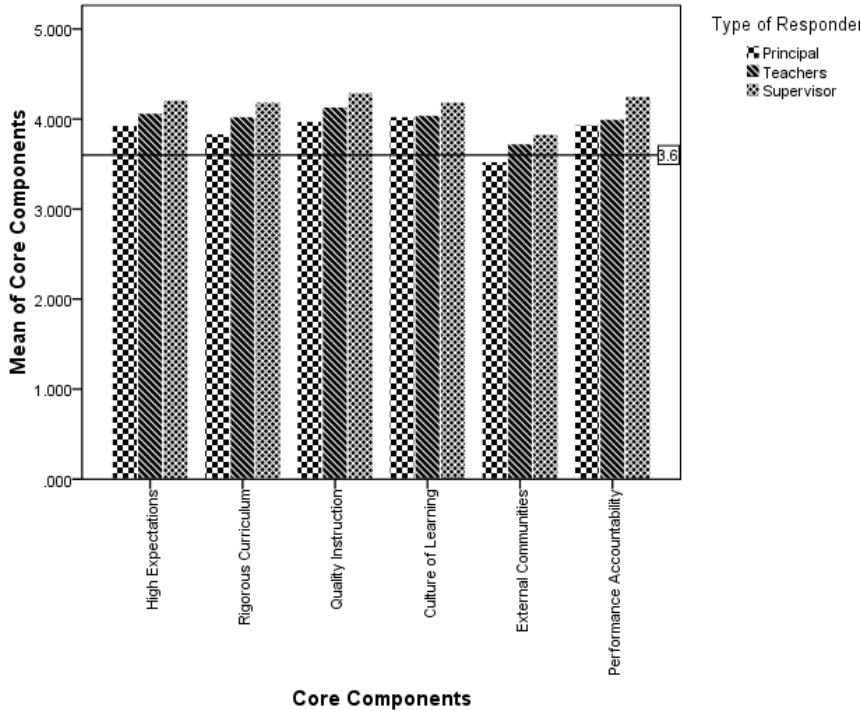|	Supervisor Rating	
	Mean	**Range**
Supporting	4.30	2.42-5.00
Implementing	4.20	2.33-5.00
Communicating	4.16	1.92-5.00
Advocating	4.16	2.08-5.00
Monitoring	4.10	2.08-5.00
Planning	4.08	2.00-5.00

National Norms - Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education

According to national norms published by authors of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education*, the ranges of scores for norms of proficiency in the *Val-Ed* survey are: above 4.00, distinguished; 3.60-3.99, proficient; 3.29-3.59, basic; below 3.29, below basic. Among the sample of 21 principals, 14 (67%) scored in the distinguished proficiency

range, five scored in the proficient range (24%), and two (9%) scored below basic. Principals' self scored rating was lower than all other groups on both core components and key processes.

| Proficiency	Range of scores	21 HPHP Principals Overall
Distinguished	4.00 – 5.00	14 (67%)
Proficient	3.60-3.99	5 (24%),
Basic	3.29-3.59	
Below Basic	3.29 – 0.00	2 (9%)

Mean of principal, teacher, and supervisor ratings on core components

Note: Reference line indicates a rating of Proficient and above

Descriptive Statistics For Key Processes From VAL-Ed Survey With Proficiency Rating
Noted

Mean of principal, teacher, and supervisor ratings on key processes
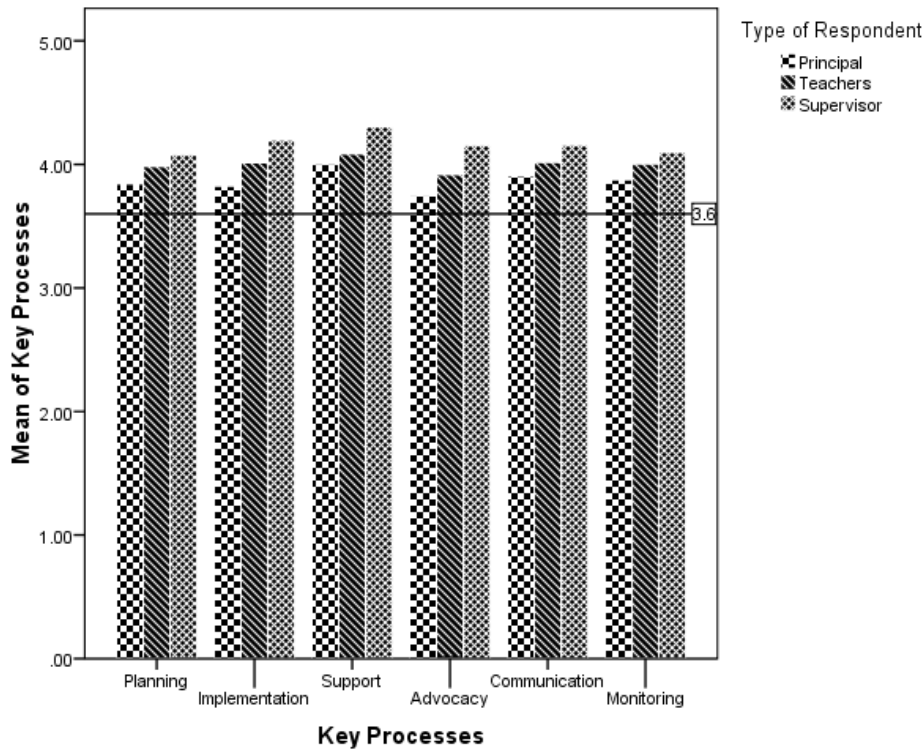
Note: Reference line indicates a rating of Proficient and above.

Overall Effectiveness Scores

     The chart below, *Overall Effectiveness Ratings Across Groups* indicates the HPHP principals' overall effectiveness rating by respondent groups. The overall rating of the HPHP principals was 4.01 which scores within the distinguished range. This rating is inclusive of the six core components and the six key processes. The rating was based on 5-point rating scale with 1= ineffective, 2=minimally effective, 3=satisfactorily effective, 4=highly effective, and 5= outstandingly effective.

Overall Effectiveness Ratings Across Groups

Respondent	Mean	Range
Principal	3.87	2.39 to 4.72
Supervisors	4.16	2.18 to 5.00
Teachers	4.00	3.46 to 4.65
Overall	**4.01**	**2.18 to 5.00**

Overall effectiveness scores for all principals places 14 of the 21 principals in the distinguished category. Principals whose score was less than proficient was generally due to a lower self score than the other two groups on both core components and key processes. Two schools are notable in this proficiency rating. Both of the schools are in the below basics proficiency rating. A further examination by the researcher indicated that both schools were in the same parish and received low ratings from the supervisor as well as low ratings from both principals. In both incidences, the teachers rated the principals as proficient.

Overall Effectiveness Scores From VAL-Ed Survey For All Principals With Distinguished Proficiency Rating Noted.
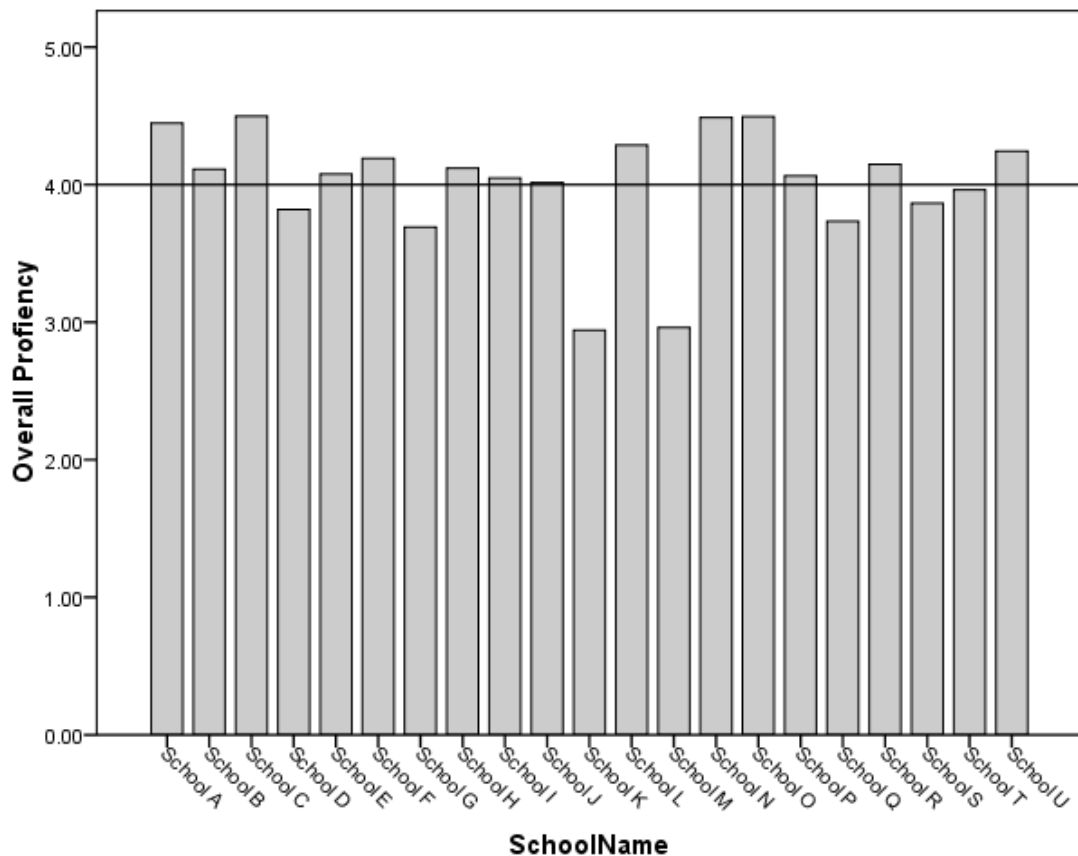

Multi-case Study

The six principals with the highest rating were reviewed for participation in a multi-case study. One of the top six principals was moved to another school in the project year and was eliminated from the study. The researcher discovered through the interview process

that each of these five selected for the study had something special about their drive and determination that merited further study. Due to the nature of the extreme sampling population, the multi-case study also included comments from other members of the population sampled. The multi-case study may be found in Appendix B.

Five Highest Scoring Principals - Overall Proficiency with Distinguished Rating Noted
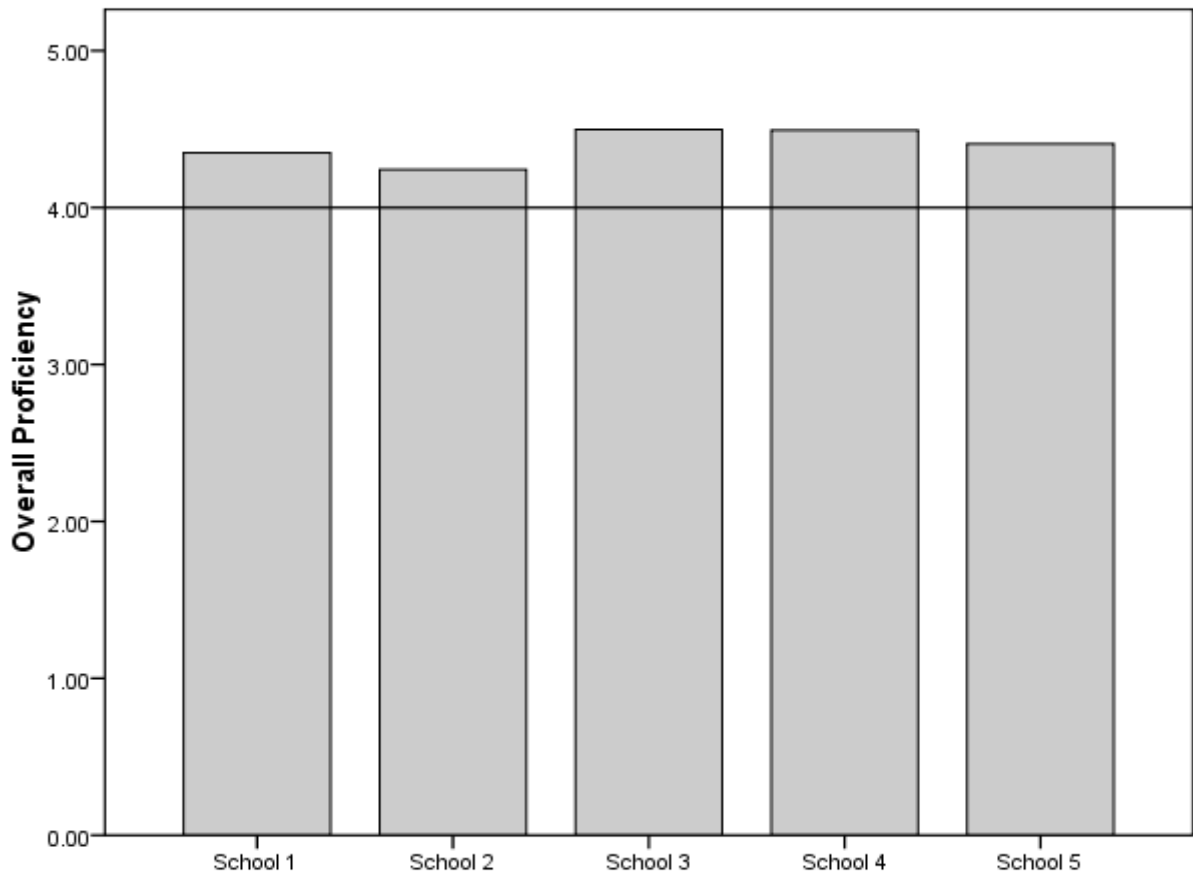
Five Highest Scoring Principals - Core Components

Variable	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High Expectations	4.43	.46	4.10	.31	4.54	.50	4.35	.39	4.49	.45
Rigorous Curriculum	4.45	.38	4.25	.50	4.45	.54	4.45	.21	4.46	.52
Quality Instruction	4.54	.11	4.30	.29	4.61	.38	4.54	.34	4.67	.51
Culture of Learning	4.44	.24	4.35	.49	4.51	.50	4.56	.28	4.58	.59
Connections to External Communities	3.69	.41	4.24	.52	4.36	.63	4.61	.34	4.17	.36
Performance Accountability	4.16	.23	4.21	.35	4.52	.46	4.45	.38	4.56	.55
Overall Core Components	**4.31**	**.23**	**4.22**	**.38**	**4.48**	**.54**	**4.50**	**.14**	**4.52**	**.46**
Overall Effectiveness Percentile rank	**4.29/96.2**		**4.24/95.3**		**4.50/99.1**		**4.49 98.9**		**4.49/98.9**	

Five Highest Scoring Principals - Key Processes

Variable	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Planning	4.28	.29	4.24	.40	4.50	.50	4.49	.20	4.49	.49
Implementing	4.33	.47	4.15	.49	4.47	.54	4.37	.19	4.40	.53
Supporting	4.30	.24	4.27	.43	4.55	.46	4.45	.46	4.47	.49
Advocating	4.44	.20	4.22	.34	4.67	.30	4.61	.35	4.58	.51
Communicating	4.13	.42	4.27	.52	4.31	.71	4.37	.13	4.39	.48
Monitoring	4.22	.17	4.35	.44	4.51	.46	4.66	.31	4.58	.51
Overall Key Processes	**4.29**	**.28**	**4.24**	**.40**	**4.50**	**.50**	**4.49**	**.20**	**4.49**	**.49**

Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire

Below is a summary of the responses to the six open-ended questions on the questionnaire. See Appendix C for complete responses.

1. I believe student achievement can be increased through…

Shared vision; multiple leaders; data analysis knowing the strengths and weaknesses of students and teachers; strongly structured environment extended day program; parental involvement; maximizing instructional time; highly effective, quality

instruction; high expectations of all students and teachers; multitude of learning strategies; dedicated teachers; better teacher preparation programs to work with all students; research based instruction that actively engages students and focuses on higher order thinking skills; and smaller class sizes.

2. What are the strengths of your school?

School climate; community support; high expectations for faculty and students; stable and dedicated faculty; job-embedded professional development; structured learning environment; highly qualified staff; supportive, strong administrative team; teamwork; and parental support.

3. What needs to be improved at your school?

Relating the vision to parents so they can get involved and have high expectations for their children; more money and understanding from the central office; student and teacher stability; technological resources; more student engagement that include teaching techniques and lessons with rigor; extended time for more remediation and enrichment; transportation for students for afterschool tutoring; small class sizes with instructional paraprofessionals; consistently progress monitoring student growth; students' higher-order thinking skills; and school's physical plant.

4. Did your educational leadership program prepare you for your role as an administrator? If no, please explain how the program could improve. If yes, what are the elements that made it a good program for you? *Note: None of the principals were graduates of a newly redesigned educational leadership preparation programs.*

Of the 15 respondents, four declared that their educational leadership program prepared them for their role as an administrator; nine stated that it did not prepare them; and two acknowledged that part of the program was good, but lacked key components. Those who answered in the positive asserted that they enjoyed sharing ideas with other future leaders and were able to apply their learnings to their present job. The nine who responded that their programs did not prepare them proclaimed that there was too much emphasis on textbooks and not enough practical experience. They recommended a full year of internship with an effective leader and more emphasis on developing organizational behavior management skills

5. Do you believe university teacher preparation programs are adequately preparing new teachers? If no, please explain how the program could improve. If yes, what are the best features of the university teacher preparation programs?

Nine of the 15 respondents do not believe the university teacher preparation programs are adequately preparing new teachers. They would like the programs to concentrate more on teaching children in poverty, varied field experiences, and classroom management skills. Four considered the programs to be adequate and two had mixed feelings about the programs.

6. How can higher education policymakers help you to do your job better?

Although the question asked specifically about higher education policymakers, some of the responses included elementary and secondary education policymakers. Seven respondents addressed higher education policymakers, five directed their responses to elementary and secondary education policymakers, and four referred to both sets of policymakers. There were 15 respondents; however, one response had two separate recommendations. The opinions that focused on higher education policymakers were centered on making policy that is consistent and making the field of education more appealing, adding additional hours of counseling courses, getting input from practitioners, helping with building community and parental involvement. The responses that were directed toward elementary and secondary education policymakers urged them to fund school districts that have high numbers of students in poverty, eliminate all tasks that do not directly affect teaching and learning, encourage financial support for more paraprofessionals that can assist in small group instruction.

MANOVA

A quantitative method, *Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)*, was employed to determine a statistically significant relationship between effective leader processes and behaviors, as identified by the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education*, as well as specific principal, teacher, and school factors. These factors, that may affect the principal's leadership behaviors, were identified in the interviews. The factors used were the years of experience as a principal at the current school (two groups: less than three years and more than three years), the teacher years at the current school (five groups: 0 – 2 years, 3 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years, 11 – 20 years, and more than 20 years), and the size of the school (three groups: less than 300, 300 – 499, 500 and over.)

This multivariate analysis was chosen to allow for categorical data from the three factors (between-subjects effects) to be evaluated for a significant relationship with the results of the *VAL-Ed* survey. The analysis of principal years of experience against the

results of the core components and key processes data from the *Val-Ed* survey was not found to be significant. Similarly, the relationship of teacher years of experience against the results of the core components and key processes was not significant. Using Wilk's Lambda as a test statistic, school size was found to be a significant factor in the analysis of both the core components (n = 433, df = 12, W = 0.94, p = 0.008), and the key processes (n = 439, df = 13, W = 0.95 p = 0.019). Effect sizes were also found to be small for both core components (η^2 = 0.031) and for key processes (η^2 = 0.027).

Post-hoc tests were analyzed for comparisons of groups based on size. Tukey's HSD test showed significant differences and positive mean differences between the small schools and the large schools in the core components of high expectations, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, culture of learning and performance accountability, and in all the key processes of planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, and monitoring. There were also significant differences and positive mean differences between mid-size schools and large schools in high expectations, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, and performance accountability, and in all six key processes. There was no significant difference found in the overall effect of small schools when compared to mid-size schools in both core components and key processes.

Core Components:

Variable	Group Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error	Significance (p-value)
High Standards	Small – Mid-size	0.11	0.10	0.506
	Small - Large	0.38	0.12	0.004
	Mid-size - Large	0.27	0.09	0.006
Rigorous Curriculum	Small – Mid-size	0.11	0.10	0.507
	Small - Large	0.41	0.12	0.002
	Mid-size - Large	0.29	0.09	0.004
Quality Instruction	Small – Mid-size	0.13	0.10	0.385
	Small - Large	0.35	0.12	0.009
	Mid-size - Large	0.22	0.09	0.038
Culture of Learning	Small – Mid-size	0.21	0.10	0.097
	Small - Large	0.41	0.12	0.002
	Mid-size - Large	0.20	0.09	0.067
External Communities	Small – Mid-size	0.06	0.12	0.879
	Small - Large	0.23	0.14	0.254
	Mid-size - Large	0.17	0.11	0.262
Performance Accountability	Small – Mid-size	0.14	0.11	0.404
	Small - Large	0.40	0.13	0.005
	Mid-size - Large	0.26	0.09	0.017

Key Processes:

Variable	Group Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error	Significance (p-value)
Planning	Small – Mid-size	0.10	0.10	0.557
	Small - Large	0.35	0.11	0.006
	Mid-size - Large	0.25	0.09	0.010
Implementing	Small – Mid-size	0.15	0.10	0.307
	Small - Large	0.38	0.12	0.004
	Mid-size - Large	0.23	0.09	0.024
Supporting	Small – Mid-size	0.17	0.10	0.206
	Small - Large	0.39	0.12	0.002
	Mid-size - Large	0.22	0.09	0.031
Advocating	Small – Mid-size	0.16	0.10	0.242
	Small - Large	0.43	0.12	0.001
	Mid-size - Large	0.27	0.09	0.008
Communicating	Small – Mid-size	0.14	0.10	0.315
	Small - Large	0.38	0.12	0.003
	Mid-size - Large	0.24	0.09	0.017
Monitoring	Small – Mid-size	0.21	0.10	0.090
	Small - Large	0.44	0.12	0.001
	Mid-size - Large	0.23	0.09	0.027

Pedagogical Leadership Wisdom

Based on the *VAL-Ed* results, two leadership behaviors received the highest rating: *Quality Instruction* and *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior.* The *VAL-Ed* definition of *Quality Instruction* declares that it is effective instructional practices that maximize student academic and social learning, as well as a culture of learning and professional behavior. It is a healthy school environment in which student learning is the central focus. Using this definition, a relationship between *Quality Instruction* and engagement as well as a connection between *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* and structure was established. See Appendix D: *Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire Synthesized with Structure and Engagement for School, Student, and Teacher.*

For the purpose of this study, the terms engagement and pedagogy are used to guide the discussion on the leadership behavior, *Quality Instruction*. Interviews with the principals in the sample informed the researcher of the three areas quality instruction influences. These are school, students, and teachers. These principals were attuned to the needs of their students, staff, and community. They have the ability to set the school environment so quality instruction is available to all students.

The second leadership behavior that was identified by the research was *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*. The definition of this behavior implies the need for structure in three areas: (a) school day (b) student expectations, (c) teacher learning. Coupled with engagement, the structure of the instructional day and high expectations for all learners becomes the foundation from which the High Performing, High Poverty leaders excelled.

For quality instruction to occur, the leader must ensure a school environment that allows successful strategies that capitalize on student academic and social learning. Just as the teacher must know how to deliver the content to the students, the leader must understand the pedagogy of leadership. Pedagogical leadership can be likened to effective pedagogy for teachers. Pedagogical Content Knowledge, as defined by Lee Shulman (1986), concentrates on the development of teaching skills. When teachers have a deep understanding of the subject matter, they can organize subject content to meet the needs of diverse learners. According to Shulman, this kind of understanding provides a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge.

Extending Shulman's definition of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) to the leadership realm, the term Pedagogical Leadership Wisdom (PLW) was coined. PLW defines the astuteness of a school leader who has the instructional foundation to make decisions about the instructional program and monitor the progress of the teachers and students. It is the intersection of structure and engagement. A leader, with a deep understanding the instructional programs, teaching strategies, and student achievement, must also have the ability to support teachers and students in academic and social success. It is structure with a purpose.

PLW is evident when structure is based on engagement. Examples of PLW include:
- Changing the lunch schedule to allow an extended time for a reading block;
- Placing the same teachers on early morning duty so that they are aware of potential problems;
- Instituting a policy that does not allow interruptions (checking out students, announcement, etc) during a reading block;
- Requiring auxiliary staff to make their schedules so that they are in classroom to work with small groups during reading block;
- Expecting teachers to keep notebooks handy to record notes about student's progress during the instructional day;

- Creating flexible schedules for paraprofessionals so that they can help a student when the need is first recognized;
- Providing transportation for parents to attend school meetings to foster understanding of student expectations;
- Taking time from a busy test schedule to pick up a student who did not show up for an important test;
- Creating lesson plans so teachers can focus on student data and identifying strategies to help students succeed;
- Setting up a new teacher's classroom, including decorating bulletin boards, so the new teacher can concentrate on new teacher meetings;
- Changing the time for teachers to report absences and lunch counts to the office to allow concentrated teacher instruction at the beginning of the school day; and
- Organizing parent groups to serve as communicators for other parents to ensure important information is received by all parents.

The interviews captured a chronology of the HPHP principals' first three years. This successful journey is rich in details that support their commitment to establishing a structured and engaged learning environment for students and teachers. The first year is devoted to implementing a highly structured environment and establishing rapport with students. The second year begins the work of building trust with teachers and establishing strong collaborative groups. The third year is a time of reflection and refinement.

This chronology supports the four sets of practices make up a basic core of successful leadership practices: (a) setting direction (b) developing people (c) redesigning the organization (4) managing teaching and learning. (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, n.d.).

Timeline of Successful HPHP Principals

		Year One
School	Structure	Assign students to a specific place to read or write in journals before school
		Monitor students before school for potential problems
		Dismiss students in orderly fashion to classrooms
		Organize movement outside of the classroom so that students walk in orderly lines on right side of hall – some "flip and zip"

		Change recess privileges
		Implement Positive Behavior Support or similar program to reward good behavior
	Engagement	Greet students with compliments and pay special attention to those students who need help with cleanliness or extras like ribbons or clean clothes.
Teacher	Structure	Conduct classroom observations
	Engagement	Engage in conferences to determine teacher's compatibility with students and school's vision.
Student	Structure	Proclaim expectations for classroom and school campus
	Engagement	Learn all the students' names
		Get to know families

Year Two		
School	Structure	Examine instructional day – bell to bell teaching
	Engagement	Learn community resources
Teacher	Structure	Build faculty capacity - move teachers to different assignments or schools
	Engagement	Institute grade level meetings
		Form collaboration teams to determine effective teaching strategies and academic programs
		Foster job-embedded professional development
		Teacher feedback
Student	Structure	Implement extra tutoring sessions for small group or individual sessions
	Engagement	Use data to identify individual academic and social learning progress
		Identify resources to help students with academics as well as social issues.

Year Three		
School	Structure	Re-examine instructional day
	Engagement	Determine effectiveness of instructional programs based on student progress
Teacher	Structure	Make schedule so that teachers can meet by grade level
	Engagement	Establish leadership teams to help principal make decisions

Student	Structure	Schedule paraprofessionals so that they can assist students based on demand rather than a fixed schedule
	Engagement	Build soft skills to prepare students for a postsecondary education
		Work with whole child

Summary

The principals participating in Louisiana's High Performing, High Poverty Project have demonstrated their ability to use Pedagogical Leadership Wisdom. Their wisdom surrounds and supports all of the effective leadership behaviors identified by the authors of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education*. This knowledge ultimately results in increased student academic and social learning for all students. In summary, when effective leadership is present, students from low socioeconomic families can be academically and socially successful. An appropriate statement from the interview session captured the essence of the project – "We [students in this project] might be poor, but we sure are smart!"

Implications

This study has implications for theory and future research in educational leadership. Based on the findings of this study, the following implications are recommended to educational leaders, boards of elementary and secondary education, higher education boards, and district and state leadership.

Due to the complexity of the role of a school leader, consideration should be given to educational leadership programs to have a full year of internship. Placing the prospective principal with an expert leader will be the key to the success of the program. A suggestion to ensure the selection of an effective mentor is to use *VAL-Ed* as an assessment of leadership behaviors. The 360 degree assessment of learning-centered leadership will provide a valid and reliable tool for selecting effective principals to serve as mentors.

Findings from the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* indicate that *Connections to External Communities* was a weakness in the core components for the 21 principals. A suggestion is to provide strategies that lead to more effective external community relationships. A good start would be to provide principals and faculty diversity training for working with Hispanic students and their families.

The identification of future leaders is crucial to preparing students for postsecondary education. Districts should consider using the core components and key processes of *VAL-Ed* as well as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (*ISLLC*) *Standards* when hiring new principals.

An advisory team consisting of high performing, high performing principals should serve in an advisory capacity to the administrators of educational leadership preparation programs as well as the Division of Leadership and Technology in the Louisiana Department of Education.
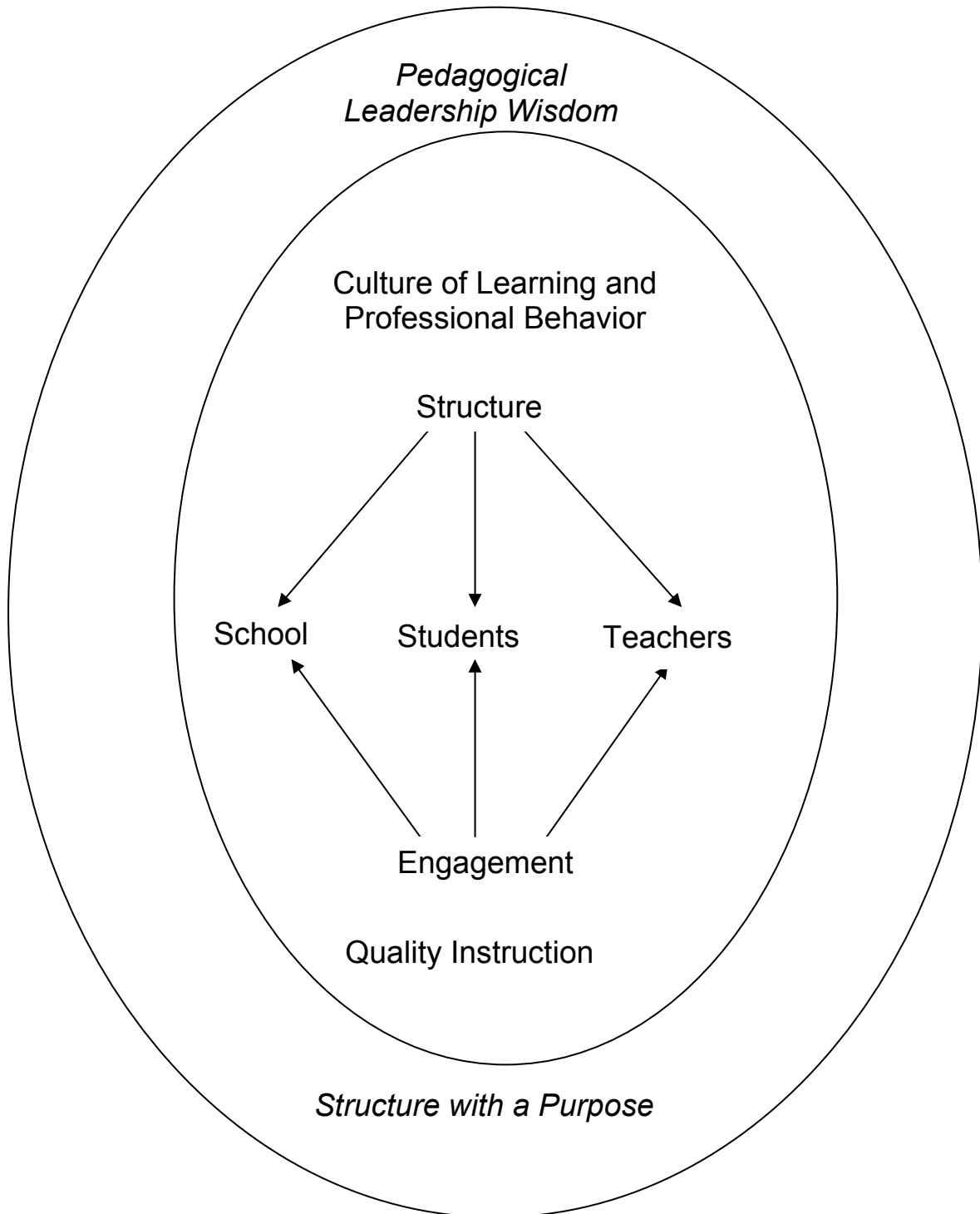
Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, consideration must be given to extending the instructional day and increasing human capital at schools that serve great numbers of students in poverty. These students need extra time and human resources to build on concepts for mastery. Specific personnel needs include highly trained paraprofessionals to work with the students on an individual basis or in small group settings and curriculum specialists to assist the principal in the analysis of data and selection of teaching and learning strategies.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Further Research</div>

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research:

1. Implementation of a longitudinal study of these schools to document growth in school performance scores.
2. Expansion of study to include schools with high poverty and low performance scores.
3. Investigation of identified High Performing, High Poverty principal's effectiveness after moving to another school.
4. Examination of principal's effectiveness based on other characteristics, such as mobility of student population, professional development, and district support.
5. Replication of the study to include other schools in Louisiana.

HPHP Secret Weapon – *Structure with a Purpose*

*Pedagogical
Leadership Wisdom*

Culture of Learning and
Professional Behavior

Structure

School   Students   Teachers

Engagement

Quality Instruction

Structure with a Purpose

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Appendix A

HPHP Schools

HPHP Schools

District	School
Bienville Parish	Gibsland-Coleman High School
Caddo Parish	Pine Grove Elementary School
Calcasieu Parish	John F. Kennedy Elementary School
City of Monroe School	Carver Elementary School
	Madison James Foster Elementary School
	Minnie Ruffin Elementary School
East Baton Rouge Parish	Ryan Elementary School
East Carroll Parish	Southside Elementary School
Iberia Parish	Canal Street Elementary School
	St. Charles Street Elementary School
Lincoln Parish	Ruston Elementary School
New Vision Learning Academy	New Vision Learning Academy Charter School
Ouachita Parish	Robinson Elementary School
	Shady Grove Elementary School
	Swayze Elementary School
Rapides Parish	Forest Hill Elementary School
	L.S. Rugg Elementary School
	Martin Park Elementary School
St. James Parish	Sixth Ward Elementary School
St. Landry Parish	Northeast Elementary School
	Plaisance Elementary School

Appendix B

Multi-case Study

Multi-case Study

Driving into the neighborhoods that populate the Louisiana Department of Education's 21 High Performing, High Poverty project, there is little doubt that these students deserve an escape from their habitats to a place of safety and comfort, even if it is for a relatively short span of time. Once entering the school site, the "world" for these students changes. The schools are extremely well-kept and organized. The halls are brightly decorated with vocabulary words and posters with encouraging words. The schools' staff is smiling and friendly to visitors as well as students and parents. For a student living in poverty, the school represents much more than academic environment. For those fortunate enough to be in an attendance zone for a high performing school, their lives are certainly enriched. It is apropos to describe the prevailing atmosphere at these schools by the words of this poem found prominently displayed at the entrance of one of the schools.

> A child is a butterfly in the wind,
>
> Some can fly higher than others;
>
> but each one flies the best it can.
>
> Why compare one against the other?
>
> Each one is different!
>
> Each one is special!
>
> Each one is beautiful!
>
> *-Author Unknown*

First impressions are lasting. Although each of the schools visited is different in architectural design and location, they all give the same general impression. The physical plants are very clean, from the exterior to the interior. The halls, with highly waxed floors, are covered with the students' works of art, motivational posters, and vocabulary words. Some of

the rules that guide student behavior are visible, such as floors with a colorful line painted next to the wall to mark the walking path, while others are enforced without obvious prompts. "Before you can start on academics, you must start on discipline" (Principal 5, personal interview, August 11, 2008). This sentiment was universal.

From the beginning of the school day to its end, these principals ensure there is someone, usually the principal, to greet the students each morning. Not only does the student get a warm welcome, the principal uses this time to look for any possible problems. Knowing there is tension among certain students can be more easily solved through preventive measures rather than punitive, after-the-fact measures.

"What's different about the needs of these children is that they need lots of love and attention with consistent discipline – they don't get it at home" (Principal 1, personal interview, August 6, 2008).When the students get onto the school grounds, they typically go to the cafeteria for breakfast. They are guided to their seats by a duty teacher. Once they finish breakfast they go to a specific place—either the hallway by their classroom, the gym, or their classroom—and they begin reading or writing. All of the principals interviewed replaced the option of the students playing outdoors prior to the beginning of school with an orderly beginning to the school day that included reading and writing opportunities.

"Stand up for what you [teachers] believe—education is very important and I want to make sure the education you [teachers] give is good enough for your child" (Principal 5, personal interview, August 11, 2008).This attitude was relayed to the researcher in all the onsite visits, with just minor word changes. Bell-to-bell teaching, adherence to the state's Comprehensive Curriculum and Grade Level Expectations, high expectations for students and faculty including a rigorous curriculum for all students are evident in all schools visited.

"I put resources in teachers rather than program. I believe in teachers" (Principal 16, personal interview, October 20, 2008).The value of dedicated, concerned faculty and staff is far greater than owning any piece of hardware or software was the prevalent attitude.

Principals rely on teacher leaders and the commitment of all of the staff to make a difference for their students. "Whatever your job title is, it is teacher. All have buy-in. I overheard a member of the custodial staff telling a visitor that we just got our scores back and we did great!" (Principal 7, personal interview, August 13, 2008).

Not all learning that takes place at these schools is academically related. Many of the principals informed the researcher that it was also important to address social learning and take special care to make sure all children are dressed equally. It is not uncommon for a principal to keep extra uniforms, bows, and hair care products in the school office. Principals expressed a need to build soft skills. "We go the extra mile – even if it is on thin ice. I work like a surrogate parent" (Principal 7, personal interview, August 13, 2008). The work of Ruby Payne in *A Framework of Understanding Poverty* was mentioned by several principals. Using constructs from this work, principals live by the rule of "empathizing, but not sympathizing with students" " (Principal 16, personal interview, October 20, 2008).

Establishing relationships to the external community is broad and often difficult to attain. The message about parental involvement was loud and clear. The principals acknowledged that it is difficult to engage parents because they are often adversaries of the school. The parents are young and vividly remember the problems they experienced at their school. Principals are reaching out to parents by using varied techniques.

> I have a phone tag system for keeping my parents informed. I have a core group of lead parents that are responsible for contacting their group of parents. If the parents need a ride to a meeting, the lead parent will provide transportation; if they cannot attend the meeting, the lead parent is responsible for getting the information to the absent parent (Principal 13, personal interview, August 18, 2008).

The researcher was told on several occasions that if a parent lacks transportation to a conference, someone from the school is dispatched to pick up the parent. Sometimes is is necessary to pick up a student. When a student does not show up on a testing day, the

principal goes to the home and brings the child to school if he/she is healthy (Principal 12, personal interview, August 18, 2008).

Grandparents have been the solution for many of the schools. They do not have a preconceived notion that the school is the enemy and they are also more willing to assume responsibility for helping the child. Some schools capitalized on this by increasing opportunities for grandparents to become helpers at the schools.

Learning about the tenure of a highly effective principal at a high poverty school was important to the researcher. A chronology of events is similar across the principals interviewed. Year one is typically spent in observations. When drastic steps are necessary, the new principal will take action. If the school was low performing when the principal came on board, discipline was the first area for action. A principal on a sprawling campus summed up his first year as principal by saying, "I maintained discipline—closed the campus—teachers couldn't leave, put in a dress code for students. Test scores improved the first year. You can't be afraid of hurting feelings. I'd rather hurt adults than children" (Principal 5, personal interview, August 11, 2008).

After this year of intense observation, the principals began to make changes within the faculty. In some incidences, the principal saw the need to move a teacher from one grade level to another. In other cases, the philosophy of the teacher was so opposed to the mission of the school that the teacher had to be relocated to another school or another vocation. The second year was generally spent forming collaborative teams composed of faculty and staff. This built a foundation for establishing trust and identifying staff development needs.

The third year allowed the principal time to reflect on strategies, programs, and initiatives in operation at the school. Principals used data to make decisions about continuing or discontinuing current programs. This was also a time for the principal to reconsider the structure of the instructional day.

The general consensus was that a principal needs at least three years at a school to make effective changes that result in increasing student achievement for all students. While many of the focus areas outlined in years one through three appear to be solely managerial in nature, this is certainly not true. Each of the decisions about structure was made by the principals to create or enhance the learning environment. After three years of experience at the school, the principal refines the steps set into place during the first three years. "I cannot change the way it is at home, but I can make it easier for them here at school. When the children are ready to work, all is in the right place" (Principal 8, personal interview, August 13, 2008). One of the principals remarked on the time it takes to establish a strong learning community and the need to nourish it continually. "It took three to four years to build relationships with my faculty. Once the relationship is set, you must constantly work to keep the faculty in place and then, tread cautiously" (Principal 1, personal interview, August 6, 2008).

To develop a deeper understanding of the leadership behaviors exhibited by successful principals in high poverty schools, the researcher used the results of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* to select the five principals to participate in a multi-case study.

School 1 is a rural school located in central Louisiana and is a bit different from the other schools in the project. While the number of black students is lower than the other schools in the project, the school has a growing Hispanic population. The economy of the area is dependent upon nursery farms and relies heavily on Hispanic workers.

School 1 Demographic Information

School Identifier	School 1
Percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch Students	82.5
Percentage of Black Students	26.4
Percentage of Hispanic Students	22.6
Enrollment Count (2006-2007)	416
Grade Range (2006-2007)	PS,PK,K-4
School Performance Score (2004-05)	108.3
School Performance Score (2005-06)	124.5
School Performance Score (2006-07)	124.5

A visitor to the school is quickly aware of the diversity by the signs that mark important areas of the school. Rather than the dominant word being expressed in English, the words are in Spanish with English indicated in parenthesis. The office area, which is colorful and organized, is close to the front entrance of the school. The researcher was warmly greeted by the school's secretary and then led into the principal's office adjacent to the main office. The principal's office has brightly painted pink walls. It is large and arranged to accommodate both individual and small group conferences. There are numerous awards earned by the school and principal displayed. A recent award was a national honor for being selected as one of 60 outstanding Teacher Advancement Program principals in the United States. The principal's overall scores on the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* certainly reinforce these awards. As part of the High Performing, High Poverty Schools Project, the researchers from the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* provided the results of the three respondents from School 1 on the core components. The humility of the principal is evident in these scores. Principal 1's self ratings are consistently lower than those of the faculty and supervisor. The overall mean for principal rating was

3.96; supervisor was 5.0; and teacher rating was 4.57 (N=21). The overall teacher standard deviation was .74 as compared to .58 for the state's overall standard deviation. When asked about the lower self ratings, the principals replied that there was much to learn and there was always a need to improve.

The ratings from the supervisor and teachers all fall within the *distinguished* category. This designation is the highest level set by the authors of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education*. Four of the principal's ratings are within *distinguished*; however, two of them are in the next level *proficient*. The national norms for the *VAL-Ed* scores are as follows: *Distinguished Proficiency*– 4.00 and above; *Proficient* – 3.99 to 3.60; *Basic* – 3.59 to 3.29; and *Below Basic* – 3.28 and below. Considering the processes through which a principal accomplishes the core components, Principal 1 once again self rated lower than the other respondents in the survey.

School 1 Mean Rating on Core Components
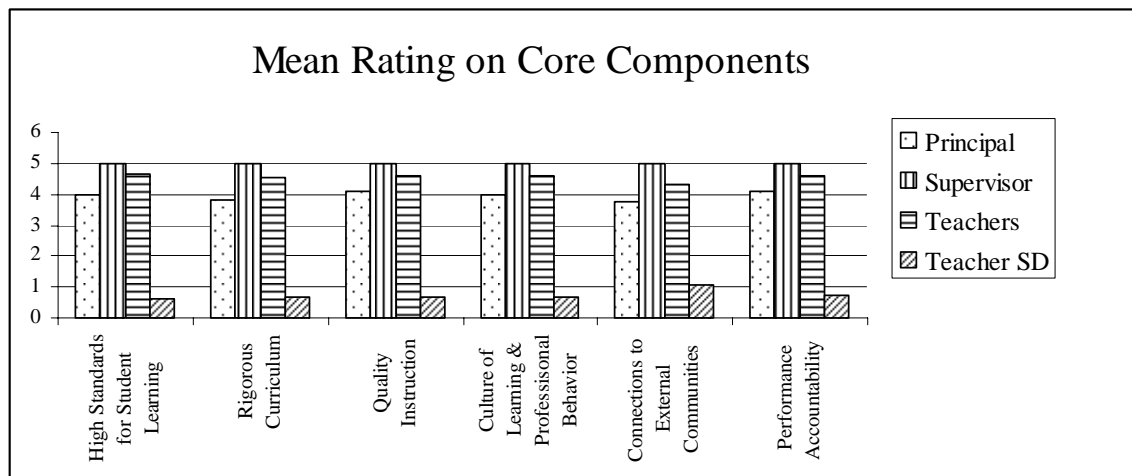
The principal's rating in *Advocating* was the lowest of the six key processes. The definition of *Advocating* includes a reference to advancing the diverse needs of students both within and outside the school. The inclusion of beyond the school ties this process to the *Connection to External Communities* core component, which also received the principal and teacher lowest rating. *Advocating* also ensures that a rigorous curriculum is in place for

all students, that students have quality instruction, and holds teachers accountable for the academic and social learning of all students at the school. The leader must also advocate on behalf of parents, especially in the larger community. The addition of a new population of families who do not speak English has made this process more complex for the school leader.

Mean Ratings on Key Processes for Principal, Teacher, and Supervisor Ratings.
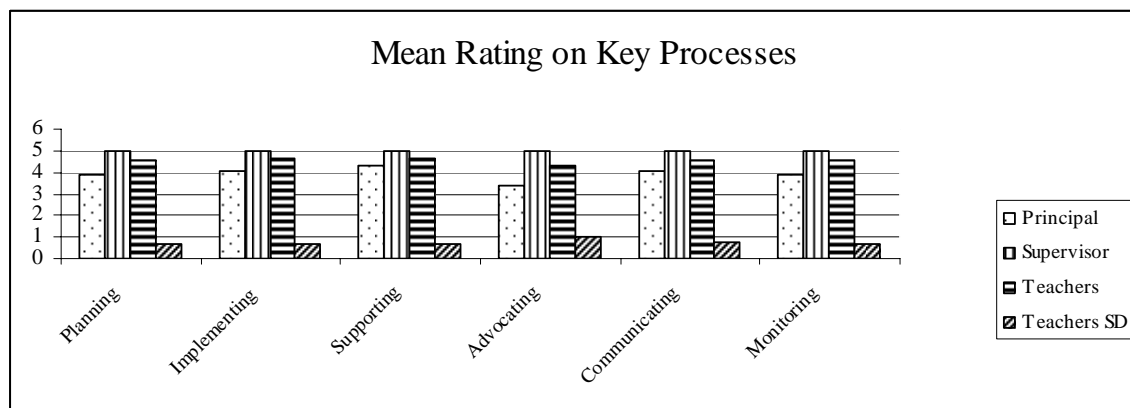
The ratings from the supervisor and teachers all fall within the *distinguished* category. Three of the principal's ratings are within *distinguished*; however, two of them are in the next level *proficient* and one (*advocating*) is in the *basic* range.

The principal and the teachers rated *Rigorous Curriculum* and *Connections to External Communities* as the components with the greatest need for improvement. Although Principal 1 was very successful in securing community funding to establish a Teacher Advancement Program at the school, the principal was not surprised with these findings. The principal immediately began the conversation around the school's most pressing need– serving the growing Hispanic population.

As Hispanic population grows we have to find a way to help them with comprehension. Our challenge is with the students that come to us in fourth, fifth, or sixth grades. For the most part, Spanish is still the only language

spoken at home, so the students only hear English when they are at school (Principal 1, personal interview, August 15, 2008).

Establishing a communication method for persons of different languages will continue to grow in importance. Principal 1 is one of the first in Louisiana to experience the growth of a new population. While migrant programs are available for immigrants to learn English, parents in this community spend long hours working at the nursery farms leaving little time to attend classes. Searching for a method through which communication about school activities could be established, Principal 1 found an effective method of communication without crossing the language barrier. "The Spanish Catholic Church has been very helpful to me. I have learned that this is the best way for me to communicate with Hispanic parents" (Principal 1, personal interview, August 15, 2008).

Creating a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* is the core component that Principal 1 truly embodies. Six years ago, two fourth grade teachers approached the principal with a problem. They wanted to know how they could raise their already good test scores higher. This question intrigued Principal 1 and an examination the professional development that was occurring at the school began. As Principal 1 looked more deeply into the activities, the results of the trainings were questioned. Doubts were raised about the long lasting value and consequences of the teachers' absences from the instructional program. By happenstance, Principal 1 had a conversation with someone who was familiar with the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP).

> My greatest change happened six years ago when I learned about the Teacher
> Advancement Program (TAP). I have learned more in the last six years in TAP
> than in the last 36 years in education. The way I looked at education did a 180. I
> knew we were doing okay with our students, but hadn't thought about how to
> get more from our kids (Principal 1, personal interview, August 15, 2008).

Teacher Advancement Program, a national program sponsored by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, is broad school reform that includes comprehensive changes in the teaching profession to achieve gains in student achievement. Although TAP includes opportunities for career advancement and performance pay, Principal 1 spoke only of the ongoing school-based professional development which included a new type of instructional organization:

My first exposure to TAP was a cluster meeting. The teachers were using data to find best practices and all was accomplished while kids were still receiving instruction. I approached my superintendent about implementing the project and my school and he said yes to the project, but said I had to get the money to fund it. I found it and we got started.

School 1's medium size allows cluster meetings and grade level meetings. The principal and assistant principal coordinate these meetings so that students receive instruction while the teacher is getting professional development. This professional development not only informs the teacher, but also allows the teacher to make individual decisions about what best serves the children.

Teachers love the fact they can throw it out if it bombs – nothing is mandated. We now do tons of pre and post testing, our teachers have developed their own assessments during cluster time. The pre and post testing is the key to empowering teachers. They are free to keep or dispose of any strategies they wish (Principal 1, personal interview, August 15, 2008).

Participation in these cluster groups drives the teacher to find ways to motivate students while experiencing autonomy in the process. The cluster meetings are far more than a collaborative grade level meeting. These meetings have a strict adherence to an agenda that only includes issues relating to the curriculum. If other issues need to be discussed, they will be presented at a grade-level meeting. Either the principal or the

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assistant principal participates in each meeting. Teachers are led into a deep discussion about each student's academic progress through the use of data represented on graphs and charts.

After successfully implementing and maintaining effective cluster groups, principal 1 and master teachers have established leadership teams. Members of the leadership team include principal, assistant principal, two master teachers, and six mentor teachers. In weekly meetings, the team analyses the effectiveness of the cluster meetings. The team also looks for data trends.

> We discovered that our biggest area for refinement is teaching students how to think. We determined that we are not modeling thinking and problem solving. We need to coach them on how to think through a wrong answer.

The faculty and staff of School 1 are mostly from a middle class background. Teaching students from other socioeconomic origins proved to be a learning experience. As an enthusiastic new principal, Principal 1 wanted to make a difference in a hurry. The principal was ready to make changes that would not only affect the students' school life, but also their home environment. Lessons were quickly learned. One of the most powerful messages learned by this principal was from Rita Pierson, a National Trainer for Ruby Payne's *A Framework for Understanding Poverty.*

> My *aha* moment was listening to Rita Pierson. She said you cannot change home life. You can only change their lives when they are at school. This helped me to understand children in poverty. Now I want to take it a step further and have an expert on teaching Hispanic children talk to my faculty and staff. I found one associated with Ruby Payne, so I wrote a grant to cover his costs and stipends for my faculty. He will present at a Saturday workshop (Principal 1, personal interview, August 15, 2008).

School 1, like the other schools in the High Performing, High Poverty project, has a dedicated faculty and staff. What is different about this faculty and staff is the organization of the instructional program. In the 13 years, Principal 1 has been at this school, the main concern has been to find best practices. While this school has been a high performing school for some time, it is important to continue to improve—"you don't have to be sick to get better; even good schools need to get better" (Principal 1, personal interview, August 15, 2008.)

Students in this community reflect the growing Hispanic population in the United States and fall in the category of unrepresented student in postsecondary education. Principal 1 takes seriously the duty of providing a high quality education for all students that opens doors to postsecondary opportunities. This principal begins the awareness of the student's ability to attend college in elementary school by identifying language that is associated with the ability to attend college.

> When I'm talking to students and they use a word that is different from their normal vocabulary, I say to them, "Wow, that's a college word you just used." They smile because they know college means smart (Principal 1, personal interview, October 24, 2008).

The process for making them aware of the possibility of going to college begins in earnest in the fourth grade. Groups are carefully selected to meet with Principal 1. The composition of the group always includes at least one student that has already talked about going to college. The students sit on the rug in the principal's office and Principal 1 begins the conversation by asking what college they want to attend, rather than asking if they plan to attend a college. "They say my mom doesn't have money….that's when the 'hand picked' student usually begins to talk about scholarships. I always talk about college like they are going. It is very important to communicate that possibility to them" (Principal 1, personal interview, October 24, 2008).

To provide more exposure to the possibility of attending college, School 1's

sixth grade students will visit Louisiana State University Alexandria on a field trip. [Note: school structure changed school year 2008-2009 to include fifth and sixth grades.] My motto is "what is good for the best is good for the rest and we give each one the best" (Principal 1, personal interview, August 15, 2008).

School 2 is part of an urban district in north Louisiana. While the parish exceeds the state's number for educational attainment; the area that this school serves has a high percent of residents living below the poverty level. The principal's office is filled with Mickey Mouse characters and other Disney memorabilia. It is a cheerful setting with bookcases of children's books and has an area that is large enough to accommodate small groups of students.

School 2 Demographic Information

School Identifier	School 2
Percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch Students	94.6
Percentage of Black Students	100
Enrollment Count (2006-2007)	352
Grade Range (2006-2007)	PS,PK,K-5
School Performance Score (2004-05)	97.8
School Performance Score (2005-06)	91.8
School Performance Score (2006-07)	93.8

As part of the High Performing, High Poverty Schools Project, the researchers from the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* provided the results of the three respondents from School 2 on the core components. The supervisor's overall rating was the highest of the three respondent groups, with teachers next, and the principal below each of the other groups. The overall mean for principal rating was 4.09; supervisor was 4.61; and teacher rating was 4.23 (N=17). The overall teacher standard deviation was .79. All of the

supervisor's ratings fall within the *distinguished* category. The teachers and principal ratings, with the exception of one, fell into the *distinguished* category. *Connections to External Communities* was considered by both teachers and principal to be in the second to lowest category, *Basic*."

School 2 Mean Rating on Core Components
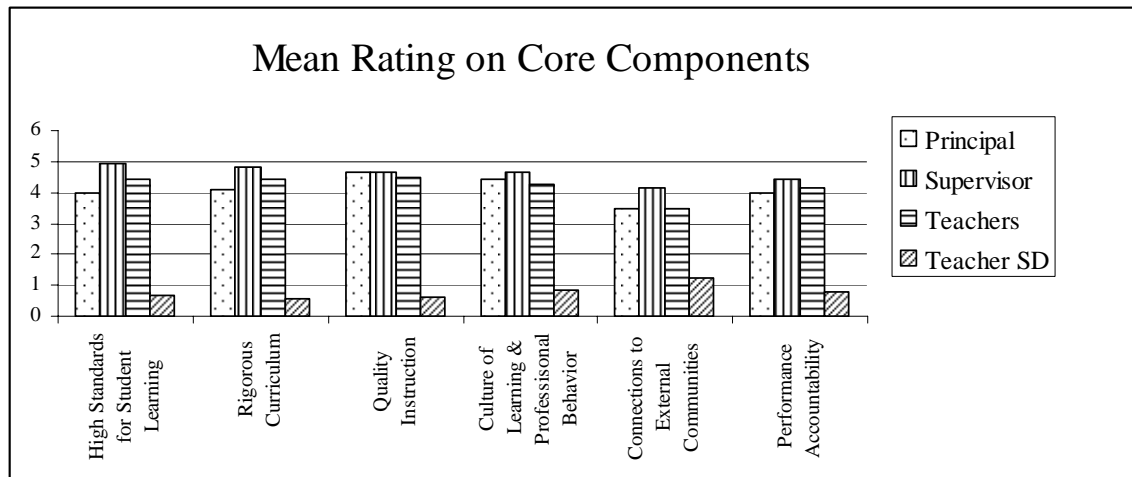
Results from the key processes component of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* indicated that Principal 2 and the teachers considered *supporting* as the principal's greatest strength. The definition of s*upporting* implies the creation of an environment that encourages academic and social learning.

The ratings from the supervisor and teachers all placed the principal's use of the key processes within the *distinguished* category. Four of the principal's ratings are within *distinguished*; however, two of them (*planning* and *advocating*) are in the next level *proficient*.

School 2 Mean Ratings on Key Processes

Mean Rating on Key Processes
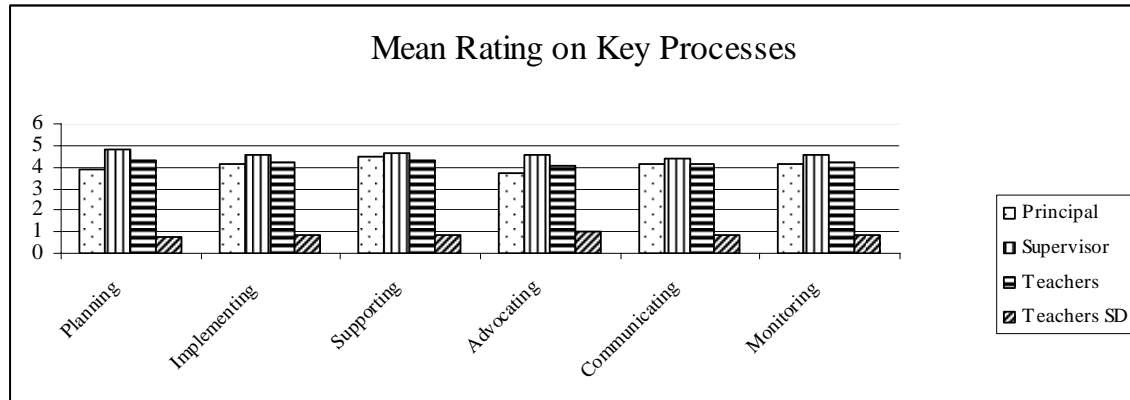
Walking into a high poverty school as a first-time teacher is a daunting task. Already apprehensive about the ability to achieve success with these children, the new teacher is also faced with district meetings and finding the time to create a warm learning space for the students. If the teacher is fortunate enough to be on staff at School 2, some of the worries are quickly alleviated by the principal.

> I remember what it was like to begin my first job as a teacher. I was hired shortly before school began and had no time to make my classroom look like the other teachers' rooms. Now it is even more difficult for new teachers to find time to get their rooms ready. There are district meetings just prior to the beginning of school. I want my new teachers to be able to focus on the content of these meetings, so I set up the new teacher's classroom, including bulletin boards, posters, and also make sure all the supplies are in place. This not only helps the new teacher, but also assures the parents that their children are in a room that is warm and inviting like all the others (Principal 2, personal interview, August 11, 2008).

The support Principal 2 provides to teachers does not stop with a new teacher. The principal's philosophy of supporting teachers extends to all teachers. While lesson plans are an important piece of instruction, Principal 2 believes the process can be streamlined so that the teachers can focus more on collecting and analyzing data for student improvement. Over

the summer, this principal creates a lesson plan template for the teachers. The template includes Grade Level Expectations and is based on the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum. The teacher completes the portion indicating the resources that will be used in the lesson as well as the strategies to teach each of the students.

The scripted curriculum is a fix to look at course content —see what kids need—gaps to close. Our [principal] job is to make it make sense to them [teachers]. I can help by offering structure to them. They [teachers] are not so sensitive that they take offense to my suggestions. (Principal 2, personal interview, August 11, 2008).

Both the teachers and the principal rated *Quality Instruction* as Principal 2's greatest strength in the core components. The notion of quality instruction begins with the principal according to Principal 2, "Principals must provide structure. Expect me to know enough to know what they are doing. Staff development makes the difference – in the classroom – helping teachers to develop a bag of tricks. The principal must be the instructional leader" (personal interview, August 11, 2008). Summer school is a time for learning for both teachers and students at School 2. It is not just a remediation time, but enrichment for all learners. The principal uses this time to demonstrate new resources purchased for use in the next school year. In School 2 summer school, the principal is the teacher and the students are adults as well as children.

Instruction is only successful when it meets the needs of individual learners. The needs of children in poverty are greater than for those in a higher economic level.

Children need experiences to build upon. Poverty limits these experiences and consequently it takes them longer to grasp concepts for which they have no background. When I'm aware of a gap, I stop immediately to close it. I was reading a book to students during a summer program and the book talked about pralines. I could tell by the reaction of the students they did not know anything about these candies. As soon as the book was finished, I went to the local Walgreens and bought

all the pralines they had. It was an expensive lesson, but now my students know not only what a praline is, but also how it tastes. You have to take responsibility for teaching more than is in the book to these students. It takes longer, but you have to stop and allow them to experience new concepts" (Principal 2, personal interview, August 11, 2008).

Preparing underrepresented students for a postsecondary opportunity begins by establishing a nurturing environment that provides experiences and high expectations for all students. The lack of experiences for children in poverty means they need more opportunities to mastery a new concept. There is an urgent need to provide extended time for these students to master new concepts. "There must be time for our students to marinate their skills. For them to stretch, they must have a foundation. Without extended time for mastery, it is hard to accomplish this (Principal 2, personal interview, October 21, 2008).

While students attending School 2 may need extra time on task to achieve success, the principal is certain about the instructional leadership needed to make the students successful, "I can't control poverty, but I can put each child an environment that is second to none (Principal 2, personal interview, October 21, 2008).

School 3 is part of a suburban district in north Louisiana. While the parish exceeds the state's number for high school and college graduates; the area that this school serves has a high percentage of residents living below the poverty level. The school is in close proximity to other HPHP schools.

School 3 Demographic Information

School Identifier	School 3
Percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch Students	94.7
Percentage of Black Students	95.9
Enrollment Count (2006-2007)	531

Grade Range (2006-2007)	PS,PK,K-6
School Performance Score (2004-05)	116.5
School Performance Score (2005-06)	83.7
School Performance Score (2006-07)	88.8

As part of the High Performing, High Poverty Schools Project, the researchers from the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* provided the results of the three respondents from School 3 on the core components. The supervisor's overall rating was the highest of the three respondent groups, with principal next, and the teacher group was below each of the other groups. The overall mean for principal rating was 4.72; supervisor was 4.81; and teacher rating was 3.99 (N=30). The overall teacher standard deviation was .92. The ratings from the supervisor and principal all fall within the *distinguished* category. Three of the teachers' ratings are within *distinguished* and three in the next level, *proficient*.

School 3 Mean Rating on Core Components
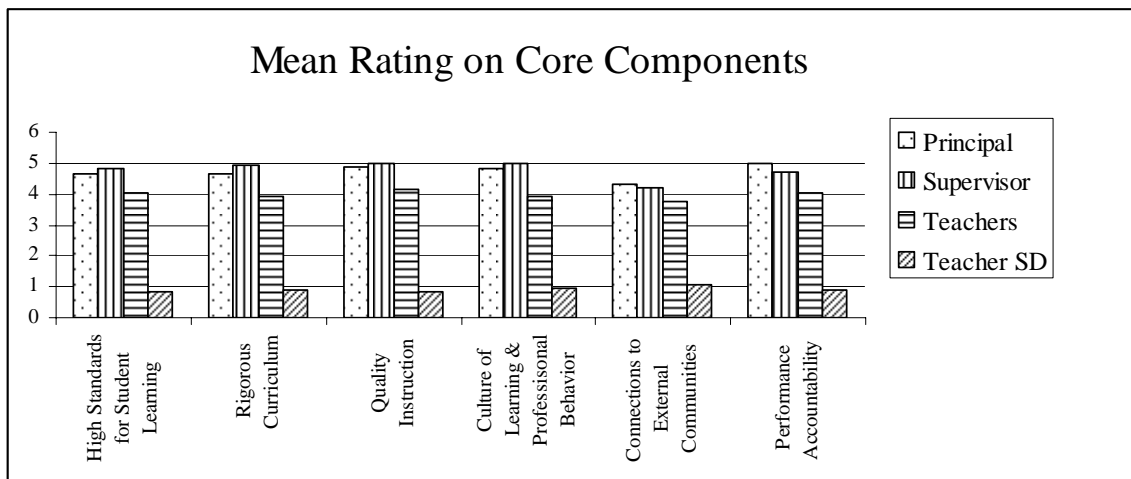
Results from the key processes component of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* indicated that the ratings from the principal and supervisor are all within the *distinguished* range; three of the teachers' ratings are in *distinguished* and three are within *proficient*. Data for the proficiency ratings indicated that teachers rated the

principal highest in *supporting* and *monitoring*. Creating the conditions for teaching and learning must take place through the key processes to accomplish the establishment of the core components. A *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* can not be established without first providing support. *Monitoring* is essential to teacher and student achievement. Once the support is in place, assessing and evaluating progress guarantees systemic improvement.

The definition of *supporting* implies the creation of an environment that encourages academic and social learning; and *monitoring* refers to analyzing data to direct assessment and procedures for continuous improvement. Principal 3 believes in supporting an environment that encourages the development of the whole child. "I believe it is important to provide opportunities for extra curricula activities. It is my role to plan and attend the event. My students expect me to be there" (Principal 3, personal interview, October 20, 2008).

School 3 Mean Ratings on Key Processes
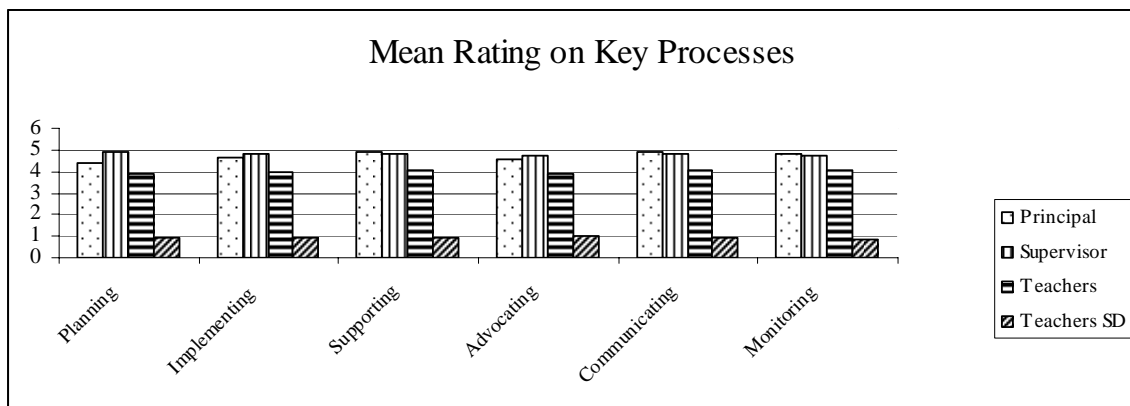
There is a tie between social and academic learning. Preparing students for employment in tomorrow's world not only requires academic skills, but also soft skills Included in these soft skills are teamwork and collaboration as well as critical thinking or problem-solving skills. Principal 3 believes these soft skills can be obtained through extra-curricula activities. Evidently many of the students at School 3 have mastered these soft skills because the cheerleading and dance team won a national championship title, the

Junior Beta Club has won several honors, and the flag football team is undefeated (as of October 20, 2008). There is also a Student Council, 4-H Club, and Tech Squad that meet on the school's campus. Teachers are also involved in the social learning process and have donated time and money to help the students meet and compete.

School 3 has a highly structured environment for all learners. The process through which this occurs is built on the principal's dedication to detail. Students, dressed strictly according to uniform rules, proceed down the hallway in an orderly fashion, always walking on the right side of the hall. The students are not the only learners at this school whose behavior and progress is monitored. Principal 3 related to the researcher all academic electronic programs, such as *Accelerated Reader* and *Accelerated Math* are closely observed and progress for each student is noted.

> I let the teachers know I can keep an eye on what is going on. At grade level meetings, I present an agenda that includes student data. I also keep a close eye on the teachers' electronic grade books. If over half the students are failing a skill, then I have to look to the teacher. When I observe teachers I always leave them with reflective questions that they must respond to me within three days. I believe you only get stronger when you take time to reflect on your performance (Principal 3, personal interview, October 20, 2008).

Principal 3 takes performance accountability very seriously and is willing to accept personal responsibility for missteps or miscommunication.

> I monitor myself by my kids and teachers. If something happens everyone does not know about—it was my fault. I have a chart that my administrative team monitors every day for observations. We color code it for what I need to observe. It is based on student scores and teacher observations. It helps me to see at a glance where I need to focus each day. I can never relax, complacency will get us. One year I only focused on new teachers. I trusted the old faculty thinking they would continue

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moving, our scores went down that year. It won't happen again (Principal 3, personal interview, October 20, 2008).

Principal 3 understands the faculty needs help working with the school's population. Like other principals in this project, the faculty will have access to the work of Ruby Payne. "A nearby university is offering an online book study on Ruby Payne's *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. I am paying tuition for some of the faculty to take the class. Next semester they will be the facilitators for our faculty's book study on Payne's book" (personal interview, October 20, 2008).

School 3 is part of a district grant that provides an AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) teacher for selected fourth through sixth grade students. AVID targets students in grades four through nine that are in the academic middle, yet have a dream to attend college. Students selected are usually those considered to be underrepresented in postsecondary education. They are typically underachievers, but have a willingness to work hard. A sixth grade spelling teacher has these students one hour per week. The course consists of learning how to take notes, organize study materials in a binder, and visits from guest speakers.

We have a College Week for our students as part of AVID. I take them to visit the two area universities and this year will also take them to the state's flagship university. When we get on campus, we go to the financial aid and recruitment office and they can ask questions about college applications and cost. I want them to be aware of what it takes to go to college. They realize the possibility of college is real for them if they work hard to get there (Teacher 1, personal interview, October 20, 2008).

There is a mentoring element also included in the program. Mentors in sixth grade serve as mentors for fourth graders and university students come to campus twice a week to work with AVID students.

I worked at another school before coming to School 3. Working here is very

demanding, but rewarding. Principal 3 is a true instructional leader. By knowing

exactly what is supposed to be going on in the classroom, Principal 3 looks closely at

the data on what is effective and shares it with us. This empowers us to become

leaders. It's worth the hard work it takes to be at a school like this one (Teacher 1,

personal observation, October 20, 2008).

School 4 is part of a suburban district in north Louisiana. The parish is home to two

four-year universities which may account for the fact that the parish exceeds the state's

number for high school and college graduates. The school is newly renovated and is teeming

with structured activities. The principal's office has a large one-way window that allows the

principal to keep vigilance over the reception area from the inner office. The students in this

school are from a high percentage of residents living below the poverty level.

School 4 Demographic Information

School Identifier	School 4
Percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch Students	92.8
Percentage of Black Students	87.7
Enrollment Count (2006-2007)	418
Grade Range (2006-2007)	PS,PK,K-6
School Performance Score (2004-05)	74.4
School Performance Score (2005-06)	82.2
School Performance Score (2006-07)	82.7

As part of the High Performing, High Poverty Schools Project, the researchers from

the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* provided the results of the three

respondents from School 4 on the core components. The supervisor's overall rating was the

highest of the three respondent groups, with teachers next, and the principal below each of

the other groups. The overall mean for principal rating was 4.40; supervisor was 4.73; and teacher rating was 4.33 (N=25). The overall teacher standard deviation was .76. The ratings from the supervisor and teachers all fall within the *distinguished* category. Only one of the principal's ratings (*High Standards for Student Learning*) is within the *distinguished* category.

This is consistent with other principal ratings which are typically lower than the other two respondent groups. The principal's high rating of *Connections to External Communities* is unusual in this study. This is the leadership behavior that was the lowest in the state ratings as well as nationally. Principal 4 has many unique connections to the larger community. In the interview session, the principal remarked how the community has become much more involved in work at the school.

School 4 Mean Rating on Core Components
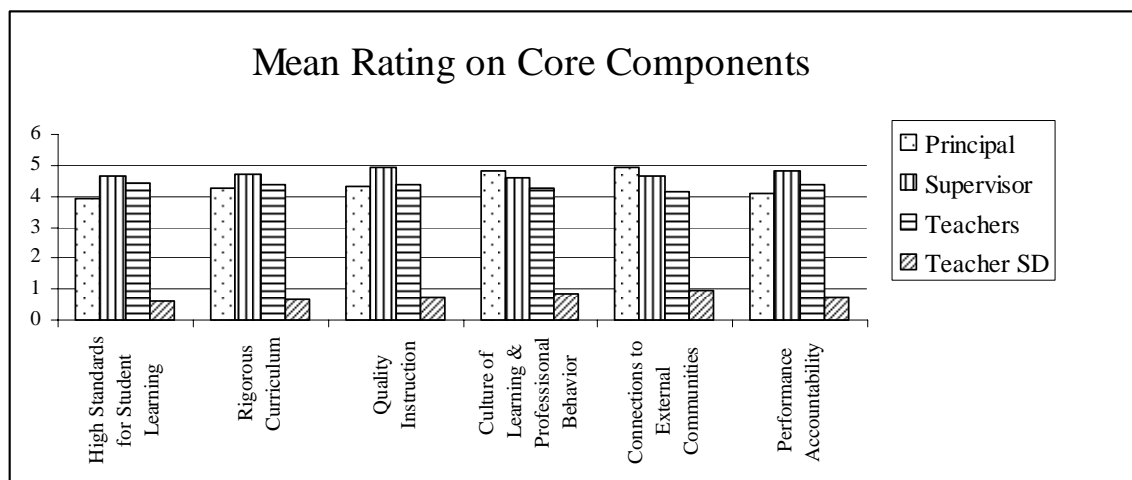
Results from the key processes component of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* indicated that the all of the ratings from the three respondent groups are within the *distinguished* range. The principal self rated *Advocating* as the highest of the six key processes. Principal 4 stands alone in the study with this high rating. *Advocating* for students in the external school community has been the most difficult for the other principals in the study. In the interview, the principal was confident of advocating both within the school arena as well as outside of the defined educational community.

School 4 Mean Ratings on Key Processes
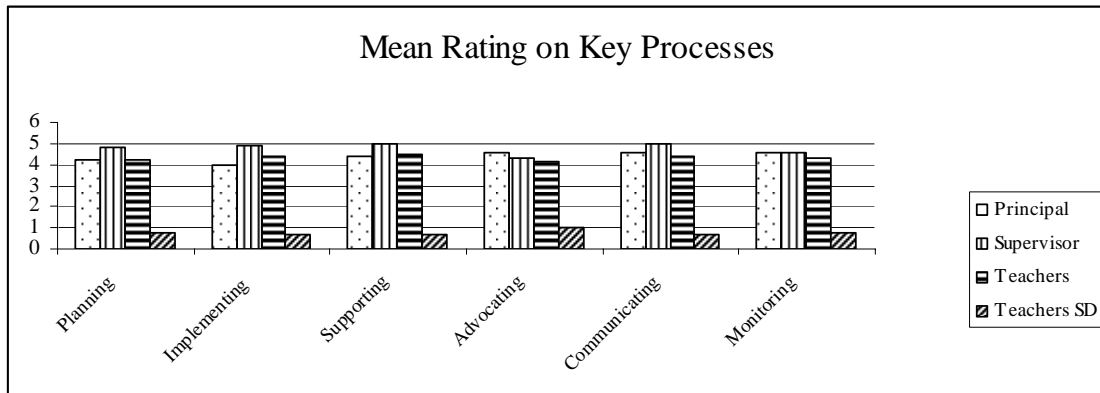
Getting parents involved in their children's education has been a difficult task for the principals in this project. Principal 4 has beaten the odds through a summer enrichment program implemented in summer 2008. By virtue of a private funding source, School 4 was the site of an innovative reading enhancement program that required commitment from parents and students to attend *Get BUGGED About Reading!* First through third grade students and their parents were invited to attend the session that began June 2 and ended on June 27. Transportation for students was provided. The program included students outside of the school attendance zone. The parents or family representative had to agree to attend a weekly session, read nightly with their student, and obtain a public library card. The students were in the program from 8:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Parents spent an hour per week learning from teachers how to help their children with reading and then worked with their child with a reading activity.

> The parents were so impressed by the program that one mother drove 18 miles to drop off her husband every week so she could keep the car to attend the sessions. It was so important to the family that on the last day her husband needed the car, so he gave her taxi fare to get to and from the school (Principal 4, personal interview, August 11, 2008).

Parents showed their interest by their attendance. Over 50% of parents came to all four parent meetings and most came at least one time. Comments from parents and teachers were captured at the end of the session and indicated the success of the program.

It was the best thing my child has ever been to

Why don't you do this in regular school?

My child loved the small groups.

My child actually made me take him to the library - this is a FIRST

The teachers were excited about the small groups, power of retelling, job embedded professional development - many cried the last day saying it was the best thing in their professional career (Principal 4, personal communication, November 10, 2008)

The students were benchmarked by parish pupil appraisal staff at the beginning of the session and given a post test at the end. Using DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) test, 61% of the first grade students, 60% of the second graders, and 89% of the third graders showed an increased in ORF.

ORF is a measure of words read in one minute and then they have to retell what they have read. This was a huge jump!!!!! (especially in third grade) Also, we are tracking these students with the help of the district test person to see if this program has made a difference. I know that several schools began using some of these strategies because their teachers went back so excited (Principal 4, personal communication, November 10, 2008).

Principal 4 has found an unusual program to help students with anger management problems. *Brothers in Arms* is a project that provides a mastiff as a therapy dog. The specially trained dog and counselor visit ten students twice a week.

When they complete their work, they get to pet the dog. They LOVE it. She has made a lot of progress with these students. Three were in there because they lost both parents to suicide this last year. One of the girls just let it all out in the last

session. We try everything once to see---more than once if it works. We have a ton of community involvement this year. I really need a volunteer to coordinate all the volunteers.....it is exciting to be a part of this. (Principal 4, personal communication, November 10, 2008).

Principal 4 has high expectations for the students at School 4. Knowing that education is the only way a student can climb out of poverty, this principal uses every opportunity possible to talk about college.

We not only talk about going to college, but the teachers include topics relating to vocations in the writing program. I make it a point to talk to students about college in front of their parents. I usually do this with one family at a time. I want to open the discussion about financial barriers at an early age" (personal interview, October 21,2008).

This creates a more urgent need to provide opportunities for underrepresented students to investigate postsecondary opportunities early in their education.

I want my students to have an early opportunity to explore college. Because we are in a district with two universities, I can bring in college students to serve as role models. (Principal 4, personal interview, October 21, 2008).

Preparing students for the workplace of the 21st century requires learning social or soft skills. Principal 4 makes sure the students at School 4 are practicing these skills. The school hosts an annual job fair for fifth graders. To participate, the students come in their dress clothes and visit each employer's table to learn what particular jobs require. "I also require that they find out the subjects they will need to take for a job they have an interest. This will help them in middle and high school" (Principal 4, personal interview, October 21, 2008).

School 5 is part of a suburban district in north Louisiana. The parish's educational attainment exceeds the state's number for high school and college graduates; however, over 90% of the students that populate School 5 are from families living below the poverty level.
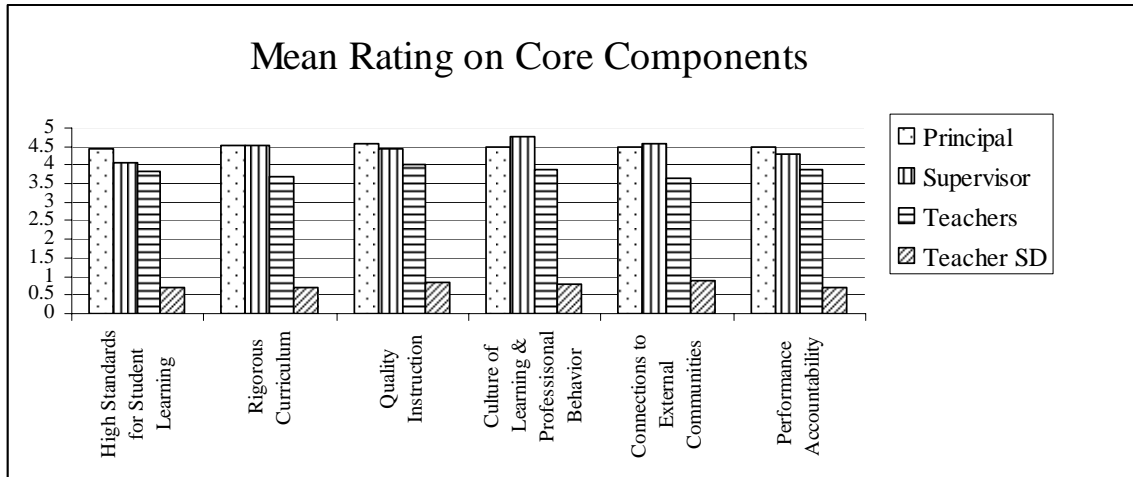
School 5 Demographic Information

School Identifier	School 5
Percentage of Free/Reduced Lunch Students	93.9
Percentage of Black Students	92.6
Enrollment Count (2006-2007)	311
Grade Range (2006-2007)	PS,PK,K-5
School Performance Score (2004-05)	75.6
School Performance Score (2005-06)	80.5
School Performance Score (2006-07)	81.4

As part of the High Performing, High Poverty Schools Project, the researchers from the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* provided the results of the three respondents from School 5 on the core components. The principal's overall rating was the highest of the three respondent groups, with supervisor next, and the teachers below each of the other groups. The overall mean for principal rating was 4.50; supervisor was 4.45; and teacher rating was 3.83 (N=24). The overall teacher standard deviation was .77. The ratings from the supervisor and principal all fall within the *distinguished* category. Only one of the teachers' ratings (*Quality Instruction*) is within *distinguished*; the other five are in the proficient rating.
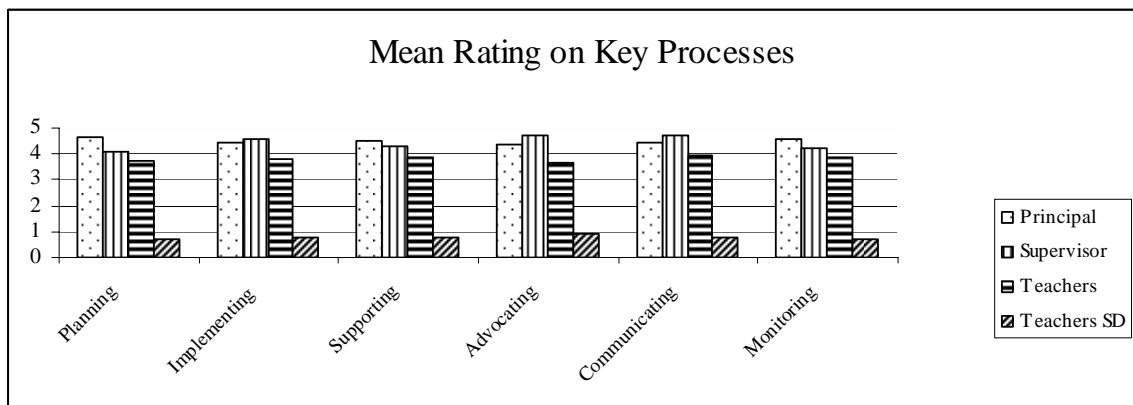
The principal's highest rated core component was *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior*; the supervisor and teachers rated *Quality Instruction* as the highest core component. The greatest variance among the three groups was on rating *Connections to External Communities;* the teachers rated it much lower than the supervisor

School 5 Mean Rating on Core Components

Mean Rating on Core Components

A bar chart titled "Mean Rating on Core Components" with a y-axis scale from 0 to 5 (in 0.5 increments). The x-axis categories are: High Standards for Student Learning, Rigorous Curriculum, Quality Instruction, Culture of Learning & Professisonal Behavior, Connections to External Communities, Performance Accountability. Legend: Principal, Supervisor, Teachers, Teacher SD.

Results from the key processes component of the *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* indicated that the all of the ratings from two of the respondent groups are within the *distinguished* range. All of the teachers' ratings fall within the *proficient* range.

School 5 Mean Ratings on Key Processes

Mean Rating on Key Processes

A bar chart titled "Mean Rating on Key Processes" with a y-axis scale from 0 to 5. The x-axis categories are: Planning, Implementing, Supporting, Advocating, Communicating, Monitoring. Legend: Principal, Supervisor, Teachers, Teachers SD.

Principal 5 has been principal at School 5 for four years (as of school year 2008-2009). This change in leadership caused many of the veteran teachers to move to another school. Opportunities to replace staff with teachers who could support the vision and mission of the school were welcomed. The school had been a low performing school, so not many

teachers were interested in applying for a position. Principal 5 had to initiate the process by recruiting teachers at the local job fair. Although the school needed staffing, Principal 5 was selective in the process. "I told all of them that only a special person can work here (Principal 5, personal interview, August 12, 2008).

The interview process was important. Principal 5 selected a hard line for questioning and listened carefully to the responses.

I can feel whether they can fit in. I am not a typical principal. In an interview it is important to be honest. These students are my babies and I tell the prospective teachers that they will not disrespect these children. I tell them we are a Title I school, give them our population statistics—over 90% free/reduced lunch—then I ask them some questions: What will you do if a student is hungry? How will you treat her/him? If they answer that they will tell them "try to make it until lunch" they are not what I'm looking for. If they say they'll find some little snack for them, then they might fit. Many of our students have disruptive home lives. We don't know if the police was called to their homes the previous night or if the student had any dinner or breakfast (Principal 5, personal interview, August 12, 2008).

Once the teachers are hired, their tutelage by the principal does not end. To make sure the teachers are fully aware of the circumstances they will be working under, Principal 5 takes all the new teachers on a tour of the attendance zone. As they pass by a home in which a School 5 child lives, the principal provides the new teacher with the student's name. After the tour, they gather in the principal's office to debrief.

We talk about the experience – I let them verbalize what they have just experienced. We use a lot of Ruby Payne's work to help them further understand the type of student they will have in the classroom. One thing I make clear from the beginning is that the teachers must respect the students as well as their parents (Principal 5, personal interview, August 12, 2008).

Principal 5 has high expectations for the students as well as teacher. From 8:15 until 10:15 each morning there is an absolute protected time. Each teacher has helpers, some of which are auxiliary staff and others are volunteers that conduct centers in the classroom. The teacher is responsible for getting the centers ready and having clear directions for the helpers to follow. The time is designed for the classroom teacher to have an uninterrupted time with a small group.

The functionality of the protected time was further discussed in a grade level meeting. The wall in the conference room was lined with bulletin board paper and each child in the school had a paper silhouette with his or her name on it. The names were arranged according to grades and then their reading levels. This converted data wall was the focus of the meeting. The principal opened the meeting by inviting any teacher to talk about someone who moved up a level. "Melvin moved up!" said an excited first grade teacher. She quickly moved the paper Melvin to the next level. Upon encouragement from the principal, the teacher explained she had increased writing assignments in centers. This process of frank discussions about student achievement continued for each grade level.

School 5 is also an AVID school. Rather than beginning in the fourth grade, this program is for sixth graders. Selected students have tutors from the local university twice a week and work daily with the AVID teacher. Students not selected to participate in this program are given opportunities to attend other extra curricula activities that focus on character building and career planning. Teachers volunteer to be sponsors in these clubs. Save Our Sons is designed for fourth and fifth grade boys. The counterpart to Save Our Sons is Girl Power, which is sponsored by a private foundation. All of the sponsors also keep close watch over the student's academic progress and alert the principal when a student is having trouble either academically or socially.

> We try to go beyond the curriculum – we have to play catch-up. The school nurse
> goes to classrooms to talk about life skills. Professionals come to classrooms to talk

about what they need to succeed. A child's structure is built on each year's experiences. These experiences prepare the children for life. We want that life to include postsecondary education, to make it happen; we have to start young with the basics (Principal 5, personal interview, October 23, 2008).

The interviews in the multi-case study reinforced the learnings from the project. Their success was largely due to the establishment of a *Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior* and ensuring *Quality Instruction* was a constant presence. These five principals soared in Pedagogical Leadership Wisdom; every minute of the instructional day was based on structure with a purpose.

Appendix C

Written Responses on the Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire

1. I believe student achievement can be increased through

Continued shared vision among all stakeholders.

Multiple leaders, data analysis, knowing your students and community and knowing the strengths and weaknesses of students and teachers comprehensive teaching, belief and respect for students

Strongly structured environment with my dedicated, cooperative faculty, and close monitoring of data generated by CCC lab, accelerated reader, Bench mark assessment, etc. and the extended day program.

Maximizing instructional time, knowing student weaknesses/strengths, parental involvement, and good classroom management.

Highly effective, quality instruction

High levels of student engagement

High expectations of all students

Use of research based programs

well dedicated teachers who will go the extra mile for students

A multitude of learning strategies, utilization of programs that suffice the needs of the children of a particular school, educational trips to enhance the knowledge of at-risk students without the opportunities, parents committed to education, teachers that love what they do and love their students.

high expectations, effective teachers, safe/positive school environment and a culture of excellence

Improved skills in reading, especially with regard to comprehension and vocabulary

better teacher preparation to work with the students that we have regardless of the "Circumstances"

Teachers being effective in instructional strategies and socially.

Research based instruction that actively engages students and focuses on higher order thinking skills and activities. We need more thinking in the curriculum.

Smaller class sizes.

Hard work and dedication by everyone.

2. What are the strengths of your school?

school climate, community support, high expectations, willing and dedicated faculty

> Strengths are stable faculty and staff, intensive PD, High expectations for students, faculty and staff and doing what it takes to get the job done.
>
> attendance, both students and faculty, highly qualified and certified staff, caring people, and a very energetic and high expectation principal
>
> Very small turnover of faculty. Dedicated faculty. job-embedded professional development of 3 hours a month, with each grade level meeting separately, structured learning environment. technology integration in the curriculum.
>
> All of the above and also strong faculty that puts students first.
>
> Highly qualified and committed faculty and staff
>
> Supportive, strong administrative team
>
> Accelerated Reader Program
>
> a faculty that works well together for the well being of the student body
>
> Family oriented, veteran teachers, good leadership, good parental involvement, lifelong learners, open door policy, and a willingness to go that extra mile.
>
> Instructional Leader, committed teachers, supportive parents
>
> Strong, dedicated, consistent staff/principal
>
> Attendance, Teacher Certification, teacher/student respect, and willingness to set and expect high performance from everyone...
>
> Teacher/student/parent relationships, Professional Development, and Teamwork
>
> We have a collaborative learning community with high expectations that responds to the needs individual students.
>
> Collaborative planning and teaching are strengths at my school.
>
> The strengths of my school are the joint effort of the faculty and staff, the grade group meetings for collaborating, the helpful and supportive parents, and our math and reading lab.

3. What needs to be improved at your school?

> conflict with defiant students needs to be addressed and math scores
>
> Improvement in the area of relating the vision to parents so they can get

involved, getting them to have high expectations for their children.

Student stability, teacher stability, more money and understanding from the central office

Technological resources; cooperative planning and use of data collected into instruction which is geared toward the different achievement levels within the classroom.

Reaching those parents who do not get involved, and more student engagement that include teaching techniques and lessons with rigor.

Extended time for more remediation and enrichment; Transportation for students for afterschool tutoring; Small class sizes with instructional paraprofessionals

more parental involvement

More programs for students who learn at a slower pace along with the opportunity to provide more exposure to resources in the state that can enhance students' knowledge about many topics discussed in the classroom.

consistently progress monitoring student growth

Students' higher-order thinking skills

Teacher Retention....Newer teachers tend to leave, moving to other areas (not schools here) for different reasons....

Use of technology, Parental involvement continuously

We need to improve curriculum alignment and vertical articulation. Also, we could improve parental involvement.

The physical plant needs to be improved.

My school needs more technology and a P.E. Teacher

4. Did your educational leadership program prepare you for your role as an administrator? If no, please explain how the program could improve. If yes, what are the elements that made it a good program for you? *Note: None of the principals graduated from the newly redesigned educational leadership preparation programs.*

Yes. Most of my classes were with one particular professor known for making learning relevant. I have used much of what I learned from his courses in my school.

No, educational leadership did not prepare me to be an administrator. It gives me principles, but my experience as an effective schoolroom teacher helped

me. I wanted the best for every child that enters my classroom and it continued when I became an administrator. The program is not inadequate, it should contain the field experience for every potential administrator with varying demographics

The ed. leadership from college did not help as much as the Administrators Academy (our district provided) really helped.

Yes. The overall information provided helped me to put my own experience and continue the applied structure already in place at the school.

No, not really. Nothing is better than actual practical experience. Also, be able to call a mentor administrator for advice is helpful.

Yes, it was very well-rounded. The program covered all aspects of being an administrator. Every component of the leadership program is important to an administrator. It all becomes applicable at some point.

I don't think any one program can fully prepare you for an effected administrator. I believe you have to love what you are doing and care about children that's something that you can't find in a book.

Somewhat. However because I began as a paraprofessional, I feel that this helped and gave me an eye opener of what is expected.

No. My program simply gave me the theory and foundational information. I think more application at early periods during the program would be effective.

No. A longer (full year) apprenticeship would give a better view of what the job entails especially the beginning and end of a school year and the planning involved (hiring staff, making schedules/classes, meeting paperwork deadlines, planning/providing professional development, etc.)

Not as much as the Administrators Academy that I attended that was sponsored by our District. You just don't receive the inside training that may prepare you for the Administrators role.

As far as the role and responsibility of an administrator it did. It did not prepare you for all the everyday unexpected situations and overwhelming paperwork.

No, the program needs to involve more actual case studies that lend itself to practice rather than theory. We need to get beyond instructional management practices and focus more on organizational behavior management.

The educational leadership program did not prepare me for the real world; it was mostly based on the textbook.

Yes. The reading of the different materials and being able to share with administrators.

5. Do you believe university teacher preparation programs are adequately preparing new teachers? If no, please explain how the program could improve. If yes, what are the best features of the university teacher preparation programs?

They are doing a good job. However, students in high poverty schools are coming with problems that these students may not know how to deal with. Perhaps a study on poverty would help. Also, more in classroom management is needed.

The job is adequate but not enough. Teachers should understand principles of poverty, varies cultures, behavior disorders and strategies for dealing with problem children

NO...I believe that if students spent more quality time in the schools... ALL types of schools, I believe they would have a better idea of the real world of students.

Yes. The latest teachers are coming well prepared in the areas of classroom management and technology.

Yes, our local universities have strong teacher programs. Teacher preparation programs need to include a wide array of schools including at risk schools so future teachers can see the whole picture.

Yes. New teachers that graduate with a degree in education are very well prepared. They have a solid understanding of the LATAAP requirements and most have had quality methods and student teaching experiences. I feel student teaching is invaluable to a new teacher. Teachers in alternative certification programs are not nearly as well prepared.

I feel that in order to adequately prepare teachers university teachers need to get out in the classrooms to see exactly what going on. There needs to be an collaborate effort between universities and schools

I think teacher preparation programs should allow future teachers more time on a school campus working with students than to sit and do a multitude of book work. They should be allowed to spend more time in at-risk schools so that they can get a fill for the real teaching world.

No. I think teacher programs give prospective teachers a general concept of how to plan, implement, manage, and evaluate an educational program.

However, they don't provide "real world" opportunities that will teach them how to deal with students in poverty, special needs students, unmotivated students, etc.

No. More should be done with the Comprehensive Curriculum and unit teaching.

No....Students should be expected to intern at schools at some points during their college career. Not just one school where they do student teaching...

It will prepare them for the responsibility, but they need more hands-on experiences.

No, the university needs to provide more experiences in dealing with poverty and at-risk students as well as research based instructional practices.

The teacher preparation program should prepare students for settings that are not ideal.

Yes. The best feature is allowing the new teachers a chance to block teach at the local schools.

6. How can higher education policymakers help you to do your job better?

Encourage financial support for more paraprofessionals that can assist in small group instruction.

Understanding everything is not black and white must be so gray areas.

Investigate or gather information before making policy by talking to the people in the field.

Stop making so many policies, make certain that the policies that are made are clear, and can be followed...

They can continue to supply us with the support, policies, and material we need to continually raise scores. They can also help in community resources to turn around the negative outlaw mentality of too many young parents who do not properly supervise their children, especially in the area of education.

Better pay for all educators and support staff. With accountability and difficult problems faced by educators, rewards make the tasks a little easier.

Listen to ideas/suggestions/concerns from those who are in the schools on a daily basis. Streamline paperwork whenever possible.

Require more training for incoming new teachers in the areas of classroom management.

By continuing to protect and support us for making decisions that are best for the schools. Also, allowing us to have some input is always great idea.

Require that teacher programs provide at least 6-9 hours of counseling courses.

Eliminate all tasks that do not directly affect teaching and learning.

Send better products... Not just passing the exam, but other attributes that would contribute to a good administrator....

Be consistent and make things simple instead of complex. Make education appealing.

They can fund school systems with the weigh on students in poverty.

The higher education policymakers can help by experiencing a situation before making a policy on it.

Continue preparing the students and allowing to participate in real life situations.

Appendix D

Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire Synthesized with Structure and Engagement for
School, Student, and Teacher

Louisiana HPHP Principal Questionnaire Synthesized with Structure and Engagement for School, Student, and Teacher

Structure For Increasing Student Achievement

	Structure
School	Smaller class sizes; maximizing instructional time, knowing student weaknesses/strengths, parental involvement, and good classroom management, strongly structured environment, and extended day program
Teacher	Better teacher preparation to work with all students; research based instruction that focuses on higher order thinking skills and activities; bench mark assessment
Student	Improved skills in reading, comprehension and vocabulary

Engagement For Increasing Student Achievement

	Engagement
School	Hard work and dedication by everyone; high expectations, effective teachers, safe/positive school and culture of excellence; highly effective, quality instruction; high levels of student engagement; high expectations for all students; data analysis
Teacher	Teachers being effective in instructional strategies and socially; well dedicated teachers who will go the extra mile for students; comprehensive teaching, belief and respect for students.
Student	A multitude of learning strategies, utilization of programs that suffice the needs of the children of a particular school, educational trips to enhance the knowledge of at-risk students without the opportunities, parents committed to education, teachers that love what they do and love their students.

Structure For Strengths Of School

Structure	
School	Math and reading lab; attendance; set and expect high performance from everyone; structured learning environment; technology integration in the curriculum; school climate
Teacher	Grade group meetings for collaborating; collaborative planning and teaching; collaborative learning community with high expectations that responds to the needs individual students; job-embedded professional development of three hours a month, with each grade level meeting separately; stable faculty and staff; and highly qualified and certified staff.
Student	Accelerated Reader Program

Engagement For Strengths Of School

Engagement	
School	Effort of the faculty and staff; helpful and supportive parents; teacher/student respect; teacher/student/parent relationships; faculty that works well together; strong, dedicated, consistent staff/principal; highly qualified and committed faculty and staff; Instructional Leader, good parental involvement; open door policy; high expectations for students.
Teacher	Teamwork; veteran teachers; willingness to go that extra mile; strong faculty that puts students first; very small turnover of faculty.
Student	

Structure For School Improvement

Structure	
School	More technology; physical plant; curriculum alignment; vertical articulation; use of technology; more money and understanding from the central office.
Teacher	Need a P.E. teacher; lessons with rigor; cooperative planning and use of data for differentiated instruction; teacher stability;
Student	Students' higher-order thinking skills; consistent progress; monitoring student growth; more programs for students who learn at a slower pace; opportunity to provide more exposure that can enhance students' knowledge; extended time for more remediation and enrichment; transportation for students for afterschool tutoring; small class sizes with instructional paraprofessionals; student stability; conflict with defiant students needs to be addressed

Engagement For School Improvement

Engagement	
School	Parental involvement; Improvement in the area of relating the vision to parents so they can get involved, getting them to have high expectations for their children
Teacher	Teacher retention; more student engagement that include teaching techniques;
Student	