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# Influence of Principal Work Styles and Behaviors on Teacher Commitment During School Reform in Georgia

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THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL WORK STYLES AND BEHAVIORS ON  
TEACHER COMMITMENT DURING SCHOOL REFORM IN GEORGIA

by

SUSAN MARIE SENTER MCGLOHON

(Under the Direction of Linda M. Arthur)

ABSTRACT

Research was conducted to learn about the influence of leadership work styles and behavior patterns of three high school principals in northeast Georgia whose schools were undergoing reform through the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The study sought to identify specific work styles and behaviors that affected teacher commitment when implementing change during school reform initiatives. A mixed methods study of collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data was used in a case study involving three different high schools. Principals and their teachers responded to interview questions and survey questions to reveal patterns of work styles and behaviors used in the change process. The responses to both interview questions and surveys were analyzed to find common themes of work styles that influence teacher motivation towards implementation of school reform. Responses to the interview questions and surveys that supplemented observations made by the researcher added to the panoramic view of interactions between teachers and leaders in the change process. A convergence of both responses and various methods of data collection were conducted to reveal what motivates or prevents others to embrace change and implement reform structures.

The findings indicated that principal work styles and behaviors affected teacher commitment. Interactions have been shown between three personality types of leadership

and their respective teachers in acceptance of change within the school system. Leadership personalities which scored strongly in scale groupings that included achievement, self-actualizing, humanistic-encouraging and affiliative were shown to foster positive and confident reactions from the teachers to commit, by contrast while the leadership personalities which scored strongly in the scale groupings that included approval, conventional-dependent and avoidance were shown to foster negative reactions in teacher commitment. Low confidence levels and insecurities over shadowed the support needed for teachers to embrace change. Therefore, it was recommended that districts seeking to promote change in specific schools, seek to appoint principals to those schools that possess the characteristics that foster positive teacher commitment to change.

**INDEX WORDS:** Principal, Work Style, Behaviors, Teacher Commitment, School Reform.

THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL WORK STYLES AND BEHAVIORS ON  
TEACHER COMMITMENT DURING SCHOOL REFORM EFFORTS IN GEORGIA

by

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TEACHER COMMITMENT IN SCHOOL REFORM IN GEORGIA

by

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father whose role model of tenacity and perseverance has inspired me to complete this degree, to set personal goals, and to reach for the stars.

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, who never gave up on my going back to school; who called every weekend to remind me that school was always there for me when I decided to return.

I dedicate this dissertation to my children in hopes that they may see that when one sets a personal goal, one does whatever it takes to reach the finish line no matter what others may want you to do.

I dedicate this dissertation to my sister, brother-in-law, relatives, and friends who called and encouraged me in my darkest moments to stay focused when I sometimes didn't have the strength to believe in myself.

I dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior who has given me a purpose filled life. Who has walked with me and sometimes carried me through this journey in order for me to discover that deep within there was a song that played softly and deeply... always... a song of life, and dreams and wisdom...a call to adventure...a destiny that was uniquely mine.

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Each member was a unique design to the team that ensured success and understanding. From this team I learned that people who have love of cause, love of purpose and love of passion can make the impossible happen.



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## CHAPTER I

*Belief is a powerful force. Belief can help the outnumbered triumph and the disadvantaged succeed. By the same token, a lack of belief can fell any effort, no matter how promising its substance (Walker, 2004).*

### INTRODUCTION

#### General Introduction

The American educational system was created to establish a system of public education that would be beneficial to the nation by helping to promote democracy, to ensure equality of educational opportunities, to enhance national production and a means to strengthen national defense (Brandt, 2000). The history of how the nation grew and the nation's need to organize into a political structure known as the federal government emphasized that an educational system was a much needed venue to support the anticipated growth of the new nation. Our public educational system was designed as a systematic process to educate children while allowing local areas to address societal ills such as poverty, gender, class-based inequities, or perceived ineffectiveness (Brandt, 2000). As needs grew in number, so did the financial backing to support programs in the educational system. Federal assistance was the key component the states and territories turned toward in order to help public education expand. The federal government assisted states and territories by offering support through federal dollars to establish and expand public schools. George and Mohammed (2003) pointed out that, in modern times, the federal government had continued to play a major role in school reform much the same way as it had done in the past through federal aid. The momentum of educational reform programs continued to accelerate in the latter part of the 21st century due to the intense

criticism from the public on the inadequacies in basic skills acquisition (George & Mohammed, 2003). The landmark publication, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) linked America's decline in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovations with the declining quality of education, especially in mathematics and science (Hoffman & Hudson, 1991). In the past two decades there had been strong political pressures to change the American educational system. The business sector had become especially interested because the U.S. was no longer the dominant competitor in an increasingly global marketplace. This translated into lost dollars in potential profits. Countries such as Japan and Germany were mentioned frequently in recent comparisons. The voice of the business community resonated that students who were coming out of the public educational system were not well enough prepared, and that was why U.S. business and industry was losing its competitive edge. Business and political leaders were pointing their fingers at the public American educational system. Reform, restructuring, and transformation of the public schools became part of the current rhetoric (Frick, 1992).

Reform, restructuring and transformation of the American public school had been a national focus to improve student learning. A reflection of the educational reform efforts during the 1980s to 2000s emphasized that every two or three years the federal government issued a new reform package to reach targeted groups of individuals to ensure high levels of academic achievement. Reform programs such as *High Schools that Work* (National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education, 1987), *America's Choice* (National Center on Education, 1988), *Charter Schools* (Center for Education Reform, 1992), *Goals 2000: Education American Act* (National Education

Goals: HR 1804, 1994), and the *Comprehensive School Reform Program* (U.S. Department of Education, 1997) were implemented to improve different aspects of education; yet these policies could not ensure the desired educational outcomes. Greene and Lee (1996) identified three factors that explained why reform endeavors did not work for a majority of schools: (1) given the limited time and resources that most schools had, schools had difficulty in adopting a reform package which would best meet the school's needs; (2) for reforms to build school capacity to change, schools needed to have capacity to carry out those changes in the first place, which many did not have; and (3) the false assumption that "more reforms... implementing multiple programs at the same time... would result in considerable changes". Historical data showed that educational reform movements in the United States during this time often proceeded as a reaction to the previous reform effort. Reform proposals were rarely built on knowledge of past successes and failures (Wraga, 1998).

As in different parts of the world, people gradually found that change of school structure alone was not sufficient to improve teaching and learning (Elmore, 2002). The pursuit of education quality was also dependent on teachers who carried out tasks or activities of education in schools. Therefore, teacher commitment proved to be a key element for the success of schools and the key element to successful educational reform movements (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). Day (2002) revealed that a substantial factor in teachers' commitment was a sense of teacher identity. Data analysis from interviews of experienced teachers in England and Australia suggested that commitment could be explained as a nested phenomenon, commitment tied to our beliefs, values and behaviors that may not be conscious to personal understanding. Commitment



was categorized into four dimensions: commitment of caring, commitment as occupational competence, commitment as identity and commitment as career-continuance (Tyree, 1996). The study conducted by van den Berg (2002) revealed that ‘self’ was a crucial element in the way teachers construed and constructed the nature of academic work. Commitment was a necessary element of professionalism. “Motivation, self-efficacy, job satisfaction and commitment were closely linked with identity; and teacher identities were the result of an interaction between personal experiences, and ‘the social, cultural and institutional’ environment in which teachers function on a daily basis” (p.579).

The continuous theme that unified all reform programs was one of change. In examining the psychology of change, Evans (1996) research found that even when change was recognized as positive, change was not approached logically, but emotionally, and was accompanied by a sense of loss and bereavement. Evans also revealed that when change was introduced, people were prone to protect the assumptions that guided them rather than to re-examine the assumptions which provided a sense of personal identity and helped make sense of their world. People involved in change often reacted defensively as if personal assumptions were challenged in the call to develop new proficiencies. Change created confusion; clarity and predictability of the status quo were replaced with uncertainty and conflict. When schools were engaged in second-order change, staff members perceived that the culture of the school had been weakened, opinions were not valued, and that the stability and order of the school was undermined (Marzano et al., 2005). Dufour’s (2006) studies found that when teachers were called upon to do differently, teachers questioned why and challenged both the need for and the

specifics of the change. Reform efforts focused on school improvement needed to embrace, respect and address teacher identity. The challenge policy-makers and reform efforts faced was to reduce resistance in order to make connections between the priorities of the school and teacher's individual, personal, professional and collective identity (Dufour et al., 2006). Policy changes and reformists have left many teachers feeling confused about professional identity, use of discretionary judgment, and about personal capacity to carry out the responsibilities associated with new performance identities, which challenged their traditional concepts of professionalism and professional purposes and practices (Day, 2005; Louis, 1998; Riehl & Sipple, 1996). If the quality of the education provided to students was to be maintained or improved in the face of increasing pressures and demands of reform efforts, then understanding teacher commitment was crucial for the reform's success (Day et al., 2005). The current state and national reform effort, *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB 2002), needed to take into account the gaps between existing teacher identity images and those envisioned for the reformed system (Day et al., 2005).

Belief is a powerful force. Belief can help the outnumbered triumph and the disadvantaged succeed. By the same token, a lack of belief can fell any effort, no matter how promising its substance (Walker, 2004). In the realm of school improvement, belief was no less important. Schools can make up for many missing ingredients in the short term, but there was no making up for staff commitment. If staff members did not believe in the improvement effort, implementation fidelity was lowered and success was unlikely (Walker et al., 2004). A focus on organizational culture has brought attention to the identified gap of resistance to educational reform. When people interact, they influence

one another's beliefs, understandings and perceptions of reality. Individuality was not given up, but each individual did modify his or her individuality to accommodate the other. Culture was more than just human relations, climate, or commitment; culture was a phenomenon that encompassed every element of organizational life (Marion, 2001, p. 266). The function of culture was to help organizations understand the environment and determine how to respond to it, thereby reducing anxiety, uncertainty, and confusion (Yukl, 1998).

Katz and Khan (1996), Leavitt (1964), and Seiler (1967) defined organizational culture as a social system or groups of people who interacted for such things as companionship, interaction and conversation, psychological systems, or personalities, needs, and drives. School organizational cultures were comprised of management systems, technical systems and environmental systems. Management systems or the structures used to control the organization included rules and regulations; technical systems referred to the competencies required to transform a raw material such as instruction and classroom management. Organizational systems referred to structures for processing raw material; many high schools, for example, adopted a departmentalized organizational structure. Environmental systems referred to structures that were considered external to the organization but which influenced the organization's activities; parents, for example, were part of the environmental system for public schools.

Culture played an extensive role in nearly every aspect of organizational life (Hodge, 2003). Cultural norms, rules, behavioral regularities, root metaphors, shared meanings and myths provided and institutionalized mechanisms of control that facilitate coordinated behavior. Culture defined roles, behaviors and structural protocols that enhance group productivity and efficiency (Schein, 1992). Marion (2001, p. 271-280)

described ten characteristics of culture which included observed behavioral regularities when people interacted (standardized way of interacting with one another, i.e. language conventions, proper conduct for eating), group norms (expected behavior), espoused values (things the group believes and what the group tries to achieve), formal philosophy (formalized statement of the espoused values, a broad statement of policies, ideology, or principle that was intended to guide a group's actions and influence perceptions of clients), rules of the game (the way the group does things), climate (ambiance of what the group does), embedded skills (things the group knows how to do and does them well), habits of thinking (mental models and the language structures that members of a culture construct around their perceptions of reality), shared meanings (commonly understood meanings for words and concepts), and root metaphors (myths and rituals the group engage in that defined who the group was).

Riehl and Sipple (1996) suggested that in the management and implementation of change and reform agendas, sustained teacher commitment was found to be greater in schools characterized by high levels of administrative support. School cultures that had strong administrative support were more likely to have teachers who were more committed to the profession and more committed to the goals and values of their schools offices, state departments, regional accrediting agencies and even some federal programs that were more concerned with conformity, compliance and control issues than with results or outcomes. In a study of a national sample of high school teachers (American Teacher Survey of High Schools and Beyond) researchers found that satisfaction was largely unrelated to demographics or experience differences in teachers, but strongly predicted by a teacher's subjective interpretation of their work environment

which included a safe environment, security and worth. Therefore, it was not known if the correlation of school leader commitment to reform measures through their work styles and behaviors had an impact on teacher commitment by transforming school culture to one of least resistance during school reform measures. The purpose of this study was for this researcher to specifically illuminate to what extent teacher commitment depends on the principal's work styles and behaviors in school reform during second order change (Marzano et al., 2005).

### Statement of the Problem

Educational organizations were ever more dependent upon external definitions of quality, process and achievement for success. The current state and national reform package, *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, had defined these terms as accountability, standards and success for all. If past school reform efforts fell short of their intended goals, educational leaders were asking what they could do in their schools during a new age of school reform to increase success. Past reform efforts have left a crippling disillusionment in their wake, a cynicism about staff development and any belief that training or innovation benefits students. Implementing successful school improvement required more than simple maintenance or structural change; school improvement needed to involve the human side of change as well.

School leaders recognized that school reform required balance between structural change, instructional change and relational change. Teacher commitment had proved to be a key element in the success of school reform. Best practices had to be embedded in the hearts and minds of those who needed to implement them. Meeting the challenge of change was not just a concern of teachers, but of principals as well. Change was focused

on how particular initiatives could be developed without compromising the development of teachers in the surrounding environment, now and in the future. School culture played an active role in second order change. Since school culture was built, in part, on actions of the school principal as perceived by teachers, principals must investigate their leadership work styles and behaviors to face the challenge of addressing teacher resistance to change and successful implementation of reform measures. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to illuminate how principal work styles and behavior influence teacher commitment during school reform in Georgia.

### Research Questions

The overarching question reform models should consider was “Do principal work styles and behaviors influence teacher commitment during school reform in Georgia?”

The following sub questions further guided the researcher on answering the overarching question:

- 1) How do leader’s work style and behaviors influence teacher commitment?
- 2) What are principals’ beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in school reform?
- 3) How do principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors?
- 4) What are major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change?

### Significance of the Study

The pace of educational reform has continued to increase thereby creating rapid change in the external and internal conditions of schools. Accountability, standardization and mandatory changes have produced teacher resistance to current reform movements. The changing nature of teaching through reform efforts has produced conditions of extreme uncertainty and identity crisis within what historically has been a stable profession. Reforms have come and gone, using up time, money and hope. Reform strategies have historically caused people within educational organizations to adjust to new demands and expectations that the movement imposes on them. Belief systems of both principals and teachers are challenged during the change process, causing resistance and defiance to much needed reform. If federal and state support was to continue to finance reform programs that highlight best practices in educational organizations, then guidelines for reform programs must focus on the nature of change and the role of the principal in regard to relational as well as structural changes in order to reduce resistance and embrace new ideas toward true school improvement.

The challenge policy-makers and reformers face was to reduce resistance in order to make connections between the priorities of the school and teachers' individual, personal, professional and collective identities. School leaders needed to identify the type of second order change needed in their schools and then match appropriate leadership behaviors to achieve success in reform implementation. Therefore, examining the work styles and behaviors of principals and their commitment would define the characteristics that impacted successful school reform initiatives and had provided useful information to other high school principals implementing a change process.

### Importance to the Profession

Currently, reform approaches were being examined by our educational systems at a rate that kept educational practitioners uncertain as to what would be the best approach to school improvement. Within these reform approaches were strict guidelines for school redesign to ensure that best practice were embedded in the change initiative. As reformists continued to debate the unique design of what works in schools, school leaders, teachers and the Georgia Department of Education would benefit from learning about barriers that limit full implementation of reform programs. Therefore, in the educational profession, it would be beneficial for principals to recognize their work styles and behaviors that influence their decision in leading change before they invest in a redesign of their school's culture when reform approaches are chosen.

### Importance to the Researcher

Being a part of the facilitation of the Georgia Department of Education's support system design, this researcher had a vested interest in understanding how principals recognized their role in successful school reform and if that role had a prominent influence on teacher commitment. Teachers were constantly being shifted from one initiative to another causing frustration and confusion as to what their purpose and focus on best practices should be. The results found in this study would benefit the work of the researcher as a leadership facilitator for schools in needs improvement status in order to design better school support strategies as schools embrace best practices outlined in *No Child Left Behind Act 2001*.



## Procedures

IRB approval was secured before any research or pilot study was conducted. Permission to conduct research with each principal and focus group was secured in a letter of written consent. The written consent was obtained first from the county board office secured with the superintendent's signature to allow research to be conducted on the school premises and then was given to the participants acknowledging their acceptance of participation in the research study and their right to anonymity throughout the study. Purposive selection was used to select participants in order to reduce variables during the study. Participants were from the same geographical setting and possessed a similar demographic profile. Information was gathered through multiple methods that were interactive and humanistic. The researcher actively involved participants in data collection and sought to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study. Confidentiality of the data collected was maintained and participants had the right to terminate their participation by contacting the researcher of their decision at any point in time during the study. Data collection included both qualitative and quantitative data composed of interviews, open-ended observations and survey questions. The study identified a relationship between principal work styles and behavior patterns with teacher commitment. Human Synergistic International© interpreted the survey responses and produced scored evaluations of strengths and weaknesses for each participant. Interview sessions were used by the researchers to enrich the findings of the survey questions and provide a triangulation on research findings. The researcher interpreted the data by analyzing the data for themes or categories, and making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned,

and offering further questions to be asked to ensure validity in data collection. Data analyzed in this study was from multiple data collection commonly referred to as concurrent triangulation: participant observation, interviewing both individual and focus groups, and surveys were the sources for data collection.

### Participants

Three high school principals were interviewed in this case study. High school teachers who have served under these principals were interviewed as well. All principals and teachers were from a similar rural region within 30 miles of each other. One principal was from a rural high school as it became identified as “Needs Improvement, Level 3 through Corrective Action”, by the Georgia Department of Education (2004-2005). The second principal was the current principal (2006-2008) of a rural high school who was transitioning this high school from “Needs Improvement Level 3, Corrective Action”, to “making AYP” as deemed by the Georgia Department of Education. The third was a principal whose school has been identified by the Georgia Department of Education as leader of a high performing school that achieved adequate yearly progress for the last three years and received national recognition for school performance. This principal was also recognized as the High School Principal of the Year for the state of Georgia, 2008. Leadership work styles used by the leaders were identified through the results found in Acumen Leadership *WorkStyles*<sup>TM</sup> survey. This assessment provided information on the leader’s influence on those around him or her and how their strategies affected peer behavior and ability to perform (Human Synergistic International© 2005). Teachers that served under each principal were interviewed in three small focus group settings of 5-6 people respective to the principal they served under, to obtain a collective

response toward their viewpoints. They also participated in the Acumen Leadership *WorkStyle*<sup>TM</sup> profile through the feedback collected from the co-workers' assessment form which reveals co-workers' perceptions of their leader's influences on teacher commitment. The researcher was a leadership facilitator assigned to one of the high schools used in this case study. The researcher has served in the high school for four years as a school and leader quality specialist working with two different principals assigned to this school during Corrective Action.

### Research Design

A mixed methods study utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data was used in three separate case studies. This strategy integrated the results of the two methods during the interpretation phase. This interpretation noted the convergence of the findings as a way to strengthen the knowledge claims of the study or explain any lack of convergence that may result (Creswell, J.W., 2003). This study applied a mixed methods design in order to provide a concurrent triangulation approach that was used in an attempt to confirm and cross validate the case study. The study illuminates relational impacts on principal work styles and behaviors and teacher commitment during school reform in Georgia.

### Data Collection

After Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, a pilot study was conducted with two principals and was conducted as if it were the actual study. The pilot study results were not used in the study, but were used to assist the researcher with determining if the research protocol was workable. Adjustments to the interview questions were made as analysis of the pilot study group offered recommendations. In order to maintain

anonymity among the participants and their schools, the participants and the high schools were identified by coded names.

After the pilot study, the researcher conducted the proposed study with principals and teachers. The qualitative study was conducted as the first phase of the study. Interview sessions helped enrich and add depth to the relations found between conceptual categories and to specify the conditions under which theoretical relationships emerge, change, or are maintained. If the survey was administered first this could influence the interview responses more toward the survey questions rather than a response to the interview of what the researcher questions. The quantitative study was conducted as the second phase of the study. The survey highlighted the type of work styles that were used by the principals as they led in the change process of school reform. Interview sessions were digitally taped. The leadership questionnaire on leadership behaviors and personality styles were administered and sent to Human Synergistic International© for analysis, producing a behavior profile on leadership styles. The researcher was the primary collector of all data.

### Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. After all interviews were transcribed, these transcripts of the recorded interview were thoroughly read and compressed into briefer statements by use of meaning condensation, a method involving condensing “natural units” into “central themes” (Kvale, 1996). The researcher adapted Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) open coding as a technique for coding participants’ statements relevant to their beliefs about the impact of leader commitment and reform sustainability. As each transcript was coded, both the codes and the categories

were reevaluated and refined to mirror participants' description of their beliefs.

Categories of common themes were constructed and logged into a frequency distribution chart according to theme. The Acumen Leadership WorkStyles© leadership profile were facilitated by the researcher and then sent to Human Synergistics© International to process the results. A triangulation was used through interviews, questionnaires and observations to ensure the findings have validity and reliability. The researcher analyzed the data to draw conclusions from the observed and recorded responses.

#### Limitations

Limitations of the study include:

1. When asking respondents to state their attitude about a topic, the respondent may provide an opinion when they do not know anything about specific issues or their biases may influence their response.
2. The study was based on how participants perceive change while change process was still taking place.
3. The generalization was limited to three settings, and findings may not apply to other schools in Georgia or in the nation.
4. Perceptions of participants were reflective of regional norms and values.

#### Delimitations

1. Participants used in this study were limited to those found in three Northeast Georgia high schools, defined by the Georgia Department of Education, school support regions, as Region One.

## Definitions

**Absolute Measurable Objective:** Benchmarks set annually for schools in Georgia on a performance index that raises student achievement to national levels by the year 2014.

**Behavior:** Actions or reactions usually in relation to the environment. The most basic human action that can be conscious or unconscious, overt or covert, and voluntary or involuntary which was influenced by culture, attitudes, emotions, values, ethics, authority, rapport, hypnosis, persuasion, coercion and/or genetics.

**Best Practices:** A technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. A commitment to using the best practices in any field was a commitment to using all the knowledge and technology at one's disposal to ensure success.

**Chivied:** To vex or harass with petty attacks.

**Concurrent Triangulation:** A method-appropriate strategy of finding the credibility of qualitative analyses.

**Leadership Facilitator:** A School Support Specialist provided by the State of Georgia to help schools who are in "Needs Improvement Status" in levels 3 or higher of not making adequately yearly progress. The School Support Specialist works with the principal and the leadership team to establish a viable school improvement plan that targets reasons why the school did not make adequately yearly progress, to assist in building functional and effective leadership teams, to assist in establishing standards based classrooms, to offer quality professional learning identified in the school improvement plan and to assist in creating tiers of intervention and prevention that individualize assistance in student learning.

Emotional Intelligence (EI), often measured as an Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ), describes an ability, capacity, or skill to perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. It was a relatively new area of psychological research. The definition of EI was constantly changing.

IRB: Institutional Review Board

Second Order Change: Deciding – or being forced – to do something significantly or fundamentally different from what has been done before. The process was irreversible: once one begins, it was impossible to return to the way one was doing before. Second-order change implies a fundamental or significant break with past and current practices. This type of change represents a dramatic difference in current practices. Second-order changes require new knowledge and skills for successful implementation.

Work Styles: Mental processes used in the job, as one consciously chooses to work within particular processes to match the need.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

The Review of the Literature focused on some of the most significant and critical issues surrounding the influence of principal work styles and behaviors on teacher commitment during school reform. Research detailing the influence principals' work styles had on teachers in order to influence the change process during reform was presented. The literature and research focused on the following: the historical background for educational reform, school reform efforts, teacher commitment, the principal's influence on teacher commitment, best practices outlined by the Georgia Department of Education, barriers to effective school reform, the role of teachers in school reform, leadership behaviors, and new realities in the twenty-first century.

### Historical Background

Purpose shapes vision and vision shapes structure. Thus any reasonable effort to restructure schools must begin with a serious consideration of the purposes of education. Historical circumstances have shaped both the purpose and the vision of schools and have shaped the structures of schools as well. Reformulation of the purpose of schools and the consequent visions that will guide the restructuring of schools had been one of the most hotly debated topics for the better part of the last century (Schlechty, 1990). Parents, teachers, business leaders, and U.S. presidents have all pronounced their prescriptions for repairing the American education system.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in contrast to the United States, many countries did not offer free public education; only the privileged were able to attend schools. What purposes were American schools expected to fulfill during this time?



Schools were needed to Americanize the immigrant child and select and sort children in terms of their potential for carrying out work roles in the urban industrial economy. The industrial society required well-educated elite with the masses trained for semiskilled or low-skilled jobs, thus social Darwinism was the norm for society. Thus the purpose of American education shifted from an emphasis on providing a basic education to promote a common culture to selecting and sorting youngsters in a way that was consistent with the needs of the industrial society (Schlechty, 1990). In the early sixties researchers noticed a major divide with the best public educational system in the world. First and foremost, schools that were comprised of mostly African American students were being neglected and deprived of vital educational resources. Secondly, the academic achievement gap between the majority and minority students were substantial; students who attended schools in more influential areas, scored higher on achievement tests than students in less influential areas (Hill & Harvey, 2004).

The purpose of the common school was to provide a common core of learning for all Americans. The common school had been organized and structured on the assumption of a relatively homogeneous community and a general agreement on values. By the 1960s new structures were beginning to evolve. High schools and vocational schools evolved for the purpose of selecting and sorting. Not all Americans were satisfied with the view that the schools should serve the needs of American industry. Many educators viewed schools as instruments to serve very different purposes. By the mid 1960s, many educational leaders were coming to feel paralyzed by the institutions that they were leading. After much debate politicians realized that something had to be done about the discrepancy in achievement scores and school resources (Schlechty, 1990).

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed. The ESEA was mainly directed at narrowing the achievement gap among blacks and whites and between the rich and the poor. The overall purpose of ESEA was to improve educational opportunities for poor children. This was not meant as a general package of aid to all schools; the allocation formulas directed assistance to the local education agencies (LEAs) with the greatest proportions of poor children. The funds were purposely distributed through state education agencies (SEAs) to avoid the perception that the federal government was intervening in the rights and obligations of states to provide public education and also to use the funds as leverage to upgrade the capabilities of SEAs themselves (Hill & Harvey, 2004).

In the 1980s the momentum of educational reform programs accelerated due to an urgency which began to develop after the release of the seminal report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*. Based on that document's assertion that a rising tide of mediocrity in public and private schools threatened the nation's foundations, federal and state leaders chivied local educators into increasing standards. Corporate America responded to the challenge through thousands of partnerships with local schools. Philanthropies, ranging from the Carnegie Foundation to the Twentieth Century Foundation, financed impressive analyses of what needed to be done or offered their own suggestions. Leaders at all levels agreed that education had finally assumed its rightful spot at the top of the nation's domestic agenda (Hill et al., 2004).

At the beginning of the 1990s, the outlook for genuine deep-rooted school reform gained momentum. Under the leadership of President George H.W. Bush and Governor

Bill Clinton of Arkansas, the nation's governors had adopted six impressive National Educational Goals. Business leaders, rallied by the Business Roundtable and the National Alliance for Business supported the goals. A coalition of corporate and philanthropies interests was busy developing an ambitious effort to reshape schools, the New American Schools Development Corporation. A consensus was developing around systemic reform, emphasizing the alignment of standards, curriculum, assessment, textbooks and materials, and teacher training (Hill & Harvey, 2004, p.8).

As the United States moved into the first decade of a new millennium, the interest in school improvement remained high. The federal government continued to play an active role in school reform, much the same way it has done in the past, through federal funding. President George W. Bush and his then secretary of education, Rod Paige, succeeded in prompting Congress to enact the *No Child Left Behind Act 2001* program. Working with Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, these national leaders along with other supporting senators have produced legislation tying the standards and annual assessments to federal aid to children in low-income schools. The business community, rallied by Louis V. Gerstner Jr., former chairman and CEO of IBM, has worked with the nation's governors to create ACHIEVE, an organization dedicated to standards-based reform. A new array of philanthropies including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which did not exist when *A Nation at Risk* appeared, had set out to reshape school district administration and the American high school (Hill et al., 2004).

The goal was to raise achievement standards and close the achievement gap for all individuals and schools. This moral imperative applied to professional personnel as well as to students. Student achievement cannot be raised without improving the skills of

teachers and administrators. The moral imperative meant that everyone had a responsibility for changing the larger education context for the better (Fullan, 2004). Achievement of this goal may be compromised in that the attention to the importance of schooling, increased interest in innovative practices, and sustained public commitment to change coexisted with confusion about what works, disagreement about whether reform should be incremental or wholesale, and conflicting expectations about the appropriate pace of change (Johnson, 1996).

Those who were serious about school reform needed to first understand that American schools were not less effective than they once were. American schools were clearly better at doing what they were expected to do in the past. The problem was that schools today were expected to take on tasks that they had never been held responsible for before. Schlechty (1990) highlighted that those who would restructure schools must therefore consider the purposes schools had been designed to serve, as well as the purposes schools could be designed to serve. It was the past that had given schools their structure—and the way we envisioned the future would shape the new structures that were envisioned for the future. Changing rules, roles and relationships in schools which was what was required if schools were to be restructured through reform, would require leaders to learn new ways of leading and subordinates to learn new ways of following. Restructuring required that all who participated in the life of the school unlearn many things that had been taught in the past and learn new skills and abilities.

#### School Reform Efforts

Over the past century, schools had become multi-purpose institutions, which was why schools were so easy to criticize and in need of reform. Schools were expected to

feed the hungry, discipline the wayward, identify and encourage the talented, treat everyone alike, yet not forget that everyone was an individual, raise not only test scores but also feelings of self-worth, improve not only standards but also graduation rates, provide for differing learning styles and capacities while administering common test. No other institution in American society carried this weight on its shoulders. No other institution was so public, familiar, and exposed to such scrutiny (Reese, 2007).

Americans from all walks of life espoused the cause of school reform. Why do Americans love to reform the school? Reese (2007) answered this question through his research studies.

There was an old and persistent cultural strain in American history that seeks human perfection and sees education and schooling as essential to that perfectionism. Americans believe that our nation uniquely respects the individual and has a remarkably fluid social order. Individuals are so highly regarded that they are held personally responsible for their school performance. Over the past two centuries, America's public schools have assumed so many responsibilities for the care, discipline and education of the young that they inevitably disappoint many people. The dream of perfection, the supreme faith in the individual and social mobility through appropriate schooling, and the unexamined assumption that schools should cure whatever ails the nation made educational reform a constant concern in American society (p.219).

Because of these mentioned beliefs, reform in America was inevitable, and along with reform came change.

Rapid implementations of reform in Georgia were causing principal and teachers to question whether to commit themselves to new proposals for change. Reform structures in American schooling were decentralizing, resisting standardization and encouraged variation from classroom to classroom and school to school (Richardson, Short & Prickett, 1993). Current school reform had made people cautious about sure-fire solutions and skeptical of outsiders who claimed they had the answers. Changing the structure of schools—or any other organization—was no simple task. The current culture of most schools projected the belief that improvement came through programs, new materials, or additional staff. School improvement was thought of as an add-on to existing systems or services. The reason for the disappointing results came from the fact that most new programs, materials or staff was intended to produce more of what the system was already producing and would not change the outputs of the system significantly. The current system-in-place was never designed to successfully teach all the children. If education's charge was to set a new mission and craft a new system, then the outputs of the system-in-place would need to be changed. The new knowledge would need to filtrate into the system. When the new knowledge got into the system, then the system needed to change the conditions in which teachers found them. Changes in the knowledge state of the staff, without changing the conditions, or changing the conditions without changing the knowledge states, would likely yield little or no change (Zmuda, Kuklio & Everett, 2004). Social structures were embedded in systems of meaning, value, belief, and knowledge; such systems comprised the culture of an organization. To change an organization's structure, therefore, one must attend not only to rules, roles and relationships but to systems beliefs, values and knowledge as well. Structural change

required cultural change (Schlechty, 199). The general processes required to bring about those changes were universal, regardless of the specific organization or industry (Hambrick, Nadler & Tushman, 1998). How people responded to change, however, varied and this response was often a determining factor in the ultimate acceptance or rejection of that change. Richardson and Prickett (1993) reported from their findings that engaging others in change was especially hard today, because so many teachers and principals have been numbed by a decade of urgency, blame, shifting priorities and failed promises. These educators have seen reform introduced in a flurry of excitement, only to be abandoned suddenly and supplanted by new programs requiring entirely different approaches to classroom instruction or school governance. No reform can succeed without the endorsement and energetic support of teachers and principals, who must not only change as educators but make change happen with least resistance in their schools (Richardson & Prickett, 1993).

#### Teacher Commitment

Fink (1992) in his investigations found that teacher commitment had been gradually recognized as the most effective route to school success by the leadership literature. There were two reasons to emphasize teacher commitment. First, it was an internal force coming from teachers themselves who have needs for greater responsibility, variety and challenge in their work as their educational levels grow. Second, it was an external force coming from the reform movement seeking high standards and accountability, which were dependent upon teachers' voluntary commitment. The research studies of Tsui and Cheng (1999) claimed that teacher commitment was a crucial predictor of teacher's job performance and the quality of

education. However, in the management and implementation of change and reform agendas by governments, there was no evidence that teacher core identities were acknowledged or valued (Day, 2005).

There was a need for reform agendas to recognize teacher commitment in a multidimensional sense. Research studies have closely linked teacher commitment to the organizational effectiveness factors such as staff cohesiveness, attitude toward innovation, and school norms of collegiality and continuous improvement (Hoy & Ferguson, 1985; Little, 1982). Teacher commitment had been suggested as one critical element to the success of school education (Nias, 1981).

Evans's (1996) research found that even when change was recognized as positive, change was not approached logically, but emotionally, and was accompanied by a sense of loss and bereavement. Teachers were more prone to protect the assumptions that had guided them than to re-examine them, because those assumptions had provided them with a sense of identity and helped made sense of their world. He also found that change challenges our competence. When educators were called upon to develop new proficiencies, they were likely to feel the anxiety that accompanied moving outside their comfort zone. Maeoff (1988) emphasized this finding by stating that during reform, teachers wanted to be heard and respected with regard to school decisions and were more committed to specific decision and to the organization by exercising their decision making power in schools (Kushman, 1992, Smylie, 1992). Creating change would be easy if there weren't any resistance. Even those who want and seek change would confront internal resistance at some level and at some point during their transformation. Successful change would be easily within reach if all people were open, willing to be



coached and willing to change. The reality was, not everyone was willing to change how they thought, what they believed or what they did (Miller, 2000). Schlechty (1990) found that those who were expected to support a change effort would eventually expect to have four questions answered. If these questions were not answered, then reform failed. First, those being asked to change wanted to know what they were being asked to support. They wanted to understand the concept and its implications for them and their lives. Second, most of them were interested in feasibility: Could it be done? Did the leadership have the will to see it through, or was this just one more passing fad? Third, most of the group wanted to know if they should do it, and if so why. And finally, there was the practical question of how do we do it? When teacher felt excluded from the decision-making process, teachers became less committed to the school and student learning. As Firestone and Pennell (1993) found in their studies, some mixes of commitment to the organization, profession, and students were necessary to enhance teachers' professionalism and encouraged them to pursue changes in teaching practices.

#### Principal Influence on Teacher Commitment

The research work of Park (2005) showed that teacher commitment was affected by varying workplace conditions including principal leadership. In particular, a principal's ability to keep intrusive extraneous forces from impinging on teachers had a great impact on teacher commitment (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990). Andres and Soder (1987) extended that concept by stating that staff perceptions of principal leadership as instructional leaders in three roles are critical to the academic success of the students, particularly among low achieving students. In the first role as a resource provider, the principal takes action to recruit personnel and resources within the building, district and

community to achieve the school's mission and goals. These materials, resources, information or opportunities were seen as the principal acting as broker. As an instructional resource, the principal set expectations for continual improvement of the instructional program and actively engaged in staff development. Through active participation, the principal participated in the improvement of classroom circumstances that enhance learning. As a communicator, the principal modeled commitment to school goals, articulated vision of instructional goals and the means for integrating instructional planning and goal attainment, and set and adhered to clear performance standards for instruction and teacher behavior (Park, 2005).

Leader characteristics and capabilities have long been a topic of interest in the leadership literature. While principal actions were critical to academic success of students, the question arose as to whether or not principals' work styles and behaviors influenced teacher commitment during reform. Everyone was interested in the effective principal. Principals' work styles influenced their vision of the school as well as their behaviors (Hallinger, Bickman & Davis, 1997). In an in-depth study of an elementary principal, Greenfield (1991) found that the principal's moral orientation was important to understand because it colored practically everything the principal did on a daily basis. Beliefs about students' ability to learn and teacher's ability to teach affected a principal's leadership behaviors. Krug's (1992) research study found that the personal beliefs and goals shared by effective and ineffective school leaders produced little difference in the activities; however, they concluded that the way a principal interpreted a particular activity (beliefs) was of primary importance in explaining the differences between effective and less effective principals.

Mid- continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) continued to build on these findings and contributed to the science of leadership. McREL's study, *School Leadership That Works*, was the third in a series of meta-analytic studies of classroom, school and leadership practices that were highly correlated with student achievement. The researchers engaged in this study addressed two important concerns: do the quality and focus of leadership behaviors have a significant relationship to student achievement and what specific principal leadership work styles and behaviors had the greatest impact. The researchers found a significant, positive correlation of .25 between principal leadership behaviors and student achievement. In the 70 studies examined by McREL, researchers found that effective leadership comprised 21 key areas of responsibility that correlated to higher levels of student achievement. Included in those 21 key areas were culture that fostered shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation, order that established a set of standard operating procedures and routines, discipline that protected teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time, resources that provided teachers with the materials and professional development necessary for the successful. McREL also learned from their research that effective leaders not only know what to do, but how, when and why to do it. McREL studies concluded that effective leaders understand which school changes were most likely to improve student achievement, what these changes implied for both staff and community and how to tailor their leadership practices accordingly. What researchers know was that principal work styles and behaviors impact student achievement. Researchers also know that teacher commitment impacts student achievement.

## Best Practices Outlined by Georgia Department of Education

The Georgia Department of Education defined the role of leadership in a school through the School Keys: *Unlocking Excellence through the Georgia Standards*.

The School Keys were the foundation for Georgia's comprehensive, data driven system of school improvement and support. Correlated to several well-known and respected research frameworks, the School Keys described what Georgia school leaders needed to know, do and understand. The School Keys were intended to serve as a descriptor of effective, high impact practices for school leaders (Marzano, 2003, 2004, Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2006). The School Keys combined Marzano's seven factors and similar terms and statements from the other research documents into eight broad strands to encompass the research. Leadership was one of the eight quality strands. The School Keys defined leadership as a governance process through which individuals and groups influenced the behaviors of others so that they worked collaboratively to achieve common goals and promote organizational effectiveness. The principal and school administrators provided leadership that reinforced a commitment to high expectations for student achievement while promoting the school as a true community of learning. Principals achieved this by exhibiting a deep understanding of curriculum, assessment, and instruction. This fostered focused, professional learning as a result of the principal's role of lead learner and a high level of consistency in their use of their knowledge. Teachers were to be involved in data analysis, reviewing student work, and making decisions about instructional practice. School leadership also demonstrated the role of lead learners. The principal and other school administrators effectively and consistently demonstrated the role of lead learners

within the learning community as a priority in their professional lives. As a result of their leadership, staff, parents and community members were in partnership to ensure the achievement of all learners and to eliminate barriers to the achievement of individual students and groups of learners. The School Keys (2007) defined impact of school leadership as lead learners provide a high level of evidence of the impact of administrators as lead learners within the learning community, including active membership on study teams, protecting instructional time, and promoting adult learning. As a result of this visible and sustained instructional leadership, the school successfully and continuously achieved its mission, priorities, and long-range goals. Both symbolically and literally, the principal and administrators inspired the staff, keep the school focused on student learning, and promoted sustained and continuous improvement. School leadership coached, supervised and monitored curriculum, assessment and instruction. All school administrators understand and were actively involved in the analysis and utilization of data to drive the instructional decisions for alignment and implementation of curriculum and assessment. As lead learners, they routinely provided coaching and supervision for curriculum and assessment.

Just as the leadership roles from the business perspective had changed from the focus on the leader to the focus on team building within the organization, leadership roles and behaviors had changed for principals. Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2004) discovered in their work that skills alone could not produce effective leaders. Their discoveries pointed to examples of leaders who knew the right things to do in one setting or with one initiative but who were unable to replicate their successes in other settings or

with other initiatives. The theoretical literature on leadership, change and the adoption of new ideas provided some insights into why this might occur.

### Barriers to Effective School Reform

Many theorists (Beckard & Pritchard, 1992; Bridges, 1991; Fullan, 1993; Heifetz, 1994; Hesselbein & Johnson, 2002; Nadler, Shaw, Walton & Associates, 1994; Rogers, 1995) have made the case that not all changes were of the same magnitude. Some changes had greater implications than others for staff members. Different labels had been used to differentiate between magnitudes of change: technical versus adaptive, incremental versus fundamental and continuous versus discontinuous. Researchers used the term first-order changes and second order changes to make this distinction. First order changes built on past and existing models. They were consistent with stakeholders' prevailing values and norms and could be implemented largely with existing knowledge and skills and with help from outside experts. In short first order changes didn't seek to change the core values, beliefs or structures of the school. Second order changes, on the other hand, dramatically broke with the past and challenged existing models, norms and values. As a result, second order changes could not be implemented by outside experts. Stakeholders had to find their way through the changes together, acquiring along the way new sets of knowledge, skills, ways of thinking and often values (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2004). Order of change had less to do with the change itself than with how stakeholders viewed the change. Stake holders found the change consistent with existing values and norms, and were able to implement the change with current knowledge and resources, and agreed on the changes needed and the procedures for and accountability was, in fact a problem. Thus, for these stakeholders, such changes were first-order. If

leaders failed to understand or acknowledge that some changes were second-order for some or all of their stakeholders, they struggled to get support for the successful implementation of these changes. As a result, their initiatives failed to improve student achievement (Waters et al., 2004).

### Role of Teachers in School Reform

Achieving the goals of school reform in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* required schools to undertake numerous changes, many of which may challenge prevailing norms and values and require educators to acquire new knowledge and skills. Successfully implementing these second-order changes required effective leadership. Commitment was a psychological bond or identification with an object that takes on a special meaning (Buchanan, 1974, Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). A committed employee was more likely to believe in the object's values and goals, desire to be affiliated with the object, and exert effort beyond minimal expectations for the object (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). Change always came from within the individual, from within the group or within the organization. Ideally, change was like a pebble thrown into a lake where the change ripples from within all these configurations. Unless a clear and compelling picture was held of the change that needed to occur, the initial insight, energy or reason for changing faded into the background, until triggered by the next difficult reminder. This meant that change was accompanied by a personal insight or group awareness (Miller et al., 2000). If the quality of the education provided to students was to be maintained or improved in the face of increasing pressures and demands of reform efforts, then understanding the effect of principal work styles and belief patterns on teacher commitment was crucial for the reform's success (Day et al., 2005).

## Leader Behaviors

Understanding leadership was complicated because different language was used in the research literature. Marion (2002) reflected in his findings that when leadership theory was taught, it was defined by the leader's traits, qualities and behaviors. The research has been grouped into three categories: traits, behaviors and contingencies or situations. More recently, researchers identified several attributes that leaders need to succeed including vision, core values, and listening ability and change strategies. Hogan (1994) defined leadership as persuasion, not domination; persons who can require others to do their bidding because of their power were not leaders. Leadership only occurred when others willingly adopted, for a period of time, the goals of a group as their own. Thus, leadership concerns building cohesive and goal-oriented teams; there was a causal and definitional link between leadership and team performance.

Several taxonomies characterized what leaders do. Beginning with the Ohio State studies in the 1940s and 1950s, several taxonomies of leadership have been proposed lists. Yukl (1989) identified 14 categories of leader behavior including planning and organization, problem solving, clarifying, informing, monitoring, motivating, consulting, recognizing, supporting, managing conflict and team building, networking, delegating, developing and mentoring, and rewarding. These taxonomies told us what people in leadership positions do and the various commercially available, multi-rater assessment instruments told us about the degree to which a particular leader does things (Hogan, 1994). Effectiveness concerned judgments about a leader's impact on an organizations' bottom line. Indices of effectiveness were often hard to specify and frequently affected by factors beyond a leader's control. Nevertheless, effectiveness was the standard by



which leaders should be judged; focusing on typical behaviors and ignoring effectiveness was an overarching problem in leadership research (Hogan, 1994).

The nature of the leader capacities that impact leader behavior and performance was invaluable for selecting and developing necessary skills for leaders to further the goals of the organizations in which they worked. There have been several individual-based approaches to leadership in the past including leader behavior approaches (Fleishman, 1953, 1973,; Fleishman & Harris, 1962); contingency theory (Fiedler, 1964; Fiedler & Garcia, 1987); leader perception studies (Lord, Foti & DeVader, 1984); and leader trait studies (Boyatzis, 1982; Bray, Campbell & Grant, 1974; Dunnette, 1971; Lord, DeVader & Alliger, 1986; McCall & Lombardo, 1983; Zaccaro, Foti & Kenny, 1991) that have sought to address the question of what makes a good leader. There has been a resurgence of research on leadership traits, in part, to advances in leadership theories and methodologies (Bass, 1990; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl & VanFleet, 1992). Many studies have taken multivariate approaches, examining the relationships of leader characteristics to a variety of criteria, including measures of leader performance. These empirical studies have examined leader capacities such as cognitive abilities, motivation, and personality attributes required for effective leadership performance.

Marion (2002) stated that for thousands of years, people have known about the importance of effective leaders. The earlier leadership theories focused on the assumption that great leaders were born not made. Early leadership theory focused on what leaders do—their behaviors, rather than the traits they possessed. Situation and contingency leadership theories suggested that different leadership styles would be appropriate in differing contexts. These theorists examined the situation and developed

instruments to measure the local context to help determine the more apropos leadership style. In essence, these theories brought together the other two theories, suggesting that analyzing the leader and the situation would identify the behaviors to be pursued. In more recent years, leadership theory and studies have continued to emerge that attempted to uncover relationships between leadership and organizational effectiveness. These newer theories proposed to capture heretofore ignored issues such as: culture or cultural management, including the ability to understand the organizational culture and to modify it to assist with change. In industrial contexts, transactional leadership theory emerged, encompassing the leader-and-follower interchange or some service transaction for reward. Bass and Avolio (1999) described transactional leaders as those who explain what was required of workers in exchange for contingent rewards. Transformational leadership theory evolved as more encompassing and realistic in the current context than the transactional theories. Rost (1991) described transformational theory as characteristic of the postindustrial leadership school. Used interchangeably with charismatic leadership or inspirational leadership. It included what Bass and Avolio (1999) referred to as the four I's—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. In summation, inspirational leaders were able to elicit follower's internalized motivation to carry out the leader's ideas and the organizations plan. Emotional intelligence was another development in leadership. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) argued that leadership's main task was monitoring emotions.

Institutional educational reform was not like changing a factory's assembly line; central office administrators cannot simply issue new instructions, sponsor a training session, and expect teachers to make reform work. Because the details of a new approach

were virtually impossible to specify for all subjects, grades, and classes and because implementation of reforms take time, shared understanding and earnest cooperation (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991) was needed. Therefore, it was not passive compliance but active, collaborative leadership among educators that improved schooling. Related to research on human feelings and skills, organizational and leader behavior studies have suggested that what may be considered people's background and temperament have an impact on behavior. Such studies relied on psychodynamic Freudian-style theories to explain corporate culture and behavior.

Fullan (1991) argued that organizations are not shaped solely by the "unconscious concerns of their members and the unconscious forces shaping the societies in which they exist". Research has emerged in the importance of emotional intelligence for individual behavior and success, yet research has not examined the impact emotional experiences have on those in leadership roles (Fullan, 2005).

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) popularized the term emotional intelligence through their work that revealed that the fundamental task of leaders was to prime good feelings in those they lead. Leadership according to their studies was emotional. Emotional intelligence must be looked at as we work in leadership day to day with people. Leaders could not succeed if leaders separated this critical emotional energy dimension from the rational dimension of the expectations that they had for the behaviors of one's school. When leaders led well, leaders often had to enter the side door of their own emotional intelligence and then tap the energy of the emotions of those they were leading. Great leaders let their people shine. Great leaders delighted in their workers solo performances. Leaders fostered environments in which people saw, valued and

emulated the strength of their internal and external competitor. Leaders fostered environments in which the competition around ideas was rich and full and reflect passion for one's work. Because the nature of human beings did not change, the personal considerations of leadership mattered. Leadership was a three-way intersection where leading, serving and being human met. There was a human side to change (Mulhern, 2007). Kotter (1998) wrote about why change efforts at companies failed. In his findings the major reason was failure to stick to the vision. Leadership was focused on going toward some destination. When the destination was clear, and clarity of that destination was understood with a sense of urgency to reach that destination, then others would follow. Leaders provided mental images of where followers were being asked to go. Leaders transformed the way people see their worlds—leaders get the end in mind and eliminated anxiety by ensuring that the leader and follower would reach that destination together. Great leaders looked beyond the dark moment—living within departments or thinking within the limited view of one's school, race or political jurisdiction—and pointed to a brighter future. Great leaders waved a banner and pointed to a destination, even when others seemed unwilling or incapable of looking beyond the reality of what was. Defining success helped followers to achieve. Clarity and directedness allowed people to move without hesitation. If principals wanted greatness, they gave the team a steady stream of examples of excellence. Motivation was achieved through ongoing collaboration with others about the vision, especially when followers felt over extended. Without a destination, people didn't move far, fast or for long. A worthy vision generated a reason for movement and effort when things seemed tough. Vision gave a fresh start. Leading was a creative act (Fritz, 1984). Vision was vital for

the leader's creativity and shared vision was essential to the creative act of leadership in a group. Leadership could be seen as using the "structural tension" that exists between a vision of what we want and the current reality. Fritz (1984) showed that if leaders could hold tenaciously to both—the vision of what one wanted and an honest picture of current reality—the natural tension between the two would start to cause reality to move toward vision. Reality was the context for moving toward one's vision. Sometimes it was necessary that leaders maintained their belief in the vision and believed that their teachers could see it. Principals ensured that their vision of success was broad enough for people to find their own path in it. Ginsberg and Davies (2007) stated:

Leaders thus share their visions and values and then listen hard so that their teams can share theirs in return. When each buys into the others' vision and values, commitment rises all the way around. Thus, the greatest leadership evokes the passion that can only come as people ignite each other's torches. Each individual relates to the vision in their own unique way. For some it was redemption, some triumph and still others the accomplishment embodied in the vision was about community. For each it varies, but in sharing the vision all feels a collective sense. Individual torches together create a powerful light and offer people a mighty purpose. In the end, leaders light torches (p. 78).

Leadership understood what was going on now. Those who lead interpreted reality, great leaders crafted stories of identity. One of the arts of leadership was finding vibrancy and goodness in the identities the group shared. Organizations of all kinds thrive on the positive and on momentous. Stories of identity that are told either generated or killed momentum. As humans, one wanted to fit into a story of a proud people.

Communicating the message of identity and belonging generated a lot of energy. Great listeners were working—inside their own minds, as others were working outside in their talking and arguing. These listeners were noticing their thoughts as when they found themselves thinking.

### New Realities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

There was no one way to greatness that did not demand the expenditure of energy. Moving other people took a different skill set than the cognitive tools leaders were taught. Motivating others started with continual attention to one's own emotional intelligence. Followers saw a composite of these behaviors and work styles and the simple, unified picture of ourselves that we would like them to see. Palmer (2000) shared that education has a long tradition of approaching leadership via the power of positive thinking, yet he stated that leaders sometimes projected more shadow than light. Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2002) noticed in their studies that followers did not necessarily take leaders at their word, instead, followers saw those countless behaviors and had a sort of gauge that's told them what they thought was driving leaders most of the time. Palmer (2000) stated that leaders failed to look at how others saw their actions. By not being observant of their perceptions, leaders fed a dangerous delusion. Their efforts were always well intended, their power was always benign, and the problem was always in those difficult people whom they were trying to lead.

Mumsford, Zaccaro, Connelly and Marks (2000) studies concluded that leadership may be an indirect phenomenon where influence was exercised through cognition and performance as well as through interpersonal interaction. Cognitive performance or skills performance was embedded in a distinctly social context and had

always been a key aspect of leadership and was likely to become progressively more important as leadership skills were developed and studied in the twenty-first century.

### Summary

Principal leadership behavior of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reflected the changes in policies and accountability with the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Achieving the goals of *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* would require school leaders and teachers to undertake numerous changes. Many of the required changes may challenge the prevailing norms and values that required educators to acquire new knowledge and skills. The age of mass production and the ensuing need for high levels of controlled interaction was coming to a close. As our nation entered the post-industrial information age, school organizations were becoming progressively more loosely-knit entities where a premium was placed on the organizations ability to rapidly adapt to changing competitive environments and new technologies. Under these conditions, new kinds of skills were likely to become progressively more important determinants of leader performance. While principals strived to make effective schools through structural change and instructional change, the human side of change needed to be tapped to create balance and motivation. Teachers saw the composite of leaders' work styles and behaviors and cast their commitment to new innovative ways based on those observations. As a result of this research and supportive literature, illuminating how principal work styles and behaviors influence teacher commitment during school reform in Georgia will show how traditional conditions of leadership can be extended to help leaders prepare for a complex and dynamic work.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

#### Introduction

The researcher's purpose was to explore common leadership work styles and behavior patterns of three high school principals in northeast Georgia that were undergoing school reform through the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. This chapter included a description of the research design, participants, and the instrumentation used in the study. A pilot study was used to assess whether the research protocol was realistic and workable. Data collection, analysis, and reports by the researcher were based on the following research questions:

*Overarching Questions:* Do principal work styles and behaviors influence teacher commitment during reform in Georgia?

*Sub-questions:*

- 1) How do leader's work style and behaviors influence teacher commitment?
- 2) What are principal's beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in school reform?
- 3) How do principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors?
- 4) What are major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change.



## Research Design

A mixed methods study of collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data was used in a single case study. Many different terms have been used for this approach such as integrating, synthesis, multi-method and multi-methodology, but recent writings have used the term mixed methods and this term was used for the purpose of this study. This strategy integrated the results of the two methods, quantitative and qualitative, during the interpretation phase. This interpretation noted the convergence of the findings as a way to strengthen the knowledge claims of the study or explain any lack of convergence that may result (Cresswell, J.W., 2003). This study employed a mixed methods design in order to provide a concurrent triangulation approach that was used in an attempt to confirm and cross-validate the case study. A mixed methods approach was selected because it provided stronger inferences and it provided for a greater diversity of views. Mixed methods research answers research questions that other methods cannot. The challenge this form of research posed for the inquirer included the need for extensive data collection, the time intensive nature of analyzing both text and numeric data, and the requirement for the researcher to be familiar with both quantitative and qualitative forms of research.

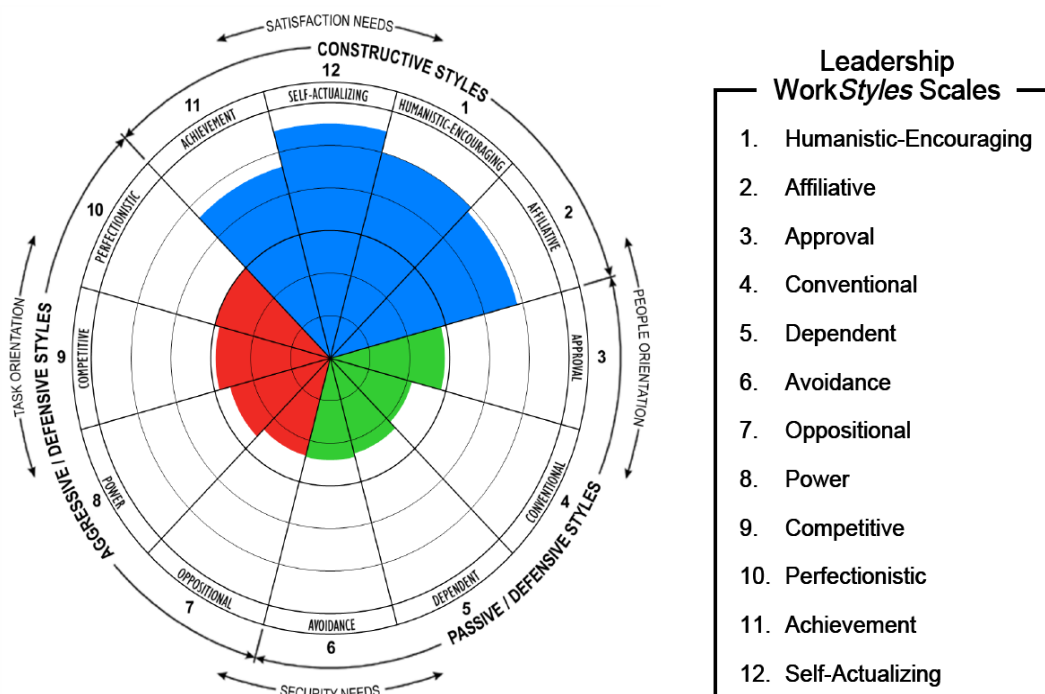
While a quantitative research approach was used in the study, Katz (1995) suggested that naturalistic methods of study were appropriate for schools from the systems approach since schools and their cultures were systems with interrelated parts. Katz (1995) further suggested that the complexity of school improvement issues cannot be understood with a research approach, but must be studied for more in-depth understanding with qualitative methods.

This study used qualitative and quantitative research in a case study approach. In a case study, the research attempted to explore in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. This case study was bound by time and activity, and the researcher collected, in detail, information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995). This case study was used to unveil work styles and behaviors of principals that impacted change and teacher commitment during school reform. By examining change processes in schools through the principals' perspectives and through teachers' perspectives, the researcher obtained a clear picture as to how principal's work styles and behavior patterns influenced teacher commitment during the change processes associated with school reform. This research was collaborative and inclusive of all major stakeholders with the researcher acting as facilitator. This theoretical perspective was geared toward understanding the subjective experiences of the participants and the nature of the study sought to examine how these experiences (in this case, one's work styles and behaviors) influenced teacher commitment during school reform.

Leadership *WorkStyles* Workbook and Report (2007) stated that one's personality and associated thinking patterns were formed from one's accumulated experiences, some of which date back to early childhood. Although one may have the ability to change these thinking patterns, many were so deeply ingrained that one may not be conscious of them. Actual management behavior was often the result of rational analysis and choice, as well as these deeply set and largely unconscious thinking patterns. Some thinking patterns generated behavior that was productive in achieving organizational results; others did not. Research indicated that there was a correlation between certain thinking

patterns and success in management, as measured by rapid promotion, increased compensation, freedom from stress-related illness and personal job satisfaction. The Acumen Leadership *WorkStyles*<sup>TM</sup> instrument was used in this study as a means to classify how the world shaped one's motivational style, the way one leads other people and the tendency to communicate and resolve conflict. The survey accomplished this task due to the fact the instrument was based on questions which had been shown to be valid and reliable indicators of attitudes and personal characteristics. Leadership *WorkStyles* indentified the participants' major attitudes and personal characteristics and measured how attitudes and personal characteristics impacted their work behavior. The results of the original study found that a person's attitudes played a key role in determining their behavior and thus had a major impact on their management performance. The Acumen Leadership *WorkStyles*<sup>TM</sup> for leadership profile instrument was chosen because it identified strengths found in the areas of managing tasks, managing people, managing conflict and leading others while classifying characteristics identified in high performing leaders. The analysis of the assessment data generated percentile scores on twelve scales. Each scale represented an important attitude or personal characteristic, which had a bearing on leadership effectiveness. Figure 1 showed the interpretation of a graphic profile.

Figure 1. Interpretation of Graphic Profile



### Reading the Percentile Scores

The sample profile above shows assessment ratings on the 12 personal characteristics measured by *WorkStyles*. *WorkStyles* displays the results as percentiles by comparing actual ratings to Acumen's large norm base of professional leaders. The six concentric circles mark the 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup>, and 100<sup>th</sup> percentiles, with the 100<sup>th</sup> percentile represented by the outermost circle.

- For example, if you score in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on the 1 o'clock scale, it means 90% of the leaders in the norm base had ratings lower than yours on the 1 o'clock—Humanistic-Encouraging—scale. Only 10% had higher ratings.
- The largest shaded areas reflect which personal characteristics dominate your work style.
- The smallest shaded areas show which personal characteristics have a small influence on your work style.

### Scale Groupings

The outer ring shown on this sample profile illustrates the 3 broad styles underlying the 12 *WorkStyles* scales. These 3 styles provide a meaningful way to group your results into more general categories:

**Constructive:** (11, 12, 1 and 2 o'clock positions) characterize self-enhancing thinking and behavior that contribute to one's level of *satisfaction*, ability to develop healthy relationships and work effectively with *people*, and proficiency at accomplishing *tasks*.

**Passive/Defensive:** (3, 4, 5 and 6 o'clock positions) represent self-protecting thinking and behavior that promote the fulfillment of *security* needs through interaction with *people*.

**Aggressive/Defensive:** (7, 8, 9 and 10 o'clock positions) reflect self-promoting thinking and behavior used to maintain one's status/position and fulfill *security* needs through *task*-related activities.

<sup>1</sup> From *Leadership WorkStyles Workbook and Report*, 2007, Plymouth, MI: Human Synergistics, Copyright 2007 by Human Synergistics International and Acumen International. Used by permission.

## Procedures

IRB approval was secured before any research or pilot study was conducted. Permission to conduct research with each principal and focus group was secured through a letter of written consent. The written consent was obtained first from the county board office secured with the superintendent's signature to allow research to be conducted on the school premises and then was given to the participants acknowledging their acceptance of participation in the research study and their right to anonymity throughout the study. Purposive selection was used to select participants in order to reduce variables during the study. Participants were from the same geographical setting and possessed a similar demographic profile. Information was gathered through multiple methods that were interactive and humanistic. The researcher actively involved participants in data collection and sought to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study. Confidentiality of the data collected was maintained and participants had the right to terminate their participation by contacting the researcher of their decision at any point in time during the study. Data collection included both qualitative and quantitative data composed of interviews, observations and survey questions. The study identified a relationship between principal work styles and behavior patterns with teacher commitment. Survey data was used to identify work style and behavior patterns in principals' as they saw themselves. Survey questions were given to teachers to identify perceptions of the participant's leadership behavior patterns and work styles. Human Synergistic© interpreted the survey responses and produced scored evaluations of strengths and weaknesses for each participant. Interview sessions were used by the researcher to enrich the findings of the survey questions and provided triangulation of the

data collection. The research required interpretations of the data by analyzing data for themes or categories, and making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned, and offering further questions to be asked. To ensure validity in data sources, data analyzed in this study was from multiple data collection commonly referred to as concurrent triangulation: participant observation, interviewing both individual and focus groups and surveys were the sources for data collection.

### Participants

Three high school principals were interviewed in this case study. High school teachers who had served under these principals respectively from one to thirty years were interviewed as the focus group. All principals and teachers were from a similar rural region within 30 miles of each other in northeast Georgia. Each school had a total student population of fewer than 1,000 students and was reflective of a high poverty rate above the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile. All principals had five years or less accrued experience as a high school principal. In order to maintain anonymity among participants and their schools, coded names were used. The first purposive sample participant was identified as the *Challenged Principal*. This participant was from a rural high school as it became identified as “Needs Improvement, Level 3 through Corrective Action” as designated by the state of Georgia’s Office of Student Achievement (2004-2005). He had moved to two other high schools in the past two years without making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The second purposive sample participant was identified as a *Turn-Around Principal*. This participant was from the same school as the *Challenged Principal* and was the current principal (2006-2007) who was transitioning his high school from Needs

Improvement, Level 3, Corrective Action to making Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) by absolute measurable objective in all categories as deemed by the state of Georgia's Office of Student Achievement within one year. The third purposive sample participant was identified as the *Motivator Principal* whose school had been identified by Georgia's Office of Student Achievement as a high performing school that achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last three years and had been nominated by the Georgia Department of Education for the National School of Change Award, given annually to six schools in the United States that had improved in substantial and significant ways. He was also selected as High School Principal of the year in the state of Georgia for 2008. Leadership behavior and strategies used by the leader were identified by the use of Leadership/ Impact Assessment through Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ instrument. This assessment provided information on the leader's influence on those around him or her and how the chosen strategies affected peer behavior and ability to perform (Human Synergistics International©, 2007). Teachers that served under each principal were interviewed in focus group settings of five to six people, to obtain a collective response of their viewpoints. Teachers participated in the Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ profile survey through the *Feedback from Others* portion of the test that revealed co-workers' perceptions of their leader's influence on commitment. The researcher was a leadership facilitator assigned to one high school used in this case study. The researcher served in this high school for successive years as a School and Leader Quality Specialist affiliated with the Georgia Department of Education and worked with two different principals, *Challenged Principal* and the *Turn-Around* principal assigned to this school during Corrective Action.

### Instrumentation

Between December 2007 and January 2008, one interview session was held by the researcher with each principal and a focus group of five to six teachers that had served in their school for at least one year. The researcher used the interview guide approach (Patton, 1990) by covering topics and issues exploring leadership behaviors or work styles of the participants in outline form. The researcher decided the sequence and wording of the questions in the course of the interview. The strength of the interview guide approach increased the comprehensiveness of the data and made the data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. The interviews were conversational and situational. The interviews were audio taped using a digital recorder and sought to garner perceptions and beliefs of sustaining work styles and behaviors that produced strong teacher commitment during school reform programs.

After the interview session, a principal and their focus group of teachers responded to a personality test/leadership test (Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™). Data analysis was conducted by Human Synergistics International© to enhance these findings from the survey. This was triangulated to principal and teacher perceptions during interview sessions concerning principal work styles and behavior as to teacher commitment during school reform.

### Pilot Study

After IRB approval was received, the researcher contacted two principals and two teachers to participate in the pilot study for interview questions. The pilot study was conducted as if it were the actual study. The pilot study results were not used in the study, but assisted the researcher with determining if the research protocol was workable.



Adjustments to the interview questions were made if the pilot study group offered recommendations. In order to maintain anonymity among the participants and their schools, the participants and the high schools were identified by coded names. The research sought counsel from a senior professor at Georgia Southern University to coach the researcher on appropriate methods to use when conducting qualitative research.

### Data Collection

The researcher actively involved participants in data collection and sought to build rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected during the study and included interviews, open-ended observations and survey questions. The study was designed to learn if there was a relationship between principal work styles and behavior patterns on the one hand and teacher commitment on the other. Survey data were used to identify work styles and behaviors in principal perceptions as they viewed themselves in the work place. Survey questions were administered to teachers to record their perceptions of the participant leader's work styles and behaviors. The two responses of both the participant and the respondent created a portrait of that leader's work style and behaviors. These findings defined how their work style and behaviors impacted teacher commitment. Interview sessions were also used to enhance the survey's findings. The survey data collection was followed by both descriptive and inferential data analysis in the first phase. Then qualitative observations and coding and thematic analysis was conducted in the second phase.

## Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded and transcribed for all principal and teacher focus groups by the researcher. After all interviews were transcribed, the transcripts of the recorded interview were thoroughly read and compressed into briefer statements by use of meaning condensation, a method involving condensing natural units into central themes (Kvale, 1996). The researcher examined the transcriptions for reoccurring themes and trends that mirrored participants' description of their work styles and behavior patterns. The Acumen Leadership *WorkStyles*<sup>TM</sup> profile survey was facilitated by the researcher using an electronic survey and processed by Human Synergistics International© to process the results. Teacher responses to leadership behavior and work style on the survey were integrated in the results. The researcher interpreted the data by analyzing the data for themes or categories, and making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned, and offering further questions to be asked. To ensure validity in data collection, data analyzed in this study were from multiple sources commonly referred to as concurrent triangulation. Participant observation, interviewing, both individual and focus groups, and surveys were the sources for data collection. The quantification of qualitative data enabled the researcher to compare quantitative results with qualitative data. The structure involved quantitative and qualitative data collection in separate sections, but analysis and interpretation combined the two forms to see convergence among the results.

## Summary

The methodology utilized a mixed study of both qualitative and quantitative research design for illuminating how principal work styles and behavior patterns

influenced teacher commitment during school reform in Georgia. The research design allowed the researcher to consciously collect information from the participants through surveys, interviews and observations. A pilot study was performed on two participants. The results of the pilot study were not used in the actual study, but served as a measure for reliable questions to validate the research. Three principals and three focus groups of five to six teachers were used in this study as well as extensive and long term observation by the researcher in each of the three schools.

## CHAPTER IV

### REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to illuminate leadership work styles and behavior patterns of three high school principals in northeast Georgia whose schools are undergoing reform through the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The study sought to identify specific work styles and behaviors that effect teacher commitment when implementing change during school reform initiatives. A mixed methods study of collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data was used in case studies involving three different high schools. Principals and their teachers responded to interview questions and survey questions to reveal patterns of work styles and behaviors used in the change process. The use of two methods of data collection allowed for triangulation by data source. The responses to both interview questions and surveys were converged to find common themes and threads that attributed to work styles that influence teacher motivation towards implementation of school reform. The interviews were compressed to reveal work styles and beliefs of principals that impact management skills. Observations made by the researcher added to the panoramic view of interactions between teachers and leaders as to the change process. A cross tabulation of both responses and various methods of data collection was conducted to reveal what motivates or prevents others to embrace change and implement reform structures.

As reformists continued to debate the unique design of suggested changes that would work in schools, this research added to the knowledge that educators have begun to collect as to barriers that limit full implementation of reform programs. It would also

reveal traits and behaviors that influenced work styles that produced positive and negative attitudes toward change processes. Therefore understanding leadership work styles and behaviors were beneficial for principals to better understand the needs of others when leading change and before they invest in a redesign of their school's culture when reform packages are chosen. Designers of reform programs at the state level would also have access to this research in considering key elements that highlight specific strategies that must be embedded in the reform program's unique design to ensure successful implementation.

#### Research Questions/Hypotheses

The following questions were addressed in this study:

*Overarching Questions:* Do principal work styles and behaviors influence teacher commitment during reform in Georgia?

*Sub-questions:*

- 1) How does a leader's work style and behavior influence teacher commitment?
- 2) What are principals' beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in school reform?
- 3) How do principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors?
- 4) What are major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change?

### A Mixed Method Research Design

The research design was a case study method involving analysis of interviews, surveys and observations. A mixed methods study was used to provide a concurrent triangulation approach in an attempt to confirm and cross validate the case study. While a quantitative research method was the basic approach in this study, a qualitative research method based on the work of Katz (1995) was also used to enhance the research findings. This report suggested that naturalistic methods of study were appropriate for schools from the systems approach since schools and their cultures were systems with interrelated parts. Katz (1995) further suggested that the complexity of school improvement issues could not be understood with only a research approach, but must be studied for more in-depth understanding with qualitative methods. This strategy integrated the results of the two methods during the interpretation phase. This interpretation noted the convergence of the findings as a way to strengthen the knowledge claims of the study or explain any lack of convergence that may have resulted (Creswell, J.W., 2003). This theoretical perspective was geared toward understanding the subjective experiences of the participants, and the nature of the study sought to examine how these experiences (one's work styles and behaviors) influenced teacher commitment during reform.

A pilot study was first conducted with two principals and two teachers in order to assist the researcher in determining if the research protocol was acceptable. Adjustments to the interview questions were made as the pilot study group offered recommendations. In order to maintain anonymity among the participants and their schools, the participants and the high schools were identified by coded names. The research sought counsel from

a senior professor at Georgia Southern University to coach the researcher on appropriate methods to use when conducting qualitative research.

Purpose selection was used to choose participants in order to reduce variables during the study. Participants were from the same geographical setting and possessed a similar demographic profile. The collection of data was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved a qualitative design where principals participated in an interview session with the researcher. The questions from the interview extracted information that highlighted the respondents' work styles and behaviors that influenced teacher commitment. A focus group of four to seven co-workers from each school was interviewed in a separate session that highlighted co-worker perceptions of the participant's work styles and behaviors that influenced teacher commitment to change during school reform. Interview sessions were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Common themes and threads were identified through a coding system to identify similarities and differences in leadership work styles and behaviors. The results of this study linked how one's behaviors played a key role in determining one's work style and thus had a major impact on management performance. The second phase of data collection was quantitative through the use of a survey obtained from Human Synergistics International©. The survey highlighted principals' personalities and associated thinking patterns that were formed from accumulated experiences that were productive in achieving success in management. The Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ instrument classifies responses according to how the world shaped one's motivational styles, the way one leads other people and the tendency to communicate and resolve conflict. Four to seven co-workers serving under each principal were used as a focus

group for responses to the survey. Instructions were to score their principals behaviors and work styles from a co-worker's perspective. These responses were compressed and evaluated by Human Synergetics International © which ran the data analysis through scale grouping and provided results from the survey in themes and categories. The survey data collection was followed by both descriptive and inferential data analysis. The data enabled the researcher to compare quantitative results with qualitative data. The structure involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection in separate sections, but analysis and interpretation combined the two research strategies to see convergences among the results. This study would help illuminate vital information about opinions, behaviors and practices that resulted in shaping and changing future building leader practices and initiatives to improve school performance.

#### Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. Three high school principals were interviewed in this case study. High school teachers who had served under these principals respectively were interviewed as the focus group. These teachers had teaching experience for a various number of years ranging from one to thirty plus years. All principals and teachers were from a similar rural region within 30 miles of each other. All schools were within 30 miles of each other in northeast Georgia and had a total student population of fewer than 1,000 students, and were reflective of a high poverty rate above the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile. All principals had five years or less accrued experience as a high school principal, and all had achieved a doctorate degree status of educational accomplishment from a southern university. In order to maintain anonymity among participants and their schools, coded names were used.



The first purposive sample participant was identified as the *Challenged Principal*. This participant was from a rural high school identified as “Needs Improvement, Level 3 through Corrective Action” as recognized by the State of Georgia’s Office of Student Achievement (2004-2005). The participants had moved from two other high schools in the past two years without making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The second purposive sample participant was identified as a *Turn-Around Principal*. This participant was the current principal (2006-1007) of one of the schools that were vacated by the *Challenged Principal*. This high school was in transition from Needs Improvement, Level 3, and Corrective Action to making Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) within one year by absolute measurable objective in all categories as deemed by the state of Georgia’s Office of Student Achievement. The third purposive sample participant was identified as the *Motivator Principal* whose school had been identified by Georgia’s Office of Student Achievement as a high performing school that had achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past three years. This school had been nominated by the Georgia Department of Education for the National School of Change Award. This award was given annually to six schools in the United States that had improved in substantial and significant ways. Leadership behavior and strategies used by the leader was identified by the use of Leadership/Impact assessment through Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ instrument. This assessment provided information on the leader’s influence on those around him or her, and on how one’s chosen strategies affected peer behavior and ability to perform (Human Synergistics International©, 2007). Teachers that served under each principal were interviewed in focus group settings of five to six people to obtain a collective response toward their viewpoints. Teachers participated in

the Acumen Leadership *WorkStyles*<sup>TM</sup> profile survey through the “feedback from others” portion of the survey that revealed co-workers perceptions of their leaders influence on commitment. The researcher was a leadership facilitator assigned to one of the high schools that involved two principals used in this case study. The researcher had served in this high school for four successive years as a School and Leader Quality Specialist affiliated with the Georgia Department of Education. Within the four year time frame, the research had also worked with the other two principals, *Challenged Principal* and the *Turn-Around* principal that was assigned to this school during Corrective Action. The *Motivator Principal* had services from a different leadership facilitator other than the researcher to advise him on state initiatives.

## Findings

### *Research Question One: Principal Interview Sessions*

Research findings for question one, “How does a leader’s work style and behaviors influence teacher commitment?” revealed the following results: All principals had a common understanding and knowledge base of best practices. The principals had a solid understanding of the eight quality strands found in the *School Keys 2007* that the Georgia Department of Education produced as a guide line for schools to follow in order to create high performing schools. Principal interview sessions emphasized that the work styles and behaviors that influenced teacher commitment in a positive way was a trusting relationship that developed between the teacher and the principal. All principals felt this was done by making connections with their teacher’s everyday life through observation of body language, smiles and conversations. This allowed the principal to see how everyone was doing and then responded to the needs of

individuals. All principals agreed that they try to have all teachers involved in leadership in some way. The principal gave responsibility and opportunity to teachers to have input, entrusted the administrative knowledge to them and expected teachers to maintain that knowledge. The principals collectively felt that when teachers had a part in something, such as a team, the principal could “push- the- ball- up-the- hill” a long way because the principal had more hands on the ball. All principals felt that having a commitment to students and being focused on the needs of the students influenced teacher buy-in and developed a stronger sense of commitment toward change.

Differences among the principals that surfaced during the interview sessions revealed that the *Challenged Principal* took a passive approach to change as opposed to a progressive approach that was found in the leadership work styles and behaviors of the *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal*. The *Challenged Principal* directed the change process toward large amounts of time (12-18 months) for teacher buy-in before asking the teachers to move toward change. This principal worried about being liked and everyone feeling comfortable with what was going on before pushing further. The vision was clearly his and his alone. By giving teachers extensive time for grass-roots buy-in, the principal showed that he himself may be afraid of failure and therefore, teachers appeared to not be comfortable in taking risks. The *Challenged Principal* did believe that leaders could pull teachers over to their side by showing them principals were not perfect and were real people who make mistakes. This principal did not have the belief in others when they themselves didn't have the belief in their own capabilities; he became frustrated when teachers could not see the need for change. Therefore, this principal's behaviors limited the amount of commitment he could generate from the

teachers. The *Turn-Around Principal* also felt that allowing people to have buy-in to the overall process influenced teacher commitment. However, this principal also had a strategic plan that, through personal ushering or motivation into greater responsibilities, the teachers would have improved productivity and therefore develop teacher buy-in much quicker. The *Turn-Around Principal* was confident in his strategic plan and kept himself and the teachers focused on the goal. The strategy this principal used was to create several short term wins in the change process to keep the teachers motivated. The *Motivator Principal* focused on a singular purpose. This principal avoided trickery and chose to be honest and up front about working harder. The *Motivator Principal* made sure everyone had a collective expectation of what the community of educators wanted from the students and the teachers. This principal's work style was to provide clarity to vision and hire people who would buy into the vision of what the educational community was trying to do. This principal used time not for trying to get buy-in, but to create time for collaborative planning of how to create the vision. Both the *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator-Principal* saw their schools as complex, but envisioned themselves as the conductor of a great orchestra, acting as a buffer to decide as to what needed to come in and what needed to stay out. Through this analogy, both principals felt that their role generated trust, and trust was a key component to teacher commitment to change during reform.

Analysis of this interview question also found that the *Challenged Principal* took a negative approach to change by stating that "... something inside the teachers has got to say that they are not successful", therefore, creating a need to seek change. In contrast, both the *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal* felt that visual images

needed to be developed to bring concepts from the abstract to the concrete. Table 1 showed the results through thematic categories of the principal's responses to question one.

Table 1: Theme Categories of Principal Response – Question 1

Question 1: How does a leader's work style and behaviors influence teacher commitment?			
Category	<i>Challenged Principal response</i>	<i>Turn-Around Principal response</i>	<i>Motivator Principal response</i>
Trust	✓	✓	✓
Involvement of teachers in leadership by entrusting leader knowledge to them	✓	✓	✓
Principal commitment to students by being focused on their needs	✓	✓	✓
Passive approach to change	✓		
Progressive approach to change		✓	✓
Belief in others when they may not have the belief in their own capabilities		✓	✓
Confident in strategy to create change—time used to create the vision		✓	✓
Works as a team with teachers to collectively on the expectation and clarity of the vision		✓	✓
Works solo hoping others will join the vision	✓		
Focused on all the complexities of operating a school	✓		
Focused on a singular purpose		✓	✓
Viewed change as an opportunity to grow rather than discovering that you're doing something wrong and need to correct it			✓

*Research Question One: Teacher Interview Sessions*

All three focus group of teachers agreed that specific leader work styles and behaviors that influenced their commitment to change included the following: (1) the principal needed to believe that he was working with the best in the business, (2) not feeling intimidated when teachers come to work, but rather experienced a feeling of support and a sense of belonging, a sense of self satisfaction, in that the principal makes the individual feel valid and a valuable member of the team, (3) a feeling that the principal was fighting for their school, being a shock absorber and protecting teachers from the upper level, (4) knowing that if the principal believed in the change and had a commitment to the change, then the teachers would believe in him and endorse the change process. These themes were graphically represented in Table 2.

The teachers of the *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal* felt that when the principal explained why there was a need for change, it was easier for them to follow. Both focus groups of teachers from the *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal* stated that the principal needed to build a team with the administrative team and a team with the teachers. Research results showed that both principals encouraged teachers to do their best rather than practice micros management. The teachers also revealed that teachers needed to outwardly see that the principal was strong in convictions and commitments. Both focus groups stated that the principal needed to monitor progress to be sure the plan was working. The principal had to have a commitment to what was going on in terms of amount of dedication and effort demonstrated and expended. Both groups felt that when the principal was an encourager and approachable, teacher commitment to change was high. The teachers emphasized

that when the principal knew the personal and professional growth of the adults in the building and provided opportunity to make that happen, teachers were more committed to change.

The teachers of the *Motivator Principal* felt that the level of commitment was influenced by the viewpoint the principal had to change. Change was viewed as an opportunity to grow. These teachers felt that their commitment was influenced by the principal taking what was already in place and adapting and adopting rather than creating something totally new.



Table 2: Theme Categories of Teacher Focus Group Response – Question 1

Question 1: How does a leader's work style and behaviors influence teacher commitment?			
Category	<i>Challenged Principal response</i>	<i>Turn-Around Principal response</i>	<i>Motivator Principal response</i>
Principal believes he was working with the best in the business	✓	✓	✓
Principal creates an environment where teachers feel support, belonging and self satisfaction	✓	✓	✓
Principal acts as a filter and fights for their school	✓	✓	✓
Principal has confidence in the changes being made will make a difference	✓	✓	✓
Principal was approachable	✓	✓	✓
Principal asks them to do their best, rather than micro manage		✓	✓
Principal outwardly has heart			✓
Principal monitors the plan to ensure it was working			✓
Principal was an encourager			✓
Principal was concerned about the professional and personal growth of individual teachers and provides an opportunity for that to happen			✓

*Research Question Two: Principal Interview Sessions*

In response to the second research question, “What are principal beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in school reform?” the principals’ responses included the following themes as to how they saw their role in school reform: (1) All felt the principal’s role was to transition abstract concepts into concrete concepts. Principals shared in their interview sessions that teachers were typically concrete thinkers and therefore needed clarity through visuals to help paint an image of what the idea was to look like. The principals felt that many times principals could be categorized as global, abstract thinkers which caused disconnect with communication of expectations. (2) All principals felt that their role was to establish the vision of the destination, help teachers see how to create change and then provide support for that change to occur. (3) All principals saw that their role was to set the tone in the building. During the change process, teachers and administrators were being asked to leave their comfort zones and therefore stress as a domino effect was created. The principals saw themselves setting tone in the building as one of hope rather than one of strife. Their optimistic and realistic view helped keep the climate of the building balanced as the school community ventured into new structures. (4) The principals also saw their role as knowing the logistics of making Adequately Yearly Progress. The *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal* saw the role of the principal as being one that focused on motivating teachers through their displayed energy and enthusiasm toward the reform. The *Challenged Principal* and the *Turn-Around Principal* saw their role as being a monitor and reinforcement of the school reform. Only the *Motivator Principal* said that he saw his role as setting purpose and keeping the staff focused on the reason they are all together,

and why they are changing”...because this was what they wanted to do together”. Table 3 displayed the responses so that the commonalities and differences were displayed in a visual way to quickly reference the finding to question two.

Principals felt the teacher’s role in school reform was to make connection with children on the content knowledge. The principals collectively felt that the teacher’s role was to make the magic happen in the classroom. The *Motivator Principal* felt that the role of his teachers was to have a sense of service and connect with students. This principal felt that teachers needed to be good communicators and should see their role as an active part of school reform.

#### *Research Question Two: Teacher Interview Sessions*

Teacher responses to the second question “What are principal beliefs about their roles and the role of teachers in school reform?” paralleled the principals’ responses in several areas. Table 4 generated responses teachers shared. Teachers from the *Challenged Principal* felt that they were on the front line and therefore were ultimately responsible for any implementation. These teachers did not see the principal as having any significant role in implementing school reform. The teacher focus groups from the *Turn-Around Principal* and from the *Motivator Principal’s* school felt that the principal’s role was (1) to monitor the process of the school reform, (2) to focus on the teachers needs, (3) to have passion for the work and believe in the change so others will follow his belief, (4) to set high expectations for themselves and the teachers and (4) to want the school to find success. The teacher focus groups from the *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal* felt they should be able to teach as they saw fit. The teacher focus

group from the *Turn-Around Principal* also felt that their role was to produce what was requested.

Table 3: Theme Categories of Principal Response – Question 2

Question 2: What are principal beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in school reform?			
Category	<i>Challenged Principal response</i>	<i>Turn-Around Principal response</i>	<i>Motivator Principal response</i>
Principal's role was to transition abstract concepts to concrete concepts.	✓	✓	✓
Teachers don't see what they are doing was not effective, therefore, the principal's role was to show teachers that change was necessary, how to create the change and provide teachers with support.	✓	✓	✓
Principal's role was to set the tone for the building which should be one of hope. The principal creates this through empowerment of teachers.	✓	✓	✓
Principal must understand the process of making Annual Yearly Progress and match the school to high performing strategies.	✓	✓	✓
The principal's role was about being a motivator for teachers which means having energy and enthusiasm.		✓	✓
Principal's role was to monitor and reinforce.	✓	✓	

Table 4: Theme Categories of Teacher Focus Group Response- Question 2

Question 2: What are teacher perceptions about principal beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in school reform?			
Category	<i>Challenged Principal</i> Teacher response	<i>Turn-Around Principal</i> teacher response	<i>Motivator Principal</i> teacher response
Teachers felt principal's role was to monitor the process in place.		✓	✓
Teachers felt principal's role was to focus on what the teachers need.		✓	✓
Teachers felt principal's role was to have passion for the work and believe in the change so others will follow.			✓
Teachers felt principal's role was to want the school to find success and that everyone finds success with new strategies.		✓	✓
Teachers felt principal's role was to set high expectations for himself and for the teachers.		✓	✓
Teachers felt they are on the front line and ultimately responsible for any implementation.	✓		
Teachers should have very little interference with how to teach.		✓	✓
Teachers see their role as producing what was requested.		✓	
Teachers felt principal sets purpose and keep the staff focused on the reason they are all together and why they are changing, because they collectively said this was what they wanted to do.			✓
Teachers felt principal needs to be the primary person to focus on reform.	✓		
The teacher's role was making the magic happen with students.	✓	✓	✓

*Research Question Three: Principal Interview Sessions*

Responses for the third research question “How do principals’ work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors?” revealed that work styles, which were mental processes used in the job as one consciously chooses to work within particular processes to match the need, and their belief patterns have a definite correlation to their leadership behaviors. Table 5 showed the following results: All principals felt that a principal’s work ethic and belief in how one wants to lead an organization was reflective in the behaviors of the staff. All principals viewed change as an opportunity and, therefore, encouraged teacher to view change as an opportunity. The *Challenged Principal* led teachers too cautiously and too slowly allowing momentum to idle; therefore, the principal’s ideas always remained in the planning stages. While this principal viewed change as an opportunity, getting teachers to buy-in to the shifts was difficult. This principal also was too focused on other’s approval, therefore, giving into resistance. This principal was not focused on singularity, but moved quickly from one strategy to another in hopes of finding buy-in in one of the ideas. The *Challenged Principal* worked independently in creating the vision. This allowed him to not be accountable to anyone, yet this left the principal without a strong supporting team.

The *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal* saw their work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors in the following way: Both principals believe that life experiences—the total sum are embedded in one’s leadership style and therefore one leads by what one thinks was sound and decent. The general disposition of the principal was letting everyone know the scope of their work and then letting everyone go about doing it with minimal interference. The principal must have

the skill to organize his time wisely and stay current on educational events in order to show relevance and understanding as to why there needed to be change. Both identified themselves as a type of designer looking to develop new programs and encouraging teachers to think outside of the box.

*Research Question Three: Teacher Interview Session*

Table 6 depicts the theme categories of Teacher Focus Group responses as to how principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behavior. The interview session with teacher focus groups revealed the following results: Teacher focus groups from all principals felt that the principal should be focused on the teachers' interest and suggest creative ways to handle situations. The teacher focus group from the *Challenged Principal* stated that high attrition rate of the principal spawned truancy and tardiness of teachers. Getting teachers in the right seats and keeping those who wanted to follow the vision was critical for promoting a positive attitude in teachers for change. The teacher focus group for the *Challenged Principal* felt that while they needed a leader that was a global thinker. They also needed the principal to be linear in his thought process so that plans could be put in a sequential format and teachers would know what would be expected.

The teacher focus groups of the *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal* had similar responses. Teachers in these groups felt that principals needed to lead by example because a lot of their change was influenced by observation of the principal's behaviors which allowed them to make changes to their personal style to match his. The teachers also felt that the principal needed to be enthusiastic and exhibit a lot of energy if he expected a lot of energy from the teachers. The principal needed to be

a risk taker, therefore encouraging others to take risks as well. Principals also needed to have the belief that if you work hard, things got better, not totally fixed, but better. Principals also need to be open and decisive, but allowed decisions on how change should occur, not whether it would or would not happen.

The teacher focus group of the *Motivator Principal* felt that if the principal liked and enjoyed what he did, then the teacher would also like and enjoy what they did, and that was what made progress.



Table 5: Theme Categories of Principal Response – Question 3

Question 3: How do principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors?			
Category	<i>Challenged Principal response</i>	<i>Turn-Around Principal response</i>	<i>Motivator Principal response</i>
The principal's work ethic and belief in how one wants to lead an organization was reflective in the behaviors of the staff.	✓	✓	✓
Principal views change as an opportunity and therefore encourages teachers to view change as an opportunity	✓	✓	✓
The principal's ideas always remain in the planning stages therefore the principal leads too cautiously and too slowly allowing momentum to idle.	✓		
Too focused on other's approval therefore gives in to resistance and does not focus on singularity, but moves quickly from one strategy to another in hope of finding buy-in	✓		
Working solo in creating the vision leaves the principal without a team.	✓		
First the principal must take care of the mission first, and then the men and then I in that order, this belief will take care of the change process.		✓	
The belief that life experiences—the total sum are embedded in one's leadership style and therefore one leads by what one thinks was sound and decent.		✓	✓
The general disposition of the principal was letting everyone know the scope of their work and then let everyone go about doing it with minimal interference.		✓	✓
The principal has skills to organize his time to stay current on educational events and therefore understands where and why he must lead his staff in order to meet challenging global markets.		✓	✓
The principal was a designer always looking to develop new programs and encourages teachers to think outside the box.		✓	✓

Table 6: Theme Categories of Teacher Focus Group Responses – Question 3

Question 3: How do principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors?			
Category	<i>Challenged Principal response</i>	<i>Turn-Around Principal response</i>	<i>Motivator Principal response</i>
The principal was focused on the teachers' interest and suggests creative ways to handle situations.	✓	✓	✓
High attrition rate of principal spawned truancy and tardiness of teachers	✓		
Getting teachers in the right seats led to non-renewing those who did not want to follow the vision	✓		
The principal was a global thinker with people to follow, but couldn't be linear enough to put the plan in motion	✓		
Principals lead by example, therefore teachers learned how to do things by observation		✓	✓
The principal's presence in the building sets the tone of expectation		✓	✓
The principal acts as a buffer and filter for what comes in the building and what goes out of the building.		✓	✓
Enthusiastic and gives a lot of energy, therefore expects a lot of energy.		✓	✓
Risk taker, therefore encourages others to take risks.		✓	✓
Belief that the principal must have a strong ability to communicate the vision, have a hands on approach and clarity in expectations		✓	✓
Not afraid to make mistakes, therefore challenges others to accept mistakes and rework the idea to make it work.		✓	✓
Belief that if you work hard, things get better		✓	✓
Open and decisive, but allows decisions on how change should occur, not whether it will or not happen.		✓	✓
The principal totally loves what he does, and then teachers love what they do and that makes the magic happen in the classroom.			✓

*Research Question Four: Principal Survey Results and Co-Worker Feedback*

The self-perception summary provided by Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™, (2008) indicated that the *Challenged Principal* saw himself as a socially skilled person who derived satisfaction from interacting with others. Direct reports and peers were likely to turn to the *Challenged Principal* for friendship and advice if he showed teachers the genuine concern and consideration his self-profile indicated. This principal's greatest assets as a manager were likely to center around these social skills, and were expressed in an ability to establish and maintain successful working relationships with team members.

Although this principal had an intuitive talent for managing people, these intuitive skills may not be less effective when the task was to organize and control production. This principal described himself as someone who was inclined to take a relatively unassertive approach to managing co-workers and may focus on providing them with a supportive work atmosphere. This principal's expectations may be that, in return, co-workers would do their best to increase productivity and maintain high quality standards. This leadership style can be successful if co-workers are very well organized and motivated, either as a team or individually. Usually, however, teams required more structure, direction, and assertive leadership from a manager to coordinate their work efforts effectively. This principal's self-description pointed to a person who was:

- Friendly, warm and considerate
- Supportive, participative manager
- Conservative, careful and conventional
- Generous, supportive and forgiving
- More of a team player or follower than a leader

- A good listener, but not particularly assertive

Key assets that this principal described himself as having to bring to a team were the following:

- A very positive outlook
- The willingness to be patiently helpful with others
- The ability to teach and guide other team members
- A friendly, encouraging style that helps bring out the best in people.
- A strong interest in being a cooperative team player
- A high level of trust in other team members' judgment and abilities
- Reliability and trustworthiness

Overall, Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ (2008) found that this principal's self-profile have many components that make for a great team player. This principal had strong interests in working cooperatively with others, and the principal had described himself as more willing to take direction and guidance from fellow team members than to give direction to them. This principal was more comfortable in a follower role, but saw himself as a person who could apply well-developed relationship with organizational support skills to be a social leader within the group. Figure 2 and 3 gave a graphic profile that displayed the scale grouping.

The co-worker's feedback ratings indicated that the *Challenged Principal* was a consistent, reliable person who liked and showed a good deal of respect for others. According to Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ (2008), leaders with these traits were usually willing to assist other team members because they felt that what others needed or wanted was important. This type of principal was unassuming and modest, and

somewhat conventional in his approach to decision making and problem solving. Based on the perceptions of co-workers, this principal was likely to prefer the status quo to sudden changes in affairs, and tended respond to uncertain situations or change by feeling stressed. Co-workers saw some tendency toward anxiety or tension, possibly related to self-doubt.

While management performance was determined by many factors, the research was clear that some aspects of his work style (a tendency to defer to others, a tendency toward anxiety and self-doubt) actually interfered with full usage of other key factors, such as intelligence, education, professional skills and knowledge, strong work ethic, etc. These tendencies were defined as counter-productive; and actually interfered with, and were counter to, this principal's productivity. Words that described this principal as defined by his co-workers were the following:

- Reserved and cautious
- Supportive and cooperative
- Nervous and tense
- Conforming and conventional

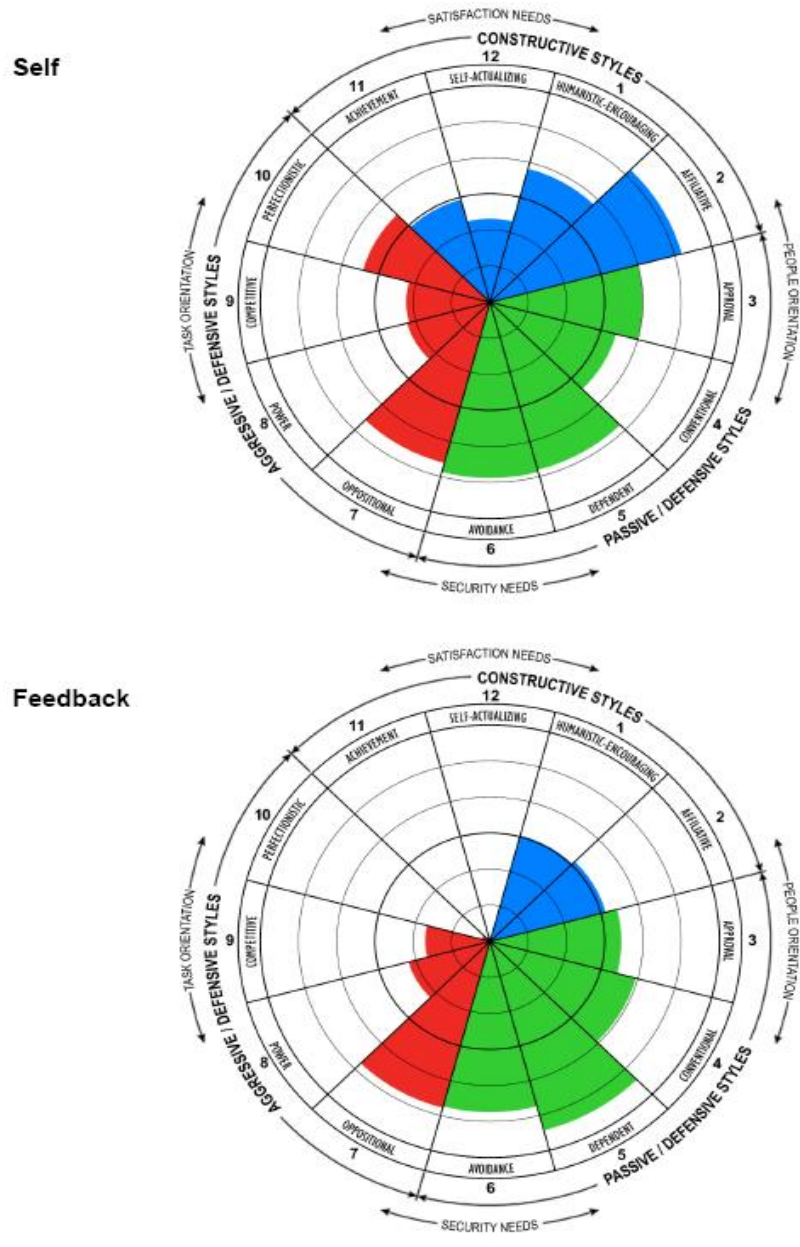
Co-workers responses described this principal as one who worked hard to keep harmony within the group and to avoid conflict or controversy. This principal was characterized by his co-workers as more of a follower or team player than as a leader, and he was not seen as demonstrating a lot of initiative. Leaders with this type of profile tended to set relatively modest standards for performances and seemed to put an emphasis on getting along with others, being consistent, and trying to avoid errors. Often leaders with this style were not seen as very motivated to put themselves in positions of

major responsibility; this principal was seen as being more comfortable playing a supporting role.

Co-workers also saw this principal as a person who would support upper management decisions and follow agreed-upon processes. These were key assets for team work. The drawback found in the co-workers response was that this principal had the tendency to be relatively unassertive and appeared to be less self-confident. As a result, this principal limited his abilities to contribute much less lead and less able to set pace for the team. With this profile, this principal was concerned over avoiding making waves, with support of the larger organization and to escape conflict. Others saw this principal as a manager who was very reserved and restrained.

Figure 2: Survey Results: *Challenged Principal* and Teacher Feedback

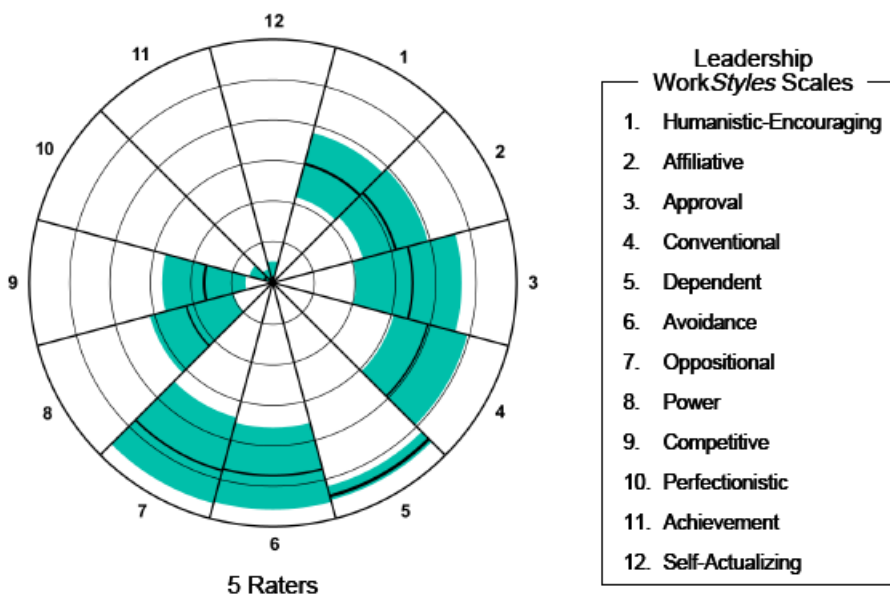
Self vs. Feedback



<sup>2</sup> From *Leadership WorkStyles Workbook and Report*, 2007, Plymouth, MI: Human Synergistics, Copyright 2007 by HumanSynergistics International and Acumen International. Used by permission.

Figure 3: Spread of Opinion on *Challenged Principal*

## Spread Of Opinion

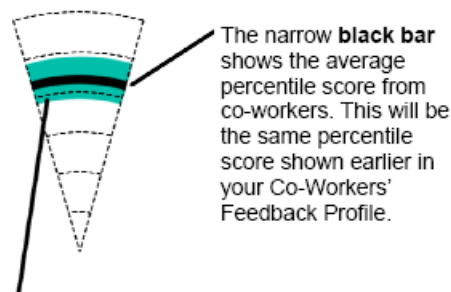


### Interpreting the Spread of Your Co-Workers' Opinions

The Spread of Opinion graphic indicates the degree to which your co-workers' feedback ratings vary. It shows the amount of variation (technically, the "standard deviation") in their ratings of you on each scale. The spread of opinion does *not* show the highest and lowest ratings, which can place too much emphasis on one extreme rater.

For each scale, the spread of opinion is represented by a shaded band, as explained in the graphic legend on the right. The narrower this shaded band is for any scale, the less difference there was among the ratings from co-workers. The wider the shaded band, the greater the difference among co-workers' ratings. Some spread of opinion is normal: for most leaders, the spread on any scale is 50 percentiles or less. If yours is much wider than this, it indicates some co-workers see you very differently than other co-workers.

Each scale has two shaded areas:



The narrow **black bar** shows the average percentile score from co-workers. This will be the same percentile score shown earlier in your Co-Workers' Feedback Profile.

The wide **shaded band** shows the spread of opinion. This shaded band always extends on both sides of the black bar (unless your percentile score is at an extreme limit, either 0 or 100). If all co-workers give the same ratings, this band does not appear.

<sup>3</sup> From *Leadership WorkStyles Workbook and Report*, 2007, Plymouth, MI: Human Synergetics, Copyright 2007 by Human Synergetics International and Acumen International. Used by permission.



The self-perception summary provided by Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™, (2008) indicated that the *Turn-Around Principal* showed a good balance of social and task-related skills. Managers like this principal were generally self-reliant, hard working, and motivated to succeed. This principal's profile indicated that he puts a strong emphasis on getting along and getting ahead. The survey revealed that the *Turn-Around Principal* had a well-defined set of personal values, and an internal agenda of things to accomplish.

Generally, this principal derived great satisfaction from being with others and enjoyed participating in group activities or projects. However, this principal also welcomed the opportunity to pursue projects or tasks that allowed him to express his individual talents. This combination of interests found him to be adaptable and capable of handling himself in a variety of situations.

Meeting others' expectations and producing results were important to the *Turn-Around Principal*. Operating democratically and reaching a consensus on expectations and general policy were also important. In his approach to management duties, this principal attempted to integrate a commitment to hard work with a commitment to accomplishing things cooperatively with a team.

This principal tended to be competitive and tended to sometimes feel compelled to be visibly successful...to be seen as a winner to others. When this happened, this principal tended to pressure himself to excel and be noticed by others. To some extent these motivations provided the impetus to perform, although, it could have a counterproductive impact on execution of the leadership role.

A self-description of this principal revealed that he saw himself as socially confident and adept, showing tremendous potential to contribute and to succeed in the workplace. The description of being driven to succeed and being a relatively competitive person were traits that underlie a strong work ethic and a high level of persistence. These were critical assets for effectiveness.

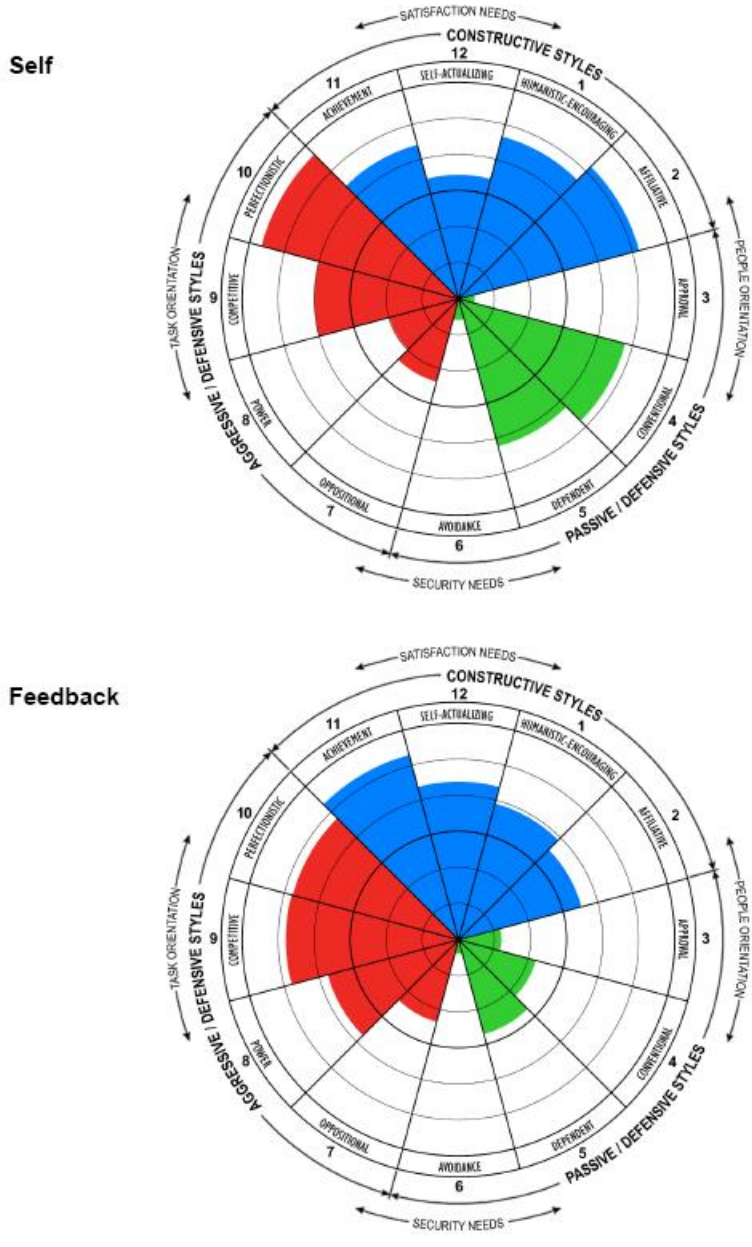
The co-workers' ratings indicated that this principal was seen as highly interested in projects and tasks and less interested in interpersonal relationships. Co-workers also saw this principal as welcoming challenging tasks and channeling considerable energy and drive into task accomplishment. This principal was perceived as being a competitive, confident, active person who was an independent thinker and, in general, enjoys competition and was seen as a winner. Other perceptions include:

- Able to derive satisfaction from work
- Tends to work himself very hard and have high expectations for others
- Sometimes sets unrealistic goals
- Very successful on the job

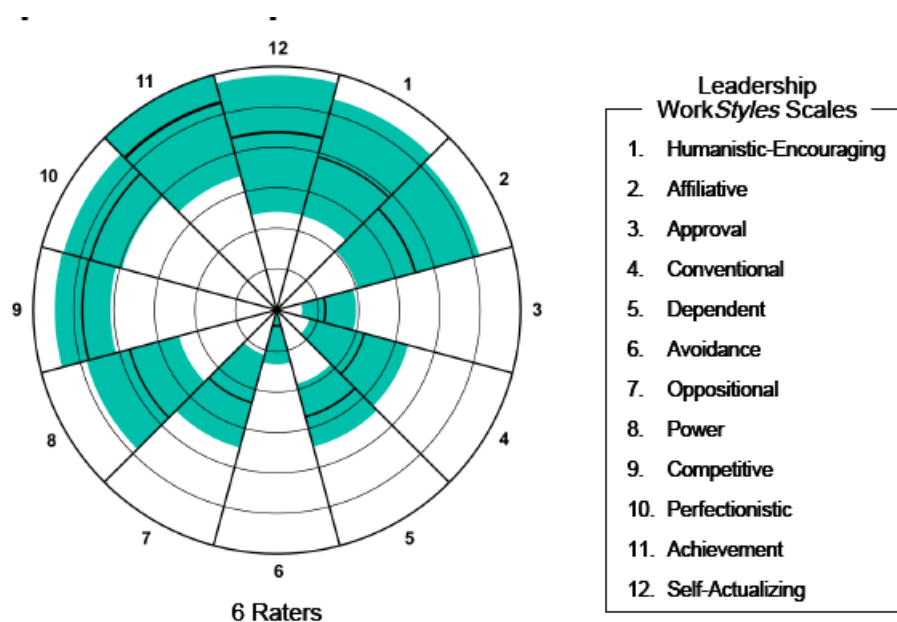
Co-workers saw this principal as pragmatic and results oriented. Co-workers perceived this principal as having the ability to maintain a healthy set of values regarding work and seeing it as a serious endeavor, yet possessing a sense of humor and a good sense of perspective. Co-workers also indicated that this principal may become upset when work efforts falls short of the high standards of excellence he has set by this principal. Co-workers saw this principal as taking moderate risks and impressed them as enthusiastic about trying to turn interesting ideas into practical reality.

While this principal has strong working skills and easily gained others' respect, he could also be seen as self-centered and too focused on work and being successful. Co-workers were likely to find working with him demanding and even stressful. Because he was focused on high achievement and tended to be preoccupied by his own interests and concerns, this principal tended to not adequately attend to other team members' ideas or personal needs. Figure 4 and 5 showed a graphic scale grouping of these findings.

Figure 4: Survey Results: *Turn-Around Principal* and Teacher Feedback  
Self vs. Feedback



<sup>2</sup> From *Leadership WorkStyles Workbook and Report*, 2007, Plymouth, MI: Human Synergetics, Copyright 2007 by Human Synergetics International and Acumen International. Used by permission.

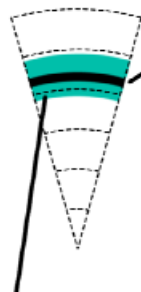
Figure 5: Spread of Opinion on *Turn-Around Principal*

### Interpreting the Spread of Your Co-Workers' Opinions

The Spread of Opinion graphic indicates the degree to which your co-workers' feedback ratings vary. It shows the amount of variation (technically, the "standard deviation") in their ratings of you on each scale. The spread of opinion does *not* show the highest and lowest ratings, which can place too much emphasis on one extreme rater.

For each scale, the spread of opinion is represented by a shaded band, as explained in the graphic legend on the right. The narrower this shaded band is for any scale, the less difference there was among the ratings from co-workers. The wider the shaded band, the greater the difference among co-workers' ratings. Some spread of opinion is normal: for most leaders, the spread on any scale is 50 percentiles or less. If yours is much wider than this, it indicates some co-workers see you very differently than other co-workers.

### Each scale has two shaded areas:



The narrow **black bar** shows the average percentile score from co-workers. This will be the same percentile score shown earlier in your Co-Workers' Feedback Profile.

The wide **shaded band** shows the spread of opinion. This shaded band always extends on both sides of the black bar (unless your percentile score is at an extreme limit, either 0 or 100). If all co-workers give the same ratings, this band does not appear.

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The self-perception summary provided by Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™, (2008) indicated that the *Motivator Principal* has a very healthy concept about himself. This principal's self-perception revealed that he had a good deal of self-confidence, liked working closely with direct reports and peers and enjoyed the challenges of managing people, projects and tasks. This type of self image typically had a variety of work-related interests and was able to derive a high level of satisfaction from work and work-related experiences. This principal described himself as self-directed but flexible and one who placed an emphasis on what was positive and optimistic, rather than what was negative and pessimistic. This principal described himself as:

- Confident, yet modest
- Very sensitive to others feelings
- Supportive and encouraging
- Naturally able to assume a leadership role, but comfortable in the role of a team player.
- Able to enjoy challenges.
- Able to work well independently and very effectively in a team setting.

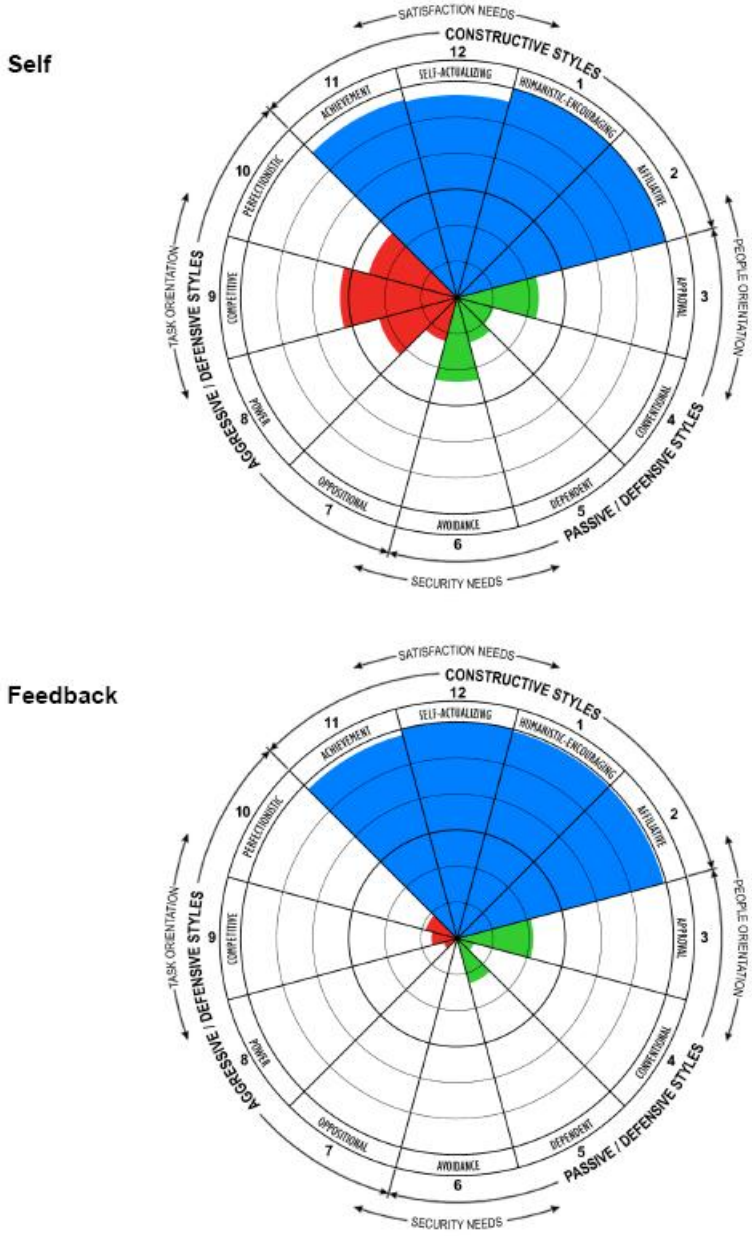
Acumen™ found that leaders with this type of self-profile tended to rise in organizations, earn higher salaries and reported a lower incidence of stress related illnesses. Overall, managers with this type of self-profile felt a realistically strong degree of confidence and pride in their capabilities.

Co-workers rated this principal as a creative, socially skilled manager with a healthy degree of self-confidence and a strong achievement orientation. Co-workers also indicated that they were strongly motivated to work closely with others. This principal

was seen as a one who could have a significant impact on what was done and how it was accomplished. Co-workers saw this principal as being motivated to handle challenges and analyzed problems as well as being a creative stimulating thinker.

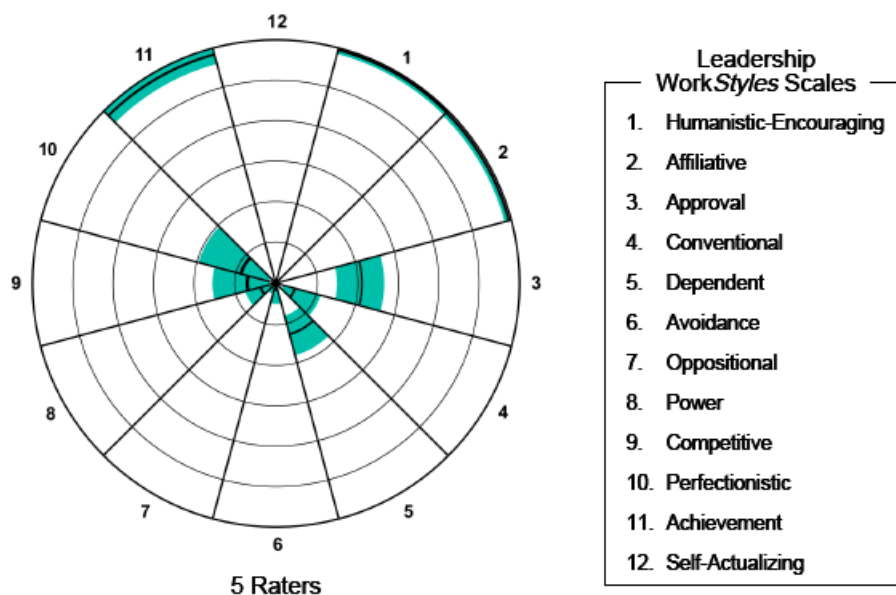
Co-workers saw this principal as very confident in his abilities, as being inquisitive and interested in a wide range of things as well as able to set and achieve ambitious yet realistic goals for personal success. Figure 6 and 7 offered a graphic profile of this interpretation.

Figure 6: Survey Results: *Motivator Principal* and Teacher Feedback  
Self vs. Feedback



<sup>2</sup> From *Leadership WorkStyles Workbook and Report*, 2007, Plymouth, MI: Human Synergetics, Copyright 2007 by Human Synergetics International and Acumen International. Used by permission.



Figure 7: Spread of Opinion on *Motivator Principal*

### Interpreting the Spread of Your Co-Workers' Opinions

The Spread of Opinion graphic indicates the degree to which your co-workers' feedback ratings vary. It shows the amount of variation (technically, the "standard deviation") in their ratings of you on each scale. The spread of opinion does *not* show the highest and lowest ratings, which can place too much emphasis on one extreme rater.

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*Research Question Four: Principal Interview Sessions*

The interview sessions with the principals from the three schools identified major challenges and barriers that principals must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change. The collection of the responses was charted on Table 7. All principals felt that how the change was presented to the teachers affected the acceptance of the change. If teachers felt that they were being forced to transform or change their work, then they usually revolted. The lack of singularity of improvement caused the work to be too broad brushed and complex which entailed a lot of people concentrating on a lot of things, which brought confusion and unnecessary stress on the teachers. A barrier that first had to be addressed was the following: do the principals have the right teachers in the right seats. If not, then principals must move teachers to the right position, and those who don't fit the program, out the door.

The *Challenged Principal* saw in the teachers, fears of not being able to handle discipline in their classes, or being able to not meet the needs of the smartest students and risk lowering test scores if they conformed to the requirements of the reform. This principal also stated that the belief held by principals and teachers of students not being able to do more academically was a huge barrier. This principal also felt that reform packages were confusing; that they were always on an abstract level and did not tell leaders how to implement the strategies.

The *Challenged Principal* and the *Turn-Around Principal* saw encapsulation as a huge barrier to school reform. Because these teachers were from a small rural setting, they may not have had experience beyond their own counties sufficient to know that

different strategies could help. For this very reason, minimizing the amount of disruption and distraction from outside forces, such as board intrusion, was hard. Both principals felt that reform programs addressed structural change, but were very weak on relational change. These principals also felt that the teachers' belief that *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* would be discontinued caused resistance to change due to the fact that if accountability were gone, the teachers would be asked to do something different the next year.

The *Motivator Principal* felt that parents were not barriers. This principal felt educational organizations should view the task as making the child successful within the organization and that there were three areas to address when implementing change. One was structural change, one was affective change and the third was curriculum, instruction and assessment. This principal felt that by the time everyone got to the last area, he believed that participants would tire of the program and therefore the real change would never occur. This principal felt that the hardest part of reform was changing the curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Table 7: Theme Categories of Principal Response – Question 4

Question 4: What are the major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change?			
Category	<i>Challenged Principal response</i>	<i>Turn-Around Principal response</i>	<i>Motivator Principal response</i>
How the change was presented to the teachers. If you force change, the teachers revolt.	✓	✓	✓
Lack of singularity. There are a lot of different people concentrating on a lot of different things.	✓	✓	✓
Teachers sitting in the wrong seats.	✓	✓	✓
Age in the faculty. The older you are the harder it was to shift them, generally.	✓	✓	✓
Encapsulation. The inability for teachers to see pass the box that they and their children are in every day.	✓	✓	
Small communities are close knit. Minimizing the amount of outside disruption and distraction from outside forces was hard. Board intrusion not only affects one person, but many.	✓	✓	
Structural practices are in place, but the reform strategies do not address the human side to change.	✓	✓	
The belief that <i>No Child Left Behind</i> was gone next year.	✓	✓	
Does not see lack of parent help as a barrier, but views the task as making the child successful within the organization.			✓
There are three areas to address in order to avoid barriers, structural change, affective change and instruction, curriculum and assessment. Everyone ones out of steam by the time they get to the last one.			✓
Teachers' fear of not being able to handle their classes if they change, fear of not being able to meet the needs of the smartest, fear of risking test scores not rising if they change.	✓		
Belief of principal and teachers that the students cannot do more. Children are a constant obstruction to the classroom.	✓		
Reform packages are confusing and always on an abstract level.	✓		

*Research Question Four: Teacher Interview Sessions*

Teacher focus group responses (Table 8) from all three principals to “What are the major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change?” revealed that teachers felt that principals were not given enough flexibility to meet the individual needs of the school in order to meet the reform design. Principals needed to ensure that teachers are not solo in being held accountable for making adequate yearly progress.

Teacher focus groups for the *Challenged Principal* and the *Turn-Around Principal* schools felt that the community and the students played a vital role as well. These groups felt that principals have a challenge in keeping morale among the teachers up, that teachers felt intimidated when being forced to change, that the teachers needed transforming, and that the delivery of the initiative could create a negative effect and resistance to change. They felt that principals needed to address the perception that changes were not being made for the sake of changing rather than for the real evidence of students not succeeding. Teachers were aware that principals had to deal with schools not having stability because of principal and superintendent turn-over.

Table 8: Theme Categories of Teacher Focus Group Response – Question 4

Question 4: What are the major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change?			
Category	<i>Challenged Principal Teacher Response</i>	<i>Turn- Around Principal Teacher Response</i>	<i>Motivator Principal Teacher Response</i>
Principals are not given enough flexibility to meet the individual needs of the school to meet the reform design.	✓	✓	✓
Principals need to ensure that teachers are not solo in being held accountable for making adequately yearly progress. The teachers feel that the community and the students play a role in this as well.	✓	✓	
Principals have a challenge in keeping morale among the teachers up. The teachers feel intimidated at being forced to change, that the teachers need transforming, and the delivery of the initiative can create a negative effect and resistance to change.	✓	✓	
Principals need to address the perception that changes are being made for the sake of changing rather than real evidence of students not succeeding.	✓	✓	
Principals need to have high expectations of themselves as well as teachers and project the image that the central office has a vested interest. If this would happen, then teachers would too.	✓		
Principals have to deal with schools not having stability through turn over with principals and superintendents.	✓		

## Summary

This study has conclusively shown that principals' work styles and behaviors influenced teacher commitment during reform in Georgia. The design of reform programs required that principals step back and regard their role as a transformational leader in three critical areas: structural changes, relational changes and instructional changes. Teachers looked to the principal as the person who sets the tempo of the implementation phase. Teachers felt that principals needed to lead by example because the principal's work styles and behaviors were highly scrutinized through observation and then molded and adapted into patterns of beliefs and work styles.

Achievement oriented work styles were an asset for principals. Planning, problem solving, innovating and organizing the work flow in an effective manner helped to create a linear map on who to involve and how to get there. Strong social skills helped motivate teaching teams to achieve high performance. Principals with an achieving, social style were the most effective in many areas such as working collaboratively with others on a day-to basis, providing useful and timely performance feedback to team members, and keeping people informed and directed on key team deliverables. Patience, respectfulness and an optimistic outlook were extremely useful in managing teacher output and productivity.

Principals' work styles and behaviors provided clarity to vision and projected confidence in a strategic plan that focused teachers on the destination of what high performing schools should do. While teachers felt that principals needed to be abstract thinkers, they also felt that principals needed to be linear in the layout of plans so others could be aware of the timeline, expectations and changes needed to make the change

happen. The strategic plan must be focused on singularity, narrowing all the complexities into what the school can achieve. Jumping from one strategy to another created confusion and resistance to change. Visual images must be developed to bring concepts from the abstract to the concrete. Implementation of the plan must be monitored to ensure the strategy of change was working, otherwise, the principal can disconnect with the tasks the teachers have to perform and cause resistance. The results of this research has shown that if the principal believed in change, and had a commitment to change, then the teachers believed in the principal and would endorse the change process.

In relational change, principals and teachers felt that developing a trusting relationship between each other, as well as being focused on the needs of students, influenced teacher commitment. The principal must embrace behaviors and beliefs that establish belief in the teachers' abilities when they themselves may not have this confidence. Teachers were more likely to commit to change when experiencing a feeling of support, a sense of belonging, and a sense of self-satisfaction. Teachers also felt that principals needed to be enthusiastic and energetic if the expectation was for teachers to give a lot of energy. Change needed to be viewed as an opportunity for growth.

Principals felt that the teacher's role in school reform was to make connections with children on the instructional level. The role of the teacher was to be a good communicator, have a sense of service and connect with students. The principal's work ethic and belief in how one wanted to lead an organization was reflective in the behaviors



of the staff. The principal also needed to completely believe in what he does and exhibit a strong image of leadership.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

## Summary

Reform, restructuring and transformation of the American public schools have been a national focus to improve student learning through federal reform programs. As the United States moved into the first decade of a new millennium, the interest in school improvement has remained high. Federal reform program, *No Child Left Behind Act 2001*, has produced legislation tying standards and annual assessments to federal aid for children in low-income schools. Achieving the goal of this school reform has required schools to undertake numerous changes, many of which have been second order changes that challenged prevailing norms and values that required educators to acquire new knowledge and skills. When schools were engaged in second order change, staff members perceived that the culture of the school had been weakened and stability and order of the school was undermined. School culture was an important component in second order change and was built in part on the actions of the school principal as perceived by the teachers. If school culture was impacted by the principal's behaviors and work styles, researchers needed to investigate how principal leadership work styles affected teacher commitment. Successful implementation of these second-order changes required effective leadership.

The purpose of this study was to illuminate leadership work styles and behavior patterns of three high school principals in northeast Georgia whose schools were undergoing reform through the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The study sought to identify specific work styles and behaviors that affected teacher commitment when

implementing change during school reform initiatives. The demographic profile for the study reflected that all principals and teachers used in this study were from a similar rural region within 30 miles of each other in northeast Georgia. All schools had a total student population of fewer than 1,000 students and were reflective of a high poverty rate that was above the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile. All three principals had accrued five years or less experience as a high school principal, and all had achieved a doctorate degree status of educational accomplishment from a southern university. The first purposive sample participant was identified as the *Challenged Principal*. This participant was from a rural high school identified as “Needs Improvement, Level 3 through Corrective Action” as recognized by the State of Georgia’s Office of Student Achievement (2004-2005). The participants had moved from two other high schools in the past two years without making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The second purposive sample participant was identified as a *Turn-Around Principal*. This participant was the current principal (2006-1007) of one of the schools that were vacated by the *Challenged Principal*. This high school was in transition from Needs Improvement, Level 3, and Corrective Action to making Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) within one year by absolute measurable objective in all categories as deemed by the state of Georgia’s Office of Student Achievement. The third purposive sample participant was identified as the *Motivator Principal* whose school had been identified by Georgia’s Office of Student Achievement as a high performing school that had achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past three years. This school had been nominated by the Georgia Department of Education for the National School of Change Award. This award is given annually to six schools in the United States that have improved in substantial and significant ways.

Leadership behavior and strategies used by the leader was identified by the use of Leadership/Impact assessment through Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ instrument. This assessment provided information on the leader's influence on those around him or her, and on how one's chosen strategies affected peer behavior and ability to perform (Human Synergetics International©, 2007). Teachers that served under each principal were interviewed in focus group settings of five to six people to obtain a collective response toward their viewpoints. Teachers participated in the Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ profile survey through the "feedback from others" portion of the survey that revealed co-workers perceptions of their leaders' influence on commitment. Principal participants in this research study were given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The researcher was a leadership facilitator assigned to one of the high schools that involved two principals used in the case studies. The researcher had served in this high school for four successive years as a School and Leader Quality Specialist affiliated with the Georgia Department of Education. Within the four year time frame, the researcher had worked with the other two principals, *Challenged Principal* and the *Turn-Around principal* that was assigned to this school during Corrective Action. The *Motivator Principal* had services from a different leadership facilitator other than the researcher to advise him on state initiatives.

A mixed methods study of collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data was used in the three case studies involving the three different leaders. The study was completed through structured interviews, surveys and observation which allowed the researcher to gather and analyze information about the work styles and behaviors found when leading second order change. The collection of data was

conducted in two phases. The first phase involved qualitative data where principals participated in an interview session with the researcher. The questions from the interview extracted information that highlighted the respondents' work styles and behaviors that influenced teacher commitment. A focus group of four to seven co-workers from each school was interviewed in a separate session that highlighted co-worker perceptions of the participant's work styles and behaviors that influenced teacher commitment to change during school reform. Interview sessions were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The second phase of data collection was quantitative through the use of a survey obtained from Human Synergistics International©. The survey highlighted principals' personalities and associated thinking patterns that were formed from accumulated experiences that were productive in achieving success in management. The Acumen Leadership *WorkStyles*<sup>TM</sup> instrument classified responses according to how the world shaped one's motivational styles, the way one leads other people and the tendency to communicate and resolve conflict. Four to seven co-workers serving under each principal were used as a focus group for responses to the survey. Instructions were to score their principal's behaviors and work styles from a co-worker's perspective. These responses were compressed and evaluated by Human Synergistics International© which ran the data analysis through scale grouping and provided results from the survey in themes and categories. The use of two methods of data collection allowed for triangulation by data source. The responses to both interview questions and surveys were converged to find common themes that attributed to work styles that influenced teacher motivation towards implementation of school reform. The common themes were identified by the researcher through use of a coding system to identify similarities and

differences in leadership work styles and behaviors. The interviews were compressed to reveal work styles and beliefs of principals that impacted management skills.

Observations made by the researcher added to the panoramic view of interactions between teachers and leaders as to the change process. A convergence of both responses and various methods of data collection were conducted to reveal what motivated or prevented others to embrace change and implement reform structures.

As reformists continue to debate the unique design of suggested changes that would work in schools, this research added to the knowledge that educators have begun to collect relating to barriers that limit full implementation of reform programs. This research revealed traits and behaviors influencing work styles that produced positive and negative attitudes toward change processes, and in understanding leadership work styles and behaviors beneficial for principals to better understand the needs of others when leading change and before investing in a redesign of a school's culture when reform packages were chosen. Designers of reform programs at the state level would also have access to this research when considering key elements that highlighted specific strategies that must be embedded in the reform program's unique design to ensure successful implementation.

#### Research Questions/Hypotheses

The following questions were addressed in this study:

*Overarching Questions:* Do principal work styles and behaviors influence teacher commitment during reform in Georgia?

*Sub-questions:*

- 1) How do leader's work style and behavior influence teacher commitment?

- 2) What are principals' beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in school reform?
- 3) How do principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors?
- 4) What are major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change?

### Findings

This study has conclusively shown that principal work styles and behaviors in the three schools evaluated influenced teacher commitment during reform in Georgia. There were several major findings that emerged from the study: (1) Principals had a direct impact on teacher's subjective interpretation of the work environment. These interpretations included cultural norms, rules, behavioral regularities, root metaphors, shared meanings and myths that were institutionalized mechanisms of control that facilitated coordinated behavior. (2) The design of school reform required that principals step back and regard their role as a transformational leader in three critical areas: structural change, relational change and instructional change. Teachers were found to look to the principal as the person who sets the tempo of the implementation phase and leads by example. The principal's work styles and behaviors were found to be highly scrutinized and then molded and adapted into their patterns of beliefs and work styles. (3) The analysis revealed that there were behavioral traits and work styles that have greater impact on teacher commitment than others. Achievement oriented work styles were found to be an asset for principals. Planning, problem solving, innovating and organizing

the work flow in an effective manner were found to help create a linear map on who to involve and how to get there. This finding implied that the hiring process of districts seeking to promote change in specific schools should select principals according to personal characteristics that foster positive teacher commitment to change. (4) Results of this study revealed one's leadership work styles and behaviors appeared to be embedded in personal characteristics and could not be masked. This, in conjunction with the sum total of life experiences, constituted leadership potential and were directly reflected to teacher commitment within the schools.

Secondary findings in this research showed that principals who possessed strong social skills helped motivate teaching teams to achieve high performance. Principals with an achieving, social style were most effective in many areas such as working collaboratively with others on a day-to-day basis, providing useful and timely performance feedback to team members and keeping people informed and directed on key team deliverables. Patience, respectfulness and an optimistic outlook were found to be extremely useful in managing teacher output and productivity and that emotional energies of principals should be focused on achieving success rather than avoiding failure.

Principals' work styles and behaviors provided clarity to vision and projected confidence in a strategic plan that focused teachers on the destination of what high performing schools should do. While teachers felt that principals needed to be abstract thinkers, they also felt that principals needed to be linear in the layout of the plan so that others would be aware of the timeline, expectations, and changes needed to make the change happen. Visual images had to be developed to bring clarity to the concept. The



strategic plan had to be focused on singularity which narrowed all the complexities into what the school could achieve. Jumping from one strategy to another appeared to create confusion and resistance to change. Implementation of the plan had to be monitored to ensure the strategy of change was working, otherwise, the principal would disconnect from the tasks the teachers had to perform and create resistance. The results of this research showed that if the principal believed in change and had a commitment to change, then the teachers believed in the principal and would endorse the change process.

Other secondary findings revealed that principals and teachers felt that developing a trusting relationship between each other, as well as being focused on the needs of students, influenced teacher commitment. The principal had to embrace behaviors that established belief in the teachers' abilities when they may not have the confidence to believe in their own capabilities. Teachers appeared to be more likely to commitment to change when experiencing a feeling of support, belonging, and a sense of self-satisfaction. The teachers also felt that principals also needed to be enthusiastic and energetic if the expectation was for teacher to give a lot of energy. They felt the principal needed to completely believe in what he did and needed to exhibit a strong image of leadership. Change needed to be viewed by all as an opportunity for growth.

### Discussion

The design of the research was to select three high school principals who were leading change within their schools. One was being successful with strong teacher commitment, one was making progress with moderate teacher commitment and the third one struggled in three different schools in the past three years with low teacher commitment. The information gathered through this analysis allowed the researcher to

extract key themes that impacted teacher commitment during change. The following is a discussion of how the principals and their focus groups' insights correlated with the interview questions.

### *Overarching Question*

Do principal work styles and behaviors influence teacher commitment during reform in Georgia?

### *Discussion*

There was a need for reform agendas to recognize teacher commitment in a multidimensional sense. The findings in this study showed that both teachers and principals believed that the principal's work styles and behaviors influenced commitment to change. The results of this study showed specific behavioral traits and work styles have greater impact on teacher commitment than others. Interview sessions exposed that while all principals appeared to have common knowledge about how to create great schools, their work styles and behaviors tended to bring about different results in the commitment of teachers. The *Challenged Principal* in this study had moved three separate times to three different high schools in the last three years, each time, increasing the school's "Needs Improvement" status the years he served those schools, respectively. The *Motivator Principal* and the *Turn-Around Principal* tended to put their beliefs into action and obtained high teacher commitment while achieving adequately yearly progress with their schools. The analysis from Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ survey generated personality profiles based on percentiles on a 12 point scale. Each scale represented an important attitude or personal characteristic which had a bearing on leadership effectiveness. The scales were then categorized into three broad scales

according to work styles. Those broad scales included: constructive, which characterized self-enhancing thinking and behavior contributing to one's level of satisfaction, ability to develop healthy relationships and work effectively with people; passive/defensive, which represent self protecting, thinking and behavior that promoted the fulfillment of security needs through interaction with people, and aggressive/defensive which reflected self-promoting, thinking and behavior used to maintain one's status/position and fulfill security needs through task-related activities.

In comparing the scales of the three principals, it was found that when principals scored between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> percentile on constructive styles and under the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in passive/defensive styles and aggressive/defensive styles, teachers had a more positive commitment to change and better sense of job satisfaction. When behaviors and work styles were more concentrated in the broad category of constructive styles, principal work styles and behaviors were described as supportive, motivates others, patient, friendly, warm, trusting, enjoys challenge, strives for excellence, decisive, enthusiastic, creative and confident. Dominance of these traits over the other two categories indicated that leaders who needed to implement successful change do not have to have a strong profile in passive/defensive styles.

These analyses revealed that when a principal having equal percentile ratings that scored mostly in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile range in all 12 categories, the implementation of change still remained positive in the school. However, if the prominent descriptors fell in the passive/defensive style, then teacher commitment tended to be more negative toward change. Analysis showed that high performance in many management skills (planning, problem solving, innovating, and organizing the work flow) was not only associated with

good social skills, but was also associated with embracing challenges, setting stretch goals, self-confidence, and creativity, which was termed by psychologists as internal locus of control. The *Challenged Principal's* stronger personal characteristics fell in the scale scores of passive/defensive which identified him more as a follower rather than a leader. The *Motivator and Turn-Around Principal's* stronger personal characteristics fell in the scale scores of constructive. The profiles of these principals alluded to the fact that personal characteristics play a major role in how one leads, regardless of their knowledge base.

The analyses showed that teachers saw principals as they really were rather than what they wanted others to see. Principal leadership work styles and behaviors could not be masked. All principals felt that the total sum of life's experiences were embedded in one's leadership style, therefore one led by what one thought was sound and decent. However, the knowledge base and life's experiences could not overshadow innate characteristics that dominated decision making and leadership tendencies. The teachers' responses supported the principal's profile findings in that one's characteristics project stronger irrespective of what one tends to understand. This one finding alone solidified the answer to the overarching question posed by this research.

This study showed that personal characteristics played a major role in how one leads. It also projected a level of knowledge on how one's personal characteristics affect leadership work styles and behaviors and how personal characteristics influence organizational effectiveness. Previous research supported this finding. Mumsford, Zaccaro, Connell and Marks (2000) concluded that leadership may be an indirect phenomenon where influence was exercised through cognition performances (skills

performance) as well as through interpersonal interaction which were embedded in a distinctly social context. Marion (2002) stated that for thousands of years, people have known about the importance of effective leaders. The earlier leadership theories focused on the assumption that great leaders were born, not made. Early leadership theory focused on what leaders do—their behaviors, rather than the traits they possessed. Situation and contingency leadership theories suggested that different leadership styles would be appropriate in differing contexts. More current leadership theory and studies have continued to emerge that attempted to uncover relationships between leadership and organizational effectiveness.

*Sub-question One*

How do leader's work style and behavior influence teacher commitment?

*Discussion*

Data analyses conclusively showed that principals who projected an image of being a filter for the school, being approachable, being an encourager, and monitoring the plan for change to ensure that the process was working, had positive teacher commitment to change. Differences that surfaced among the principals in interview sessions and survey results showed that the *Challenged Principal* took a passive approach to change as opposed to a progressive approach in the leadership work styles and behaviors of the *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal*. The *Challenged Principal* did not have belief in others nor commitment in their own capabilities and became frustrated when teachers could not see the need for change. The principal's behaviors therefore limited the amount of commitment generated by the teachers. The *Challenged Principal* also worried too much about being liked and everyone feeling comfortable with what was

going on before pushing the staff ahead in reform implementation; the vision was his and clearly his alone. By waiting for grass-roots buy-in, momentum was lost and change never occurred. The fear of failure generated by the principal's insecurities undermined the belief for teachers to take risks. In contrast, the *Motivator Principal* felt that principals needed to lead by example because a lot of staff change was through observation of the principals' behaviors and then making those changes to their personal style to match his. The researcher observed that data from this research agreed with other previous literature (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002) who noticed that followers do not necessarily take leaders at their words, instead, followers see those countless behaviors and have a sort of gauge that's telling them what they think was driving leaders most of the time. This reasoning compliments the findings of Palmer (2000) who observed that leaders failed to look at how others see their actions. By not being observant of their perceptions, leaders fed dangerous delusions. Their efforts were always well intended, their power was always benign, and the problem was always in those difficult people whom they were trying to lead.

In this study, teacher interview sessions showed that in order for commitment to be fostered in teachers, several things needed to occur within the organization: First, the principal needed to be enthusiastic and give a lot of energy if a lot of energy was expected from the teachers; second, the principal needed to believe that he was working with the best in the business ; third, teachers needed to feel support not intimidation; fourth, teachers needed to have the perception that the principal was fighting for their school.

Strong teacher commitment was fostered through a strong sense of belonging, self satisfaction and being considered a valued member of the team. Teachers needed to know the “why” for change. Maeoff (1988) supported this finding in that during reform, teachers want to be heard and respected with regard to school decisions, and they would become more committed to specific decisions and to the organization by exercising their decision making power in schools. Teachers needed to see the principal outwardly strong in convictions and committed himself. All felt that when the principal was an encourager and was approachable, teacher commitment was high. Principals needed to allow the professional growth of adults in the building, to provide clarity to vision, and to hire people who would buy into the vision and create time to collaborate. Fritz (1984) stated that the main reason why leaders in large companies often failed was the inability to stick to a vision, and leadership effectiveness was largely due to focusing on going toward some destination. When the destination was clear, and clarity of that destination was understood with a sense of urgency to reach that destination, others followed. Leaders had to provide mental images of where followers were being asked to go and to transform the way these people see their worlds. In other words, leaders envisioned the end and eliminated anxiety by ensuring that the leader and follower would reach the destination together.

#### *Sub-question Two*

What are principals’ beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in schools?

#### *Discussion*

The principal’s belief about their role, and the role of teachers, in school reform was that principals established the vision of the destination, helped teachers see how to

create change, and provided support for change to occur. Both principals and teachers saw the principal's role as one of being a conductor of a great orchestra. The role of the principal was to be focused on motivating teachers through their displayed energy and enthusiasm toward reform as well as setting purpose, keeping the staff focused on the reason why they were all together, and why they were changing. The principals saw themselves as setting the tone in building as one of hope rather than one of strife; and to be optimistic and have a realistic view of what could actually happen so that the climate of building remained balanced as the school community ventured into new structures. Principals needed to know the logistics of how to make adequate yearly progress, monitor the processes and have passion for the work.

This study found that not only do the schools need to be focused on a singular plan with clarity, but principals needed to transform abstract concepts into concrete concepts and be confident in the new direction. The *Turn-Around Principal* and the *Motivator Principal*, who kept teachers focused on the destination by creating short term wins, had greater teacher commitment than those following the leadership of the *Challenged Principal*. Kotter's (1998) findings support this trend. In his study on business success, the major reason exposed as to why change efforts at companies fail was failure to stick to the vision. The teacher's role was to have a sense of service and connect with children and content. Teachers needed to be good communicators and to see their roles as an active part of school reform.

### *Sub-question Three*

How do principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors?



### *Discussion*

All principals felt their work ethics and beliefs in how one wants to lead an organization was reflected in the behaviors of the staff. The general belief of the principals was to let everyone know the score of their work and to let them do it without interference. The interview sessions with teacher focus groups revealed that teachers felt that the principal should be focused on the teachers' interests and should suggest ways to handle situations. The teacher focus group from the *Challenged Principal's* school stated that high attrition rate of the principal spawned truancy and tardiness of teachers. They also stated that principals must have the skill to organize his time and stay current on educational events in order to show relevance. Further, principals needed to be linear in their thought processes so that plans could be put into a sequential format and teachers would know what was expected. The principals further described themselves as designers who were looking to develop new programs and encourage teachers to think outside of the box. Mulhern (2007) supported these findings in his research which revealed that the nature of human beings does not change, and the personal considerations of leadership was what mattered. Leadership was a three-way intersection where leading, serving and being human met.

Other results indicated teacher's needed to an assurance of stability and confidence by the principal toward the change process. Teachers felt that if the principal believed in the change and had a commitment to change, then teachers would be encouraged by the principal's confidence and endorse the change process.

*Sub-question Four*

What are major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change?

*Discussion*

This research examined the impact that emotional experiences have on leadership roles. Major challenges and barriers that principals must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change were identified. Interview sessions with the principals from the three schools identified major challenges and barriers as follows:

1. The way change was presented to the faculty made a difference. If teachers felt they were being forced, or made to transform their work, principals were met with greater resistance than if they had a part in how the change would occur.
2. Principals also felt that there were a lot of teachers sitting in the wrong seats, and therefore, they needed to get people in the right position to make them successful, content and productive.
3. Encapsulation of teachers in small rural settings limited their experience and therefore created resistance to the unknown. These teachers tended to only want to know what they knew and were content with the status quo.

The *Challenged Principal* and the *Turn-Around Principal* saw encapsulation as a huge barrier to school reform. Because these teachers were from a small rural setting, they may not have had experience beyond their own counties sufficient to know that different strategies could help. For this reason, minimizing the amount of disruption and

distraction from outside forces, such as board intrusion, was hard. Both principals felt that reform programs addressed structural change, but was very weak on relational change.

4. Principals recognized that the bias teacher held toward students' academic ability was a strong barrier that needed to be addressed.

The *Challenged Principal* saw the teachers' fear of not being able to handle discipline in their classes, or not being able to not meet the needs of the smartest students as a risk to lowering test scores in conforming to the requirements of the reform. This principal also stated the belief held by principals and teachers of student not being able to do more academically was a huge barrier. This principal felt that reform packages were confusing, that they were always on an abstract level and that they did not tell leaders how to implement the strategies.

5. The belief that *No Child Left Behind 2001 Reform Act 2001* was like all the other reforms and would be gone the next year. This would mean another change, all would be for naught, and another reform strategy would come in behind this one and ask them to shift again.

This finding reinforced those of Richardson and Prickett (1993) who found that engaging others in change was hard because so many teachers and principals have been numbed by decades of urgency, blame, shifting priorities and failed promises. Educators have seen reform introduced in a flurry of excitement only to be abandoned suddenly and supplanted by new programs requiring entirely different approaches to classroom instruction. The teachers interviewed tended to agree with the principals. This research also revealed that teachers needed to know why there was a need for change and if they

were making changes for the sake of change, they did not have strong commitment. If they knew that there was evidence of students not succeeding under the present plan, then they were more willing to embrace and commit to new strategies. Zmuda, Kuklio and Kline (2004) supported this finding through their research which stated that changes in the knowledge state of the staff, without changing the conditions, or changing the conditions without changing the knowledge states, would likely yield little or no change.

### Conclusions

This data indicated the importance of work style and behaviors in the leadership of high school principals affects teacher commitment. In addition, we also can get a glimpse of the impact *No Child Left Behind Act 2001* as to selection of applicants for administrative roles in local school. Therefore, from the data collected from the survey, interview sessions and observations, the researcher developed the following conclusions:

*Overarching Questions:* Do principal work styles and behaviors influence teacher commitment during reform in Georgia? There was a need for reform agendas to recognize teacher commitment in a multidimensional sense. The findings in this study showed that both teachers and principals believed that the principal's work styles and behaviors influenced commitment to change. The results of this study showed specific behavioral traits and work styles have greater impact on teacher commitment than others. Interview sessions exposed that while all principals appeared to have common knowledge about how to create great schools, their work styles and behaviors tended to bring about different results in the commitment of teachers.

*Sub-questions:*

Research Sub-question 1: How do leader's work style and behavior influence teacher commitment? Principals had a direct impact on teacher's subjective interpretation of the work environment. These interpretations included cultural norms, rules, behavioral regularities, root metaphors, shared meanings and myths that were institutionalized mechanisms of control that facilitated coordinated behavior

Research Sub-question 2: What are principals' beliefs about their role and the role of teachers in school reform? The design of school reform required that principals step back and regard their role as a transformational leader in three critical areas: structural change, relational change and instructional change. Teachers were found to look to the principal as the person who sets the tempo of the implementation phase and leads by example. The principal's work styles and behaviors were found to be highly scrutinized and then molded and adapted into their patterns of beliefs and work styles.

Research Sub-question 3: How do principal work styles and belief patterns align with their leadership behaviors? The analysis revealed that there were behavioral traits and work styles that have greater impact on teacher commitment than others.

Achievement oriented work styles were found to be an asset for principals. Planning, problem solving, innovating and organizing the work flow in an effective manner were found to help create a linear map on who to involve and how to get there. This finding implied that the hiring process of districts seeking to promote change in specific schools should select principals according to personal characteristics that foster positive teacher commitment to change.

Research Sub-question 4: What are major challenges or barriers the principal must address during implementation of school reform in order to obtain high teacher commitment toward change? Results of this study revealed one's leadership work styles and behaviors appeared to be embedded in personal characteristics and could not be masked. This, in conjunction with the sum total of life experiences, constituted leadership potential and were directly reflected to teacher commitment within the schools.

#### Implications

The pace of educational reform has continued to increase, thereby creating rapid change in the external and internal conditions of schools. Accountability, standardization and mandatory changes have produced teacher resistance to current reform movements. The changing nature of teaching through reform efforts has produced conditions of extreme uncertainty and identity crisis within what historically has been a stable profession. Reforms have come and gone, using up time, money and hope. Reform strategies have historically caused people within educational organizations to adjust to new demands and expectations that the movement imposes on them. Belief systems of both principals and teachers have been challenged during these change processes, and have caused resistance and defiance to much needed reform. If federal and state support continued to finance reform programs that highlight best practices in educational organizations, then guidelines for reform programs must focus on the nature of change and the role of administrators in regard to relational as well as structural changes in order to reduce resistance and embrace new ideas toward school improvement.

Improving school performance through a stringent accountability system administered by the state has forced fundamental challenges on principals' work styles and behaviors in relation to teacher commitment. One implication derived from this study was that districts seeking to promote change in specific schools should seek to appoint principals to those schools who possess the characteristics that foster positive teacher commitment to change. This research will also help guide those that are currently in administrative positions to design the criteria for the job first and then match the principal to the skills required to meet successful school reform. The overarching theme that highlights this research study is that in an age of accountability, the "good old boy" selection of hiring will not suffice. With measurable goals, Georgia has set criteria for improving schools, and local school systems need to consider the personal characteristics of their new hires in leading change.

This study also lends itself to addressing one's talents and style of leadership. It would be advantageous to those entering the administrative field of education to invest in a leadership work style profile assessment that frames the skills and abilities one naturally possesses. Without careful selection of job matching talents, potential leaders may be setting themselves up for failure. In the state of Georgia, the educational community is experiencing a high attrition rate for administrators. Perhaps investing in skills based, personal profile would help get good leaders in the right seats and keep the job openings filled.

Another implication from this study was that belief is a powerful force for school reform. Principals had a direct impact on teacher's subjective interpretations of the work environment. These interpretations included norms, rules, behavioral regularities, root

metaphors, shared meanings and myths that are institutionalized mechanisms of control facilitating coordinated behavior. When implementing school reform and change, principals looked in three critical areas: structural change, relational change and instructional change. All of these changes would either be first or second order change. Those that were first order change dealt with prevailing values and norms and could be implemented largely with existing knowledge and skills. Outside experts could facilitate this change because first order changes did not seek to change the core values, beliefs or structures of the school. Second order change dramatically broke with the past and challenged existing models, norms and values. As a result, second order changes could not be implemented by outside experts. Stakeholders had to find their way through the changes together, acquiring along the way new sets of knowledge, skills, ways of thinking and often values. Order of change had less to do with the change itself than with how stakeholders viewed the change. If leaders failed to understand or acknowledge that some changes were second-order for some or all of their stake holders, they struggled to get support for the successful implementation of these changes. As a result, their initiatives failed to improve student achievement.

#### Recommendations

Future studies using additional and diversified high schools should be performed to seek further answers and comments from administrators and teachers. While limited to three high schools in rural Georgia, the procedures and findings of the present study lends themselves to expansion and use in schools with larger populations and different locations, such as schools in suburban areas and inner city locations. Also of interest would be to evaluate the question of gender in the leadership role and assimilate findings



as to how their work styles and behaviors affect teacher commitment to change. Also, it would be of interest to determine why new candidates for principalship often chose high needs and struggling schools when no one else would take these schools as their first walk in administrative responsibilities. Answering this question would perhaps shed light on how to address hiring practices for worker readiness at the district level. Other possible studies could include political officials to better understand their view points on school reform and how they interpreted the change process in schools. This would add a multidimensional level to the findings and therefore bind the results in a more global view of what all stakeholders needed to do in order to ensure successful school reform.

#### Dissemination

As reformists continue to debate the unique design of what works in schools, administrators, teachers and the Georgia Department of Education would benefit from learning about barriers that limit full implementation of reform programs. This research will be published electronically so that practitioners can access the information when seeking further understanding on successful implementation of school reform measures. This researcher currently works for the Georgia Department of Education in School and Leader Quality and will present to the program manager a copy of this dissertation after publication to inform him of the research findings. The researcher and her major professor will seek publication of these findings in referenced educational journals. The nature of this researcher's profession is to conduct professional learning at local schools in northeast Georgia. In this capacity, efforts will be made to disseminate information from this research to principals, district office personnel and teachers.

#### Concluding Thoughts

Results of this research added to the knowledge of the important influence that principals exerted in their administrative capacity and the direct impact they had on their respective schools. This research purposed that principals had an innate make-up in their behavior and beliefs that impacted their work styles. The perception of these work styles by followers was found to be strongly influential in a change process. In school reform, the framework of the redesign needed to capture three critical areas: structural change, relational change and instructional change. When selecting principals to lead schools in change, the first question to answer was “what does this organization need to do in order to adapt to the framework of the reform program?” Next, one needed to question how stable the organization was in relation to school culture and climate. Finally, the organization needed to select a principal that had work styles and behaviors that were conducive to the change needed. *No Child Left Behind Act 2001* designed its framework into asking organizations to inspect and adjust expectation to levels of high performance. With this vision, change was inevitable. There was a need to be conscious of whether leaders who were chosen to lead schools that were in high critical needs of reform to meet the basic standard benchmarks set by the state of Georgia, had the work styles and behaviors that matched the job.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## **The Influence of Principal Work Styles and Behaviors on Teacher Commitment during School Reform in Georgia**

The participant interview questions will serve as a guide to obtain information exploring leadership beliefs and behaviors on teacher commitment during school reform in Georgia. Principals and teacher focus groups will be interviewed in to glean behaviors and beliefs that may influence teacher commitment. The research will be interpretations of the data by analyzing data for themes or categories, and will make interpretations or draw conclusions about its meaning. The researcher will filter the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment. The researcher will view social phenomena holistically. The participants will be audio taped and transcribed. The results of the interview will be kept confidential and the participants will not be identified individually in any way in the report.

Thank you for your participation.

### **Guiding Questions**

#### **Teacher Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. What role do principals play in school reform?
2. Does the principal's work style have any real effect on teacher commitment?
3. How can a principal influence teacher commitment?
4. What effects does state and federal mandates have on principals?
5. What effects do state and federal mandates have on teachers?
6. How do teachers respond to change? How does the principal help teachers make this transition?
7. What strategies or interventions do principals use to reduce barriers to teacher commitment during school reform?

Thank you for your participation.

Susan McGlohon, Doctoral Candidate for Georgia Southern University



## **The Influence of Principal Work Styles and Behaviors on Teacher Commitment during School Reform in Georgia**

The participant interview questions will serve as a guide to obtain information exploring leadership beliefs and behaviors on teacher commitment during school reform in Georgia. Principals and teacher focus groups will be interviewed in to glean behaviors and beliefs that may influence teacher commitment. The research will be interpretations of the data by analyzing data for themes or categories, and will make interpretations or draw conclusions about its meaning. The researcher will filter the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment. The researcher will view social phenomena holistically. The participants will be audio taped and transcribed. The results of the interview will be kept confidential and the participants will not be identified individually in any way in the report.

Thank you for your participation.

### **Guiding Questions**

#### **Principal Interview Questions**

- 1. What role do principals play in school reform?**
- 2. Does your leadership work style have any real effect on teacher commitment?**
- 3. How can a principal influence teacher commitment?**
- 4. What effect does state and federal mandates have on principals?**
- 5. What effect do state and federal mandates have on teacher commitment?**
- 6. How do teachers respond to change? How does the principal help teachers make this transition?**
- 7. What strategies or interventions do principals use to reduce barriers to teacher commitment during school reform?**

Thank you for your participation.

Susan McGlohon, Doctoral Candidate for Georgia Southern University

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ITEM GRID

## Research Interview Questions Item Grid

### An Illumination of Principal Beliefs and Behaviors on Teacher Commitment during School Reform

*Susan McGlohon*

<b>RQ &amp; Specific Questions</b>	<b>Principal Interview Questions</b>	<b>Teacher Interview Questions</b>	<b>Item Topic</b>	<b>Research Literature Primary &amp; Secondary</b>
1,3,5	1,1a, 3, 5	1,3,5	Historical Background	Schlechty, 1990; Wilcox, 1996; Hill & Harvey, 2004; Fullan, 2004; Johnson, 1996
1,2,3,4,5	1c, 1d, 3, 4b, 5, 8	1c, d; 2, 2a, 3, 4b, 5, 8	School Reform Efforts	Reese, 2007; Richardson & Prickett, 1993; Zmuda, Kuklio & Kline, 2004; Schlechty, 1990; Hambrick, Nadler & Tushman, 1998;
1,2,3,4,5	1d, 2, 2d, 3, 4b, 5, 7a,b	2,2a,3,4,4a,5,7	Teacher Commitment	Fink, 1992; Tsui & Cheng, 1999; Day, 2005; Hoy & Ferguson, 1985; Little, 1982; Nias, 1981; Evans, 1996; Maeoff, 1988; Kushman, 1992; Smylie, 1992; Miller, 2000; Schlechty, 1990; Firestone & Pennell, 1993.
1,2,5	1d, 2d, 5,7 a, 7b	2,5,6,7	Principal Influence on Teacher Commitment	Park, 2005; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990; Andres & Soder, 1987; Hallinger, Bickman & Davis, 1997; Greenfield, 1991; Krug, 1992; McREL, 2005.

<b>RQ &amp; Specific Questions</b>	<b>Principal Interview Questions</b>	<b>Teacher Interview Questions</b>	<b>Item Topic</b>	<b>Research Literature Primary &amp; Secondary</b>
1,3,4	1d, 3, 4a, 4b, 6, 7a, 7b	3, 4a, 4b, 7a, 7b	Barriers to Effective School Reform	Beckard & Pritchard, 1992; Bridges, 1991; Fullan, 1993; Heifetz, 1994; Hesselbein & JJohnston, 2002; Nadler, Shaw, Walton & Associates, 1994; Rogers, 1995; Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2004, Cuban, 1987.
2,4,5	3, 4b, 5, 7a, 7b, 8	2a, 2b, 3, 4, 6,7,8	Role of Teachers in School Reform	Buchanan, 1974; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982; Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Miller, 2000; Day, 2005.

<b>RQ &amp; Specific Questions</b>	<b>Principal Interview Questions</b>	<b>Teacher Interview Questions</b>	<b>Item Topic</b>	<b>Research Literature Primary &amp; Secondary</b>
1,2,3,4	2,4,5,6,7,8,	2c,2d,4a,4b,5,6,8	Leadership Behaviors	Marion, 2002; Yukl, 1989; Hogan, 1994; Fleishman, 1953, 1973; Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Fiedler, 1964; Fiedler & Garcia, 1987; Lord, Foti & DeVader, 1984; Boyatzis, 1982; Bray, Campbell & Grant, 1974; Dunnette, 1971; Lord, DeVader & Alliger, 1986; McCall & Lombardo, 1983; Zaccaro, Foti & Kenny, 1991; Bass, 1990; Stodgill, 1974; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992; Mumford, Zaccaro & Harding, 2000; Northouse, 2004; Meyer & Slechta, 2002; Bass & Avolio, 1999; Rost, 1991; Goleman, 2002

<b>RQ &amp; Specific Questions</b>	<b>Principal Interview Questions</b>	<b>Teacher Interview Questions</b>	<b>Item Topic</b>	<b>Research Literature Primary &amp; Secondary</b>
2,4,5			New Realities in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan, 2005; Mulhern, 2007; Kotter, 1998, Fritz, 1984; Ginsberg & Davies, 2007; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee; Palmer, 2000; Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly & Marks (2000); Leithwood, 2001; Johnson, 2004

APPENDIX C  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTERS



## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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January 5, 2008

Dear Teacher,

I am a leadership facilitator in northeast Georgia for School and Leader Quality for the Georgia Department of Education and a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I am conducting a mixed method case study on a purposive sampling of principals in northeast Georgia. The purpose of this research is to illuminate principals' work styles and behaviors on teacher commitment during reform in Georgia. The results of this study will provide insight into defining characteristics of principal beliefs and behaviors that impact successful school reform initiatives and information to other high School principals implementing a change process in their schools. If you would like a copy of the results of this study, please let me know in an email and I will send the results to you as soon as the study is completed.

Participation in this research will include completion of the principal's feedback portion of a leadership work styles survey evaluated by Human Synergistics™ International and an interview session that will define principal beliefs and behaviors influencing teacher commitment. Although there is no penalty should you decide not to participate, your assistance with this study would be greatly appreciated. By completing the above mentions tasks, you will have helped to provide valuable information about the effects of principal beliefs and behaviors on teacher commitment during reform in Georgia.

If you choose to participate, please schedule a time to complete the electronic questionnaire and schedule a time with the researcher for the interview sessions. Your leadership work styles survey will be interpreted and viewed by the research and Human Synergistics™ International. Human Synergistics™ International will produce a scored evaluation of the individual strengths and weaknesses in each principal. In exchange for research discounts approved by Human Synergistics™ International, the researcher is expected to provide Human Synergistics™ International with (1) copies of all working papers, presentation, reports to sponsors and manuscripts to be submitted for publication with present LWS results and (2) a copy of the data collected through the use of the inventories as soon as such data becomes available (if using paper instruments). Researchers can submit either the LWS scoring sheets or a raw data file (ASCII file). These data will be added to Human Synergistics' data base and will be used only for purposes of checking the norms, reliability and validity of the inventory. Confidentiality of the data will be maintained. I would appreciate all parts of the research o be completed by January 31, 2008. At any time that you wish to terminate your participation, you may end the research by telling me that you wish to end your participation. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

If you would like to contact me, my email is [smcglohon@yahoo.com](mailto:smcglohon@yahoo.com) and my contact cell number is (706) 424-1247. Participants have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-0843.

You must be 18 years if age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: The Influence of Principal Work Styles and Behaviors on Teacher Commitment during Reform Efforts in Georgia.

Principal Investigator: Susan McGlohon, 35 Deerfield Street, Arnoldsville, GA 30619 (706) 424-1247

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Linda M. Arthur, Georgia Southern University, P.O. Box 08131, Statesboro, GA 30460 (912) 681-0697

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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January 5, 2008

Dear Principal,

I am a leadership facilitator in northeast Georgia for School and Leader Quality for the Georgia Department of Education and a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I am conducting a mixed method case study on a purposive sampling of principals in northeast Georgia. The purpose of this research is to illuminate principals' work styles and behaviors on teacher commitment during reform in Georgia. The results of this study will provide insight into defining characteristics of principal beliefs and behaviors that impact successful school reform initiatives and information to other high School principals implementing a change process in their schools. If you would like a copy of the results of this study, please let me know in an email and I will send the results to you as soon as the study is completed.

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If you would like to contact me, my email is [smcglohon@yahoo.com](mailto:smcglohon@yahoo.com) and my contact cell number is (706) 424-1247. Participants have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named above or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-0843.

You must be 18 years if age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records. Your system must indicate that the research is being conducted on this school site. Please have your superintendent approve the research study to be conducted on the site.

Title of Project: The Influence of Principal Work Styles and Behaviors on Teacher Commitment during Reform Efforts in Georgia.

Principal Investigator: Susan McGlohon, 35 Deerfield Street, Arnoldsville, GA 30619 (706) 424-1247

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Linda M. Arthur, Georgia Southern University, P.O. Box 08131, Statesboro, GA 30460 (912) 681-0697

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX D  
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs <b>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</b>		
Phone: 912-681-5465		Veazey Hall 2021
Fax: 912-681-0719	Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	P.O. Box 8005 Statesboro, GA 30460

**To:** Susan Marie Senter McGlohan  
35 Deerfield Street  
Arnoldsville, GA-30619

**CC:** Dr. Linda Arthur  
P.O. Box-8131

**From:** Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs  
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees  
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

**Date:** December 4, 2007

**Subject:** Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H08100**, and titled "**The Effects of Principal Beliefs and Behaviors on Teacher Commitment**", it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

*Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.*

**This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter.** If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



N. Scott Pierce  
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX E  
LWS LETTER OF AGREEMENT



Human Synergistics, Inc.  
 39819 Plymouth Road C8020  
 Plymouth, Michigan 48170-8020  
 Phone: 800.622.7584 734.459.1030  
 Fax: 734.459.5557  
 Email: info@humansynergistics.com  
 Web: www.humansynergistics.com

**Letter of Agreement for Researchers**  
**Acumen Leadership WorkStyles™ (Web Version)**

Susan McGlohon  
 35 Deerfield Street  
 Arnoldsville, GA 30619

January 22, 2008

Dear Ms. McGlohon:

Your proposal, "The Effects of Principal Work Styles and Behaviors on Teacher Commitment" has been reviewed by Human Synergistics and I am pleased to inform you that permission is granted for the use of the *Acumen Leadership WorkStyles (LWS)* in your research.

Human Synergistics will provide you with up to 3 *LWS* Feedback Report Web Assessment Packages for use in your research for \$120.00 per package. Under this agreement, Human Synergistics is not responsible for any other activities or costs associated with this project (e.g., for data collection or analysis) or for providing technical advice on statistical analyses or the results obtained. Other reporting options will be at regular price (to be determined as needed).

In exchange for the research discount we are extending, you agree to the conditions outlined in the *LWS* "Research Applications" document and summarized below:

- (1) You will provide Human Synergistics with electronic copies or two hard copies of all working papers, presentations, reports to sponsors, dissertations, and manuscripts to be submitted for publication which present *LWS* results or otherwise incorporate *LWS* materials;
- (2) Human Synergistics has your permission to add the *LWS* data you provide to its confidential data base which is used for testing and updating the norms, reliability, and validity of the inventory.
- (3) Researchers may not reproduce any of the *LWS* items in their manuscripts or in any typewritten, typeset, computerized, or translated survey;

UNITED STATES  
 CHICAGO  
 DETROIT  
 SAN FRANCISCO

AUSTRALIA

BELGIUM

BRITISH ISLES

CANADA

FINLAND

GERMANY

JAPAN

NETHERLANDS

NEW ZEALAND

ROMANIA

SOUTH KOREA



McGlohon – Page 2

(4) The following citation must be included in your manuscript where the *LWS* circumplex is displayed: Copyright 2007 by Human Synergetics International. Reproduced by permission;

(5) The following citation must be included in your manuscript where the *LWS* style descriptions are discussed or reproduced: From *Leadership WorkStyles Workbook and Report*, 2007, Plymouth, MI: Human Synergetics. Copyright 2007 by Human Synergetics International and Acumen International. Used by permission; and

(6) More generally, you will use the *LWS*, conduct your research and report your results in a manner that is consistent with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001) and that respects and protects Human Synergetics' copyrights, trademarks, and proprietary data and materials.

If the terms outlined in this letter are agreeable to you, please sign where indicated below, retain a copy for your files, and return the original to me.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl A. Boglarsky, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheryl A. Boglarsky, Ph.D.  
Director of Research