THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS OF AVERAGE NEEDS/RESOURCE CAPACITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN NEW YORK STATE

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THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS OF AVERAGE NEEDS/RESOURCE CAPACITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN NEW YORK STATE

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Dedication

To my children, Denver and Oslo, as you lifted me up with your simple words of "I love you, Mommy" each and every day. Although you may not remember this time, I would never have completed this work without the constant phrase from little mouths that "your book will be the best."

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To my Cohort, Cohort IX: You have taught me the true meaning of collaborative leadership and friendship: Do the work.

Abstract

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The Sage Colleges, 2017

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Due in part to higher demands for educational accountability at both the Federal and state levels, the role of the school principal has come to the forefront. Previous literature has considered the indirect ways in which school principals affect student achievement. Of particular interest has been the implementation of instructional leadership by school principals. This study advances the literature around the perception of school leader evaluation through the lens of instructional leadership. Through a quantitative survey, sent to both elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers of average needs resource capacity school districts, the perceptions regarding instructional leadership and specific practices were illuminated as outlined by the Marzano, Carbaugh, and Toth (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model.* Although the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* contains five primary domains, the one focused on within this work is the Domain 2, "Continuous Improvement of Instruction." Using data from the quantitative surveys, three separate research questions were analyzed. The

first two research questions included the self-reported degree of adherence to the practices by elementary principals, as well as elementary teachers' perceptions of their principals' actions in relation to Domain 2 of Marzano et al.'s (2015) model. The third research question sought to consider whether a relationship existed between elementary principal adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015) and student achievement outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5 New York State English Language Arts assessment.

The findings illustrate that elementary principals and grade 3 through 5 teachers of average needs and resource capacity school districts perceive that, to varying levels of adherence, they are observing the 25 instructional practices found within Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*. However, contrary to expectations, there was no relationship between elementary principal adherence to the practices found within domain two (Marzano et al., 2015) and student achievement outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5 New York State English Language Arts assessment, excluding one instructional practice.

A re-thinking of use of the model in connection with state and Federal policies related to accountability and principal evaluations at the local level are discussed. Recommendations for practice and use in school districts for elementary principals is also provided.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership; School Leadership Evaluation Model; principal leadership, instructional practice

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements iv

Dedication v

Abstract vi

Table of Contents viii

List of Tables xi

List of Figures xiii

Chapter One: Introduction 1

- Background of the Problem 1
- Purpose of the Study 3
- Research Questions 4
- Significance of the Study 4
- Conceptual Framework 5
- Definition of Terms 6
- Limitations 7
- Delimitations 8
- Assumptions 9
- Summary 9

Chapter Two: Literature Review 10

- Introduction 10
- Accountability 11
- Instructional Leadership and Student Achievement 14
- Summary 32

Chapter Three: Methodology 34

- Introduction 34
- Research Questions 35
- Researcher Bias 41
- Summary 44

Chapter Four: Findings 46

- Introduction 46
- Organization of Survey 47
- Profile of the Sample 47
- Research Question One 57
- Research Question Two 63
- Research Question Three 68

Chapter Five: Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations 72

- Purpose of the Study 72
- Summary of Findings- Demographics 73
- Summary of findings and discussion 74
- Research Question One 74

Research Question Two **75**
Research Question Three **77**
Conclusions **78**
Recommendations for Policy **81**
Recommendations for Practice **84**
Considerations for Further Study **88**
Summary **89**

References **91**

Appendices **99**
Appendix I **99**
Appendix II **105**
Appendix III **112**
Appendix IV **114**
Appendix V **119**

List of Tables

Table 4.1. *Principal respondents by overall experience* 60

Table 4.2. *Time in current role by principal respondent* 61

Table 4.3. *School enrollment by principal respondents* 61

Table 4.4. *Percentage of free and reduced lunch by principal respondents* 62

Table 4.5. *Percentage of special education classification rate by principal respondents* 63

Table 4.6 *Percentage of English Language Learners by principal respondents* 63

Table 4.7. *Proficiency on NYS ELA Exam 2015-2016 by principal respondents* 64

Table 4.8. *Overall experience of teacher respondents* 65

Table 4.9. *Time in current role by teacher respondents* 65

Table 4.10. *School enrollment by teacher respondents* 66

Table 4.11. *Percentage free and reduced lunch by teacher respondents* 66

Table 4.12. *Percentage of special education classification rate by teacher respondents* 67

Table 4.13. *Percentage of English Language Learners by teacher respondents* 67

Table 4.14. *Proficiency on NYS ELA Exam 2015-2016 by teacher respondents of rates* 68

Table 4.15. *Element 1: The school leader provides a clear vision as to how instruction should be provided in the school* 70

Table 4.16. *Element 2: The school leader effectively supports and retains teachers who continuously enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans* 71

Table 4.17. *Element 3: The school leader is aware of predominant instructional practices throughout the school* 71

Table 4.18. *Element 4: The school leader ensures that teachers are*

provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses, which are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data 73

Table 4.19. *Element 5: The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals* 74

Table 4.20. *Element 1: The school leader provides a clear vision as to how instruction should be provided in the school* 75

Table 4.21. *Element 2: The school leader effectively supports and retains teachers who continuously enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans* 76

Table 4.22. *Element 3: The school leader is aware of predominant instructional practices throughout the school* 77

Table 4.23. *Element 4: The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses, which are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data* 79

Table 4.24. *Element Five: The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goal.* 80

Table 4.25. *Relationship Between principal Adherence to Element 4 of Marzano's (2015) Domain 2 and Student Achievement Scores on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam* 82

List of Figures

Figure 1. Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* 15

Figure 2. Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) Hallinger and Murphy (1987) 31

Figure 3. Dimension One of PIMRS and Cotton ‘s (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices 33

Figure 4. Dimension Two of PIMRS and Cotton’s (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices 33

Figure 5. Dimension Three of PIMRS and Cotton’s (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices 34

Figure 6. Organization and Comparison of Marzano et al. (2005); Dimension One of PIMRS and Cotton’s (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices 35

Figure 7. Organization and Comparison of Marzano et al.’s (2005) Instructional Practices and Dimension Three of PIMRS, and Cotton’s (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices 36

Figure 8. Survey Questions connected to Elements of Domain 2 37

Figure 9. *School Leadership Evaluation Model* (Marzano et al., 2015) 37

Figure 10. The Five Elements of Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School LeadershipEvaluation Model* 51

Figure 11. Survey Questions connected to Elements of Domain 2 52

Figure 12. Marzano et al. (2015) Continuous Improvement with Deliberate Practice and Intentional Planning 100

Chapter One: Introduction

Background of the Problem

The days of the school principal acting as a building manager are long gone. The teacher in the classroom is not the only one being held responsible for student achievement. Mounting high stakes accountability demands born through Federal and state mandates have created a sense of urgency in evaluating and developing effective educational leaders that positively impact student achievement (Pepper, 2010). In response to this urgency, instructional leadership theory has emerged as one of the more salient conceptualizations of effective school leadership (Hallinger, 2008). In particular, the literature is replete with the ways in which the school principal's beliefs and adherence to specific models of instructional leadership correlate to student achievement (Hopkins 2006; Johnson, 2007).

The concept of instructional leadership is not a recent one. There is a plethora of literature that analyzes the many proposed models of instructional leadership. One of the first, the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* (PIMRS) created by Hallinger (1982), considers three primary aspects of principal leadership behaviors with ten underlying actions focused on the support of classroom instruction. Cotton (2003), through a large-scale meta-analysis**,** considered 25 leadership characteristics essential to effective instructional leadership. Building off of Cotton's (2003) work**,** as well as other large-scale research studies, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) narrowed the list of leadership characteristics to 21 leadership responsibilities. Noting a need for a more contemporary take on evaluating principals as instructional leaders, Marzano, Carbaugh, and Toth (2015) proposed a school leadership evaluation model that encompassed five domains. *The School Leadership Evaluation Model*, as noted in Figure 1 below illustartates those Domains.

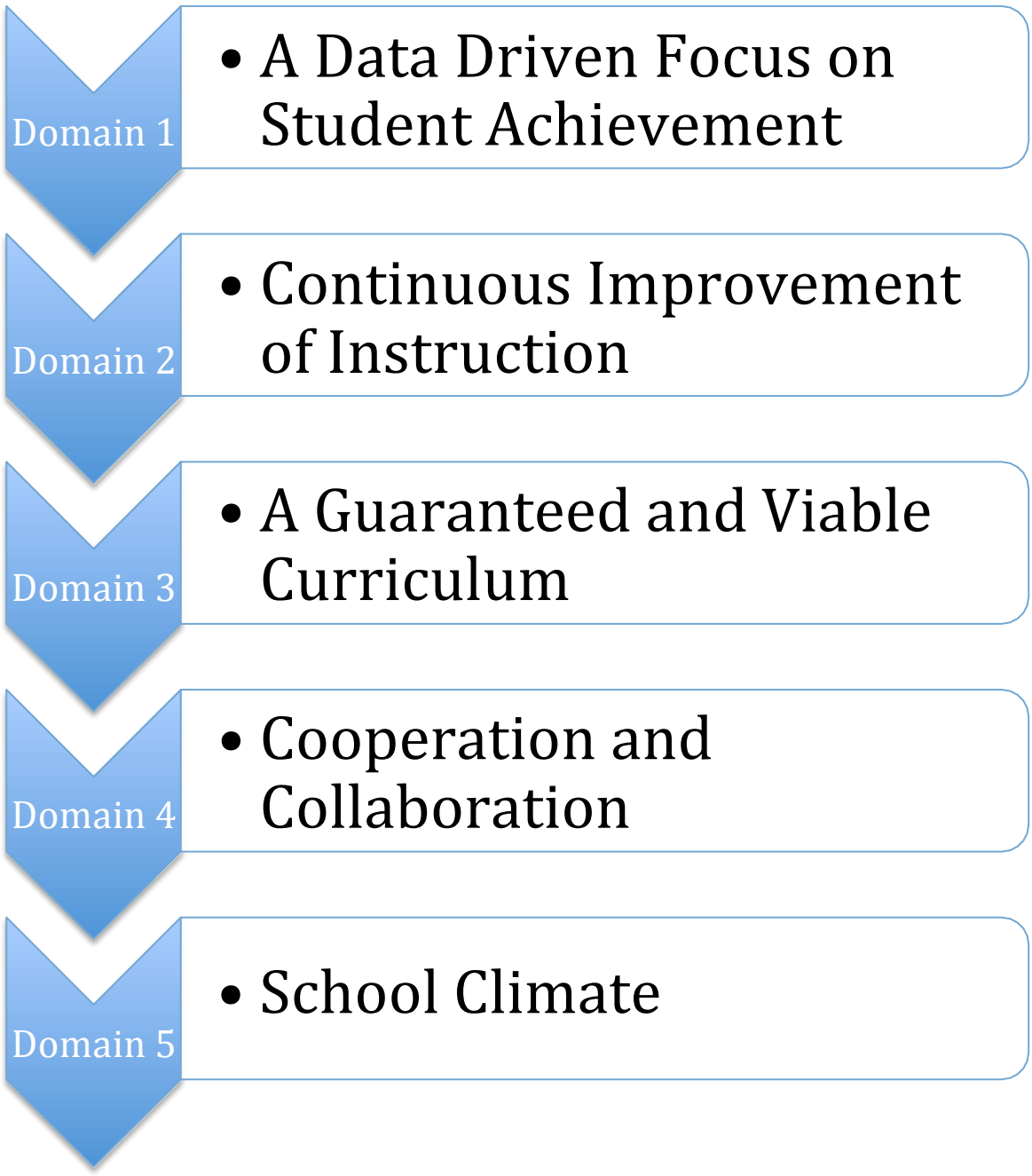

Figure 1. Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*

Although the foundation of the entire model is rooted in instructional leadership, Domain 2 targets those behaviors that appear throughout the literature and are specifically focused on instructional leadership. Current research exists around the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leader Evaluation Model* (and its relation to effective school leaders); however, less research has exclusively explored the Continuous Improvement of Instruction, henceforth referred to as

Domain 2**,** and its relation to teacher perception and instructional impact on student achievement. Domain 2 has not been studied in reference to New York State elementary principals, leaving a gap in terms of the analysis of the perceptions of elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers in New York State, and the possible relationship to student achievement. This research explores the perception of Domain 2 by New York State elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers. Two surveys were utilized to take a deeper look at principals' and teachers' perceptions of actions that support or hinder instructional practices. This study further explores the utility of Domain 2, allowing for analysis of the self-perception of principals' adherence to instructional leadership practices as they relate to Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015). The final aspect of the study includes analysis of the self-perception of principals' adherence to instructional leadership practices as they relate to Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015) and possible correlations to student achievement as measured by the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam (2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the relationship between the instructional support practices of elementary principals and student achievement, as well as the perception of classroom teachers in relation to principal instructional leadership practices in grades 3 through 5 in average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State (NYS).

Additionally, this study focuses on Domain 2 of Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model,* the Domain of Continuous Improvement of Instruction (Domain 2). Domain 2 includes the theory that a principal's practices support the development of a school culture that holds teacher instructional methods as one of the most important factors related to student achievement. Narrowing the field to focus on elementary principals in New York State

who self-report on the practices found within Domain 2 allows for further analysis of possible correlations between principal practice and student achievement.

Research Questions

1. What is an elementary principal's self-reported degree of adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?
2. How do elementary teachers perceive the actions of elementary principals with regard to Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?
3. Is there a relationship between elementary principal adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015) and student achievement outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5, New York State English Language Arts assessment?

Significance of the Study

Just as accountability measures have increased the focus on the instructional practices of the teacher, so too have they sharpened the lens on the actions of the school principal. In particular, the literature has explored various methods of evaluating principals as instructional leaders (Cotton, 2003; Hallinger, 2000; Marzano et al., 2005). Previous research has created a foundation for the correlation between the instructional leadership of principals and student achievement (Kahney, 2014). There is a litany of instructional leadership evaluative models that have been addressed in the literature (Cotton, 2003; Hallinger, 2000) however, the most contemporary of them, the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* is less well examined due to its recent developments. Within the research that has considered this model, the focus has been on the model as a whole (Kahney, 2014). Of particular note is that some of this previous literature connects only specific domains of the Marzano model to student achievement (Kahney, 2014). There is a gap in the individual examination of those domains that have previously been correlated to student achievement. According to Marzano et al. (2015),

"the test of any school leader's effectiveness is his or her ability to create a climate of continuous improvement" (p. xviii). This statement explores the concept of continuous improvement in instructional leadership and lends itself to the importance of exploring Domain 2.

Leaders working in the field of education continue to explore the practices of instructional leadership and are often on the receiving end of a myriad of evaluations, as dictated by their local educational agencies. Beneficiaries of this study could include educational policy leaders, school districts, boards of education, and building leaders. The results of this research can be utilized to shape both policy on principal evaluations and how best to implement the practices of instructional leadership as outlined by Marzano et al. (2015). Principals can also learn to focus on how to implement the practices found within Domain 2 at the building level. Similarly, this research also has implications for principal supervisors at the systems level. It also has particular relevance for program directors and faculty of higher education institutions and secondary administrative certification programs, as this study could inform larger institutional administrative preparation programs.

Conceptual Framework

"Today, improving school leadership ranks high on the list of priorities for school reform" (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 4). In the search for effective school leadership, instructional leadership theory has emerged and evolved over the last three decades. According to Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 5). Effective school leadership lends itself to the idea that as principals become effective instructional leaders, teacher capacity and thus student achievement is also increased (Marzano et al., 2015). Hallinger (2005) posits that there is an explicit expectation principals will

function as instructional leaders. The pressing question is which prescriptive behaviors yield strong instructional leadership.

Cotton (2003) asserts "principals who are knowledgeable about and actively involved with their schools' instructional program have higher achieving students than principals who only manage the non-instructional aspects of their schools" (p. 25). This thought embodies the ideal that student learning should be at the heart of every decision made by those in school leadership positions (Cotton, 2003).

As a theory, instructional leadership has been presented in a multitude of different models of behaviors. No matter the model, the framework for instructional leadership includes directly influencing teacher pedagogical practice and effecting student outcomes. In order to examine the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* specifically with regard to Domain 2, this study utilizes quantitative methods to survey elementary principals as well as third through fifth grade teachers, allowing for both principal and teacher perceptions of instructional leader to be examined. It also explores possible correlations between the self-reported instructional leadership practices of New York State elementary principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts and student achievement.

Definition of Terms

Instructional Leadership is defined as "the shared work and commitments that provide direction for instructional improvement, and that engage the efforts and energy of teachers and others in pursuit of powerful, equitable interactions among teachers, learners, and content, in response to environmental demands" (Knapp, Honig, Pleci, Portin, & Copland, 2014, p. 30).

Continuous Improvement of Instruction, Domain 2 consists of the actions and behaviors that help ensure that the school leader, as well as individual teachers, perceives teacher pedagogical skill as one of the most powerful instruments in enhancing student learning and is

committed to enhancing those pedagogical skills on a continuous basis. Five specific categories of school administrator actions and behaviors constitute this domain (Marzano et al., 2015).

Limitations

A total of 580 elementary principals and 4,877 third through fifth grade teachers in New York State were canvassed, but lack of responses resulted in a low response rate, which was thus a limitation. A mixed modality approach was utilized to address response rate by sending personal letters to superintendents and subsequent emails to both elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers. Despite these steps, the overall response rate of elementary principals was approximately 24%. The response rate (5%) for third through fifth grade elementary teachers was even lower with only 246 teachers taking the survey (out of 4, 877 possible). The low response rate could be due to the fact that educators are often asked questions by researchers seeking to elicit their views on topics in education, and so they may be reluctant to participate, thereby reducing overall participation. It is also possible that the emailed survey went into the recipients' junk email folders, or that the school district had email firewalls up that blocked the email.

Despite the low response rate, the sample of elementary principal respondents mirrors the overall population of elementary principals in New York State. This can be seen within the demographic responses given by elementary principal respondents. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), elementary principals on average have approximately five or more years of experience in their position as an elementary principal, which is true of the sample of principal respondents (25.5%; 1-5 years of overall experience). Drawing the comparison to New York State elementary principals, the sample of principal respondents also worked in schools with enrollment similar to that of the average sized elementary school in New York State, had similar percentages of English Language Learners, and similar proficiency rates on the New York State

English Language Arts (ELA) Exam (2015), all of which indicate that the principals in this study represent the population of average needs/resource capacity schools in which New York State elementary principals work (NCES, 2017).

The sample of third through fifth grade teacher respondents also answered demographic questions in such a way as to closely align with the general population of average needs/resource capacity school districts that teach third to fifth grade in New York State. Teacher respondents reported similar percentages of English Language Learners, similar proficiency rates on the New York State English Language (ELA) Exam (2015), and similar enrollment as the average sized elementary school found within average needs/resource capacity school districts.

Delimitations

Specific delimitations set for this study include the fact that all data was collected through quantitative means. Surveys were emailed to elementary school principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State. Surveys were also emailed to the corresponding third through fifth grade elementary teachers who teach in those average needs/resource capacity school districts. This limited the generalizations to elementary schools of average needs/resource capacity within the state of New York.

Within the construct of average needs/resource capacity school districts, only those elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers whose emails were publicly available on their schools' websites were sent the survey. This limited the sample to an extent as it excluded those districts whose faculty emails were not available. In addition, the survey itself was confidential, but not anonymous, which may have reduced response rate.

Excluding high and low needs/resource capacity school districts, as well as New York City, Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, Yonkers and Utica school districts in New York State, kept variables such as free and reduced lunch, size of districts, and other such variables out of the

purview of the study so as to make results more generalizable to schools found in New York State.

Assumptions

The first assumption is that the all respondents took the survey themselves. In addition, it was assumed that both class of respondents understood the questions and answered as truthfully as possible. The third and final assumption is that school district websites are up to date and they accurately reflect staffing assignments and current email addresses.

Summary

According to DeArmas (2015), "elementary school principals have the responsibility to efficiently understand and support the implementation of direct instruction in order to support teachers with their daily classroom instruction" (p. 35). This, paired with the claim that principals are second only to classroom instruction in terms of positive student achievement, is the impetus for this particular study focusing on the practices of elementary principals (Leithwood et al., 2004).

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter One has provided both an overview and background information on accountability, instructional leadership, and student achievement. A thorough literature review of relevant studies is contained within Chapter Two. Chapter Three describes the blueprint of quantitative methodologies used to gather and analyze the data, and Chapter Four provides results that correspond to the research questions posed. Chapter Five summarizes and provides for discovery and recommendations.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter begins with the review of literature surrounding Federal and state accountability measures. The literature review first considers the external forces that influence the instructional leadership practices of principals. The second section includes a discussion of the literature surrounding principal leadership practice, with a specific focus on instructional leadership. Conclusions found within the literature regarding principal and teacher perception of instructional leadership and relation to student achievement can be found at the end of Chapter Two.

From large-scale education mandates to district level reform, the question of how accountability has shaped educational leadership is an important one. Both in historical and contemporary contexts, educational accountability has focused the conversation on responsibilities and practices of school leaders and how best to affect student achievement (Elmore, 2005). Accountability pressures, both internal and external, drive educational leaders to search for the leadership practices that will maximize student learning (Fullan, Rincan-Gallard, & Hargreaves, 2015; Lyons & Algozzine, 2006).

External reform measures have pressured school districts to focus on their own internal leaders. Of particular interest are the leadership practices of the school principal. Beginning with a look at generalized leadership characteristics and standards for principals, there emerges a logical connection to the more specific educational leadership frameworks that have developed over time. From the early work of Hallinger's (1982) Principal's Instructional Management Scale (PIMRS) to the five educational leadership domains of Marzano et al. (2013, 2015), there is an argument made that instructional leadership practices lead to better student achievement

(Cotton, 2003; Marzano Research Laboratories, 2011; Schindler, 2012). A comparison across educational leadership frameworks supports the claim that principals who lead successfully do so because of specific instructional leadership methods.

While these frameworks have provided descriptive evidence of instructional leadership practices, they have focused primarily on how the leader self-assesses or is assessed by his or her supervisor. To a degree, previous literature has left teacher perception of principal instructional leadership practices out of the equation. In order to explore the leadership link to learning, the consideration of the perception of the classroom practices of teachers should also be examined (Leithwood et al, 2011).

Accountability

Prior to the 1960's, Federal mandates dictating accountability in education were scarce (Vinovskis, 2009). Each state was left to address accountability individually. It was not until the establishment of the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESEA) in 1965, along with Federal money (Title I), policy makers "turned increasingly to student testing and accountability to improve American Education" (Vinovski, 2009, p. 218).

Vinovskis (2009) takes a historical perspective of Federal education reforms and the impact that these accountability demands have had on local educational agencies. Taking this longitudinal view of the fundamentals of the ESEA, Vinovskis (2009) previews the actions required in meeting the demands of contemporary school reform. His work predicted that connecting standardized assessment results to teachers and leaders would become the norm of measuring educational agency success. In sum, Vinovskis (2009) built on the discussion of how large-scale accountability influences have driven how educators measure student achievement and who, ultimately, is responsible for those results.

Elmore (2005) also describes how educational reform has shaped the ways in which the roles and responsibilities of educators are viewed. Although accountability is not a new concept to educational leaders, Elmore reaffirms the argument that "all schools operate with implicit or explicit action theories that determine to whom, for what, and how they are accountable" (p. 135). Through an exploration of the fundamentals of accountable leadership – what it is, and how it influences practice – Elmore (2005) posits that increasing demands for the improvement of schools has created a forced evolution of the leadership roles in education. Ultimately, Elmore's (2005) assertion is that, although debates may continue with regard to how to implement school reform, school leaders will remain at the forefront of reform. His essential conclusion is that educational mandates lead the call for measurable and ultimately more effective principal practices (Elmore, 2005).

The question of the direct impact that Federal and large-scale reforms have had on the roles and responsibilities of school principals is a recurring theme addressed throughout the literature. A number of researchers contend that due to Federal reforms, state mandates further impact the specific ways in which principals operate their schools (Fullan et al., 2015; Lyons & Algozzine, 2006). Contemporary need for school reform places school leadership at the top of the list of priorities for schools (Wahlstrom, Seashore Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010).

Gonzalez and Firestone (2013) note a variety of ways in which internal and external reform pressures push school principals, in particular, to focus on their leadership practices. Considering a variety of accountability sources, they conclude that while large-scale external pressures, including mandated evaluations, are important to principals, an internal sense of moral responsibility to students and learning is at the core of their practice (Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013). This particular research notes that there was a difference in responses between principals of high and low achieving schools. Gonzalez and Firestone (2013) argue that while principals of

high achieving schools felt more internal pressure to perform, principals of lower achieving schools felt a heightened sense of external pressures. Regardless of whether the pressures are internal or external, the conclusion is that it is possible to have an understanding of principal practice "from the inside out by examining principals' values and commitments," (Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013, p. 400). The authors' call for continued research to determine the means through which principals address both internal and external pressures in both high and low achieving schools.

Lyons and Algozzine (2006) also assert that accountability measures influence principal practices. They argue that one of the essential roles of principals is that of the leader in accountability practices. One of the key elements within this work is quantifying responsibilities that relate to instructional leadership. Lyons and Algozzine report that, along with aligning curriculum to assessment, there has been an increased focus on principals making decisions related to student data and being aware of the importance of instructional practices (Lyons & Algozzine, 2006). The authors further claim that faculty also have roles in instructional leadership, suggesting that "the focus of the latest grand drive for making schools better is correctly placed: teachers and teaching (and all its accoutrements) are at the core of improved student achievement" (Lyons & Algozzine, 2006, p. 11).

When external accountability measures align with a principal's internal view of education, a positive impact will be hand on their practice (Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012). Taking a look at what specific practices are enhanced by both internal and external pressure, Seashore Louis and Robinson (2012) claim that a principal's ability to "internalize the external accountability policies articulated by both their state and district" supports the implementation of better policies and practices within the school (p. 660). As the age of accountability drivesschool

reforms, it is of utmost importance to ascertain which leadership characteristics will lead to student achievement (Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012).

Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, and Hargreaves (2015) further support the idea that accountability influences leadership practice. Fullan et al. (2015) argue "constantly improving and refining instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks is perhaps the single most important responsibility of the teaching profession and educational systems as a whole" (p. 4). Fullan et al. (2015) state that they "recast the role of principal as 'lead leader' who participates with teachers in moving school forward – school leadership practice that has the highest impact on student outcomes" (p. 14). They find that conversation may begin with accountability; however**,** the real work begins with leadership being introduced into practice.

In summary, the literature suggests that large-scale accountability mandates, as well as internal needs, impact and bring forth conversations on the role of school leaders, in particular the school principal. Both external and internal accountability pressures force both school leaders and those supervising them to consider their responsibilities and practices in relation to student achievement. As a means of answering that consideration, it is helpful to narrow the focus on the theories of leadership. Leadership itself is a broad topic that includes a range of leadership approaches. Of particular interest is the theory of instructional leadership.

Instructional Leadership and Student Achievement

As accountability pressures have mounted and the focus has turned to the topic of effective leadership, the concept of the instructional capacity of principals has come to the forefront (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Taking a more direct stance, Smith and Andrews (1989) place "the direct responsibility for improving instruction and learning in the hands of the school principal" (p. 9). The school principal, it can be argued, is one of the consistent symbols of school leadership and is accountable for all school results (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). How much

that symbolism reflects the importance of the principal's role can be found in the expanse of literature that claims that the leadership practices of principals correlate to positive student achievement (Nason, 2011; Wahlstrom, Seashore Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, (2010); The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Spanning the years 1980-1995, a summary of literature acknowledges the increased interest and general consensus of the importance of principals' affect on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). This earlier work has led to the contemporary discourse on the degree of impact principal leadership has on student achievement. Utilizing meta-analysis as a means of investigating the predominant literature surrounding the relationships among principal leadership and learning, Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) have gone so far as to claim that principal leadership is second only to classroom instruction in terms of impacting student achievement.

In relation to the above claim, consideration should be given to the aspects of leadership practices that correlate to positive student achievement. Historically, principals have been seen as budget balancers, disciplinarians, cafeteria managers, and transportation facilitators (Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000). Today, they are expected to manage all of these operations as well as setting a vision, assessing academic programs, evaluating and leading teachers and progress monitoring student results (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006). Cross and Rice (2000) further this claim, suggesting that "where schools are successful, one will find a principal who places academics first and who knows how to motivate staff and teachers" (p. 62).

Arguments can be made that in order for principals to truly impact student achievement, a vision of academic success with a high level of commitment from school leaders is a necessity (Cross & Rice, 2000). In addition, high expectations of student progress, trust and effective

communication, as well as the ability to engage in collaborative relationships with faculty and families**,** must be practiced in order for positive affects to take hold (Cross & Rice, 2000). All of these practices, as outlined, lend themselves to the concept of instructional leadership.

There are many theories on what constitutes instructional leadership. Considering instructional leadership from a more macro-level viewpoint, Usdan et al. (2000) propose that today's principals must have a firm grasp on instruction and content**,** collaborate with teachers and the community, utilize data as a means of furthering student interventions, and provide the shared vision for continued student achievement. They report that all practices "must be in service of student learning" in order to have any impact on student achievement (Usdan et al., 2000, p. 4).

Supporting the work of Usdan et al. (2000), Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2006) introduce seven general leadership behaviors relating to instructional leadership. Not only do they reassert previous claims that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction, they also consider the idea that school leaders are successful because they employ the practices of supporting teachers by responding to their beliefs, values, motivations, and skills**,** as well as exhibiting an awareness of the environment in which they find themselves (Leithwood et al., 2006). This earlier work on instructional leadership tends to generalize behaviors and beliefs versus pinpointing specific practices. Despite this, there are recurring themes such as communication and collaboration with faculty that start as generalizations or suggested practices and reappear later in the literature as non-negotiable.

Shifting the conversation from generalizable instructional leadership beliefs to that of expected standards allows for a more uniform view of how instructional leadership becomes operationalized in practice. One common set of standards for educational leaders can be found in the work of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 2008) through the Interstate

School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. The original ISLLC standards were meant to communicate effective leadership practices in a more formal manner, eliciting a sense of urgency among leaders and supporting more productive outcomes for students (CCSSO, 2008). At the onset, "the performance expectations and indicators exemplify fundamental assumptions, values, and beliefs about what is expected of current education leaders" which focus all questions on the central question, that of student learning (CCSSO, 2008, p. 6). Again**,** collaboration and communication with all stakeholders were fundamental expectations, as were high expectations for academic rigor and success, data driven evaluations and decision making**,** and clearly outlined expectations of leadership standards (CCSSO, 2008). Now more than ever, for learning to happen, educational leaders must pursue all realms of their work with an unwavering attention to students. They must approach every teacher evaluation, every interaction with the central office, every analysis of data with one question always in mind: How will this help our students excel as learners? (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 3). Actively seeking to acknowledge that the role of school leader has changed over time, the standards that originated in 1996 were subsequently updated in 2008 and then updated again in 2015. The most recent addition enhanced and released six new standards that reflect the global changes in economy, the unknown and evolving landscape of the 21st century job market, as well as community and family structures (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

Beginning with a set of standards paves the way to the consideration of more specific frameworks related to instructional leadership. Amongst the literature there emerges several different models for effective leadership, all which include instructional leadership as a priority (Cotton, 2003; Hallinger, 2005; Marzano et al., 2005). Included within these works is the theme

that instructional leadership is really part of a whole, or many practices found within a framework.

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) introduce one of the most utilized instructional leadership models, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). Hallinger (2005) examines and attempts to redefine the role of instructional leader by laying out ten instructional practices related to effective school leadership by principals. Hallinger (2005) warns that viewing principals only as instructional supervisors is short sighted. Instead, widening the lens to include defining a school mission and creating a positive school culture supports the idea that principals have the most impact on student achievement (Hallinger, 2005).

The PIMRS includes three dimensions: Defining the School's Mission, Managing the Instructional Program**,** and Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Each dimension is further broken down into specific functions, equaling 10 instructional leadership behaviors (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2***.** Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), Hallinger and Murphy (1985)

One of the more salient findings within the PIMRS is the theory that the first dimension, or defining the school's mission**,** "is the starting point for creating a learner-centered school" (Hallinger, 2008, p. 7). The language found within the third dimension, promoting a positive school-learning climate, introduces the concept of "a culture of continuous improvement" (Hallinger, 2008. p.7). This turn of phrase will be revisited in subsequent models. It is also worth noting that the PIMRS does not "measure the *quality* of principal instructional leadership" (Hallinger, 2008, p. 9). However, it does allow for patterns to emerge amongst instructional leadership practices that can ultimately be utilized to guide goal-setting and principal evaluations (Hallinger, 2008). It also offers the opportunity for different stakeholders to weigh-in on the instructional leadership capacity of principals**,** opening a discussion about faculty perceptions and their possible impact.

Although one of the earlier models on instructional leadership, the PIMRS is not the only framework through which to view instructional leadership. Utilizing a narrative, meta-analysis methodology to approach the topic of effective principal leadership, Cotton (2003) writes that effective leaders are "much more than a mere collection of behaviors" (p. 8). Within this work, Cotton (2003) frames instructional leadership practices. Perhaps one of the most important aspects of Cotton's (2003) work includes the notion that almost all of the leadership behaviors fall under the heading of instructional leadership. Both Cotton (2003) and PIMRS (Hallinger, 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) focus on the importance of instructional leadership. Consider the following charts in which alignment can be found between each of Cotton's 25 behaviors and the dimensions of the PIMRS (Figures 3-5).

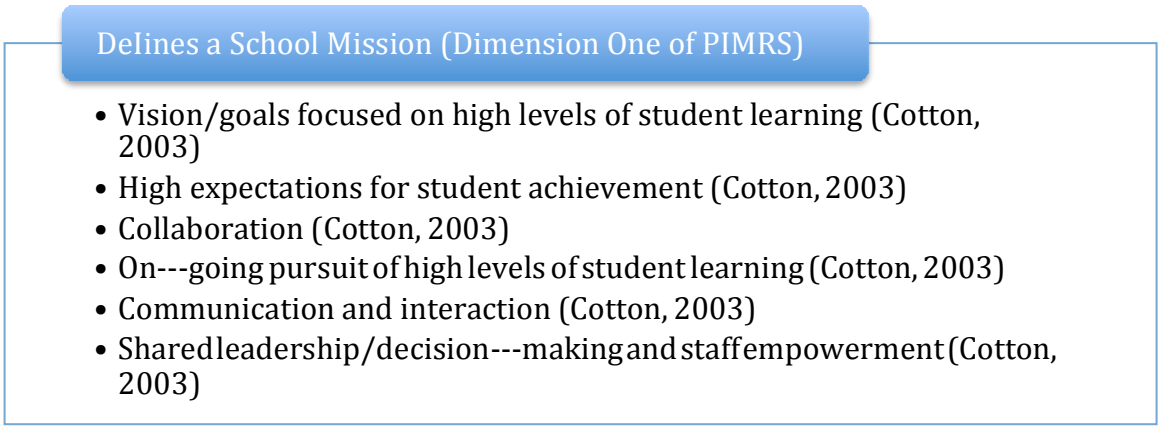

Figure 3. Dimension One of PIMRS (1985) and Cotton 's (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices

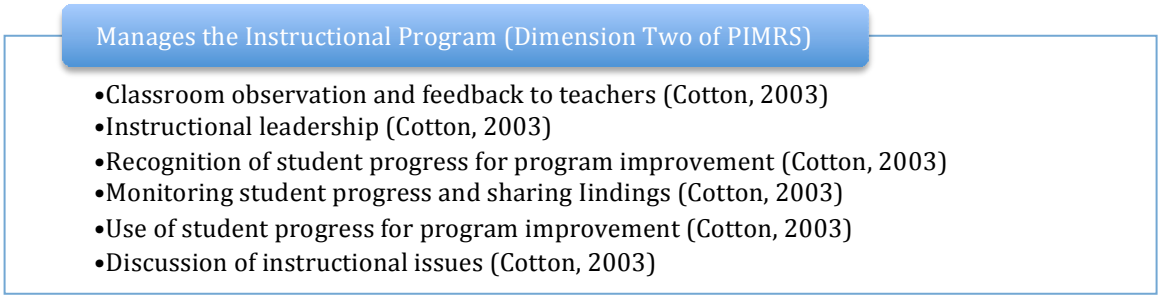

Figure 4. Dimension Two of PIMRS (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and Cotton's (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices

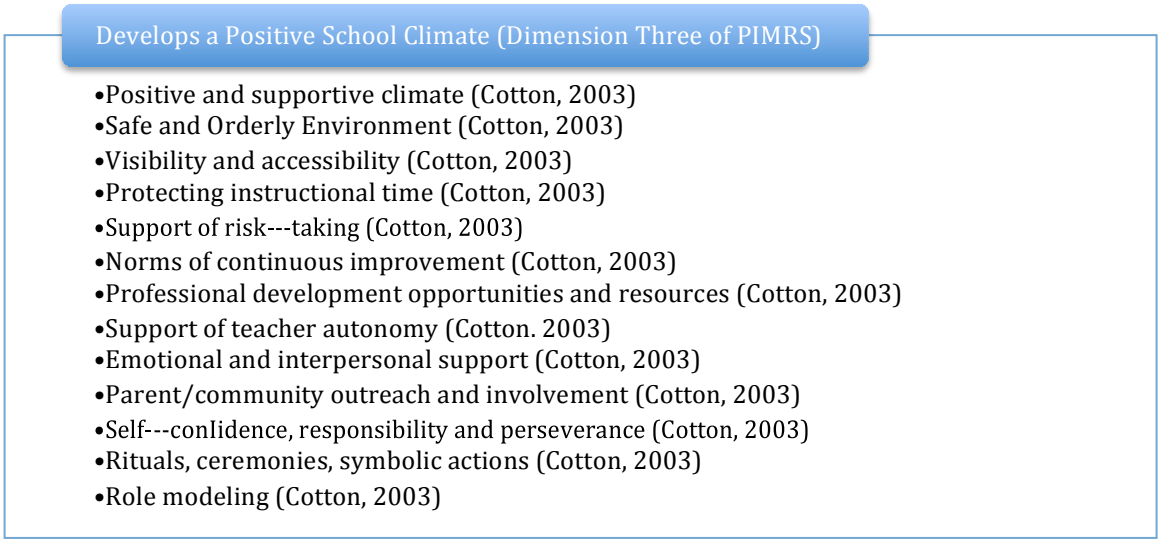

Figure 5. Dimension Three of PIMRS (1985) and Cotton's (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices

Recurring themes in the two leadership models include the importance of continuous feedback and reflection on instruction**,** support of teacher's pedagogical skills**,** utilizing student data for feedback and evaluation, and school principals' knowledge of curriculum and instruction. Considering both school leadership models, there emerges the idea that instructional leadership is an essential component for student achievement. The PIMRS (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985) and Cotton's (2003) framework highlight and specify instructional leadership behaviors in one specific dimension. Combined, the models become more specific in terms of instructional leadership responsibilities and possible correlation to student achievement.

In 2005, building off of Cotton's (2003) work, Marzano et al. (2005) introduced 21 different leadership responsibilities through an extensive meta-analysis of the literature. Here, too, instructional leadership is included as one specific set of responsibilities of effective principal leadership. This particular work mirrors the PIMRS (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and Cotton's (2003) framework in several areas. It becomes apparent that there are mainstay practices that continue across all three models. Further highlighting the second dimension,, Marzano et al. (2005) include the importance of affirmation, communication, change agent, contingent rewards, culture, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideals and beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement in curricular and instruction, knowledge of curricular instruction and assessment, monitoring and evaluating, optimizer, order, outreach, relationships, resources, situational awareness, and visibility. These are all aspects of instructional leadership responsibilities (consider Figure 6 below).

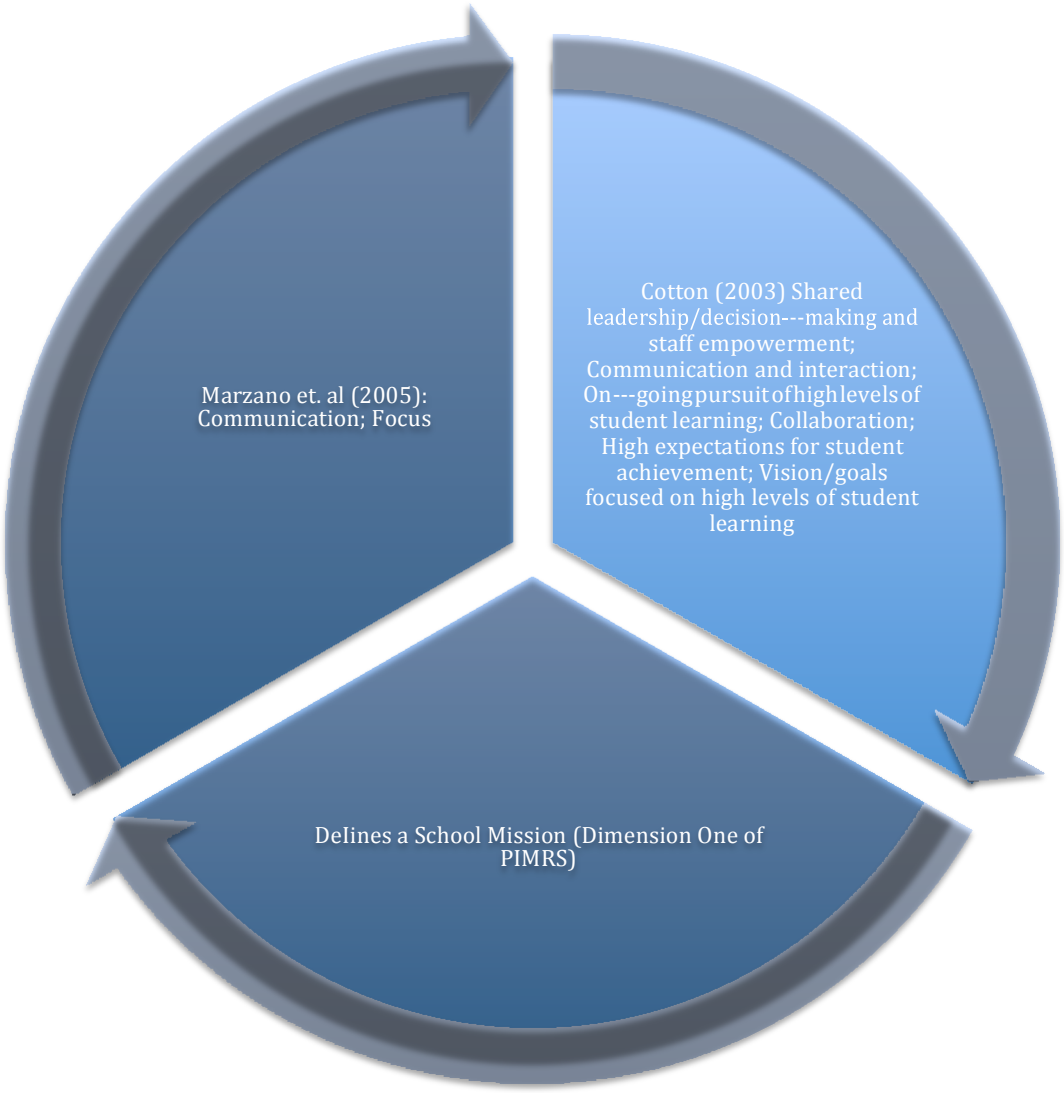

Figure 6. Organization and Comparison of Marzano et al. (2005); Dimension One of PIMRS (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and Cotton's (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices

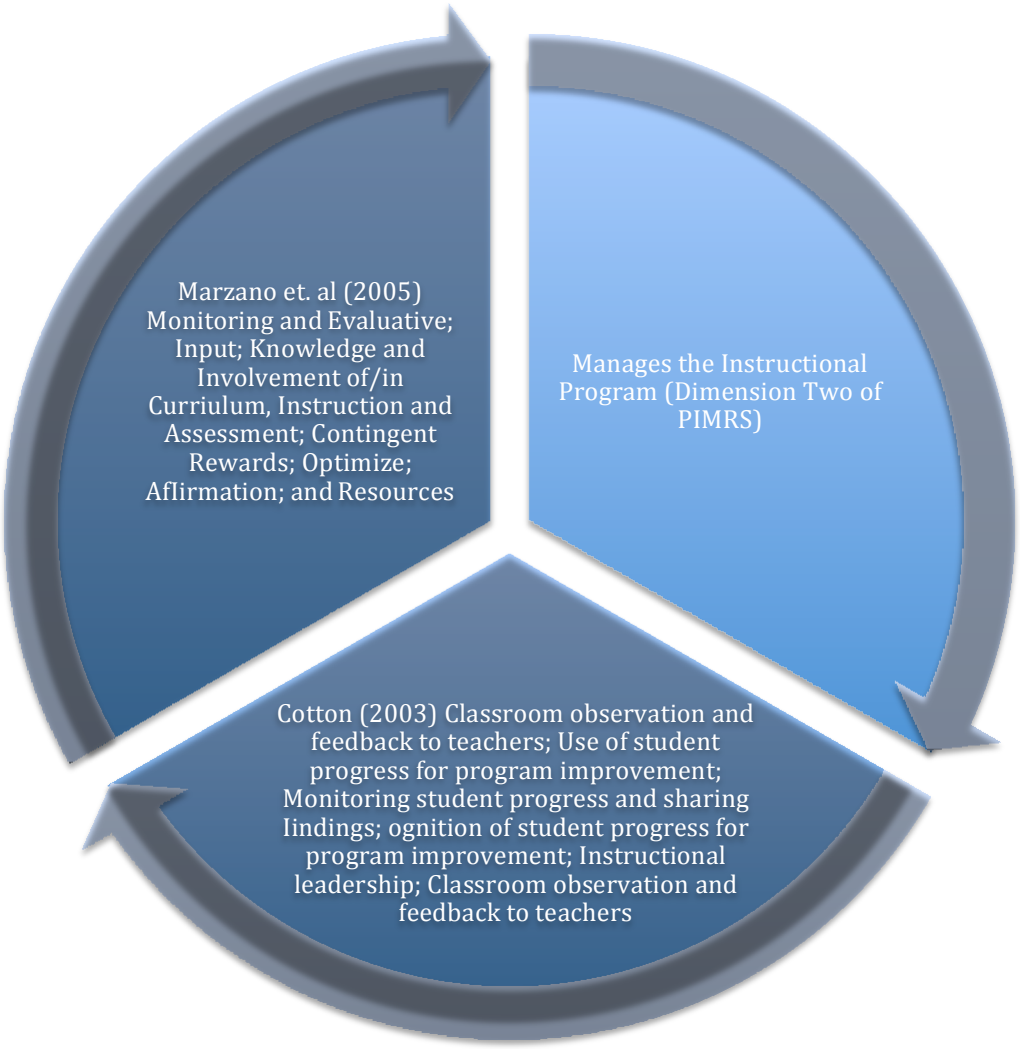

Figure 7. Organization and Comparison of Marzano et al. (2005) Instructional Practices, Dimension Two of PIMRS (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and Cotton (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices

Figure 8. Organization and Comparison of Dimension Three of Marzano et al.'s (2005) Instructional Practices, PIMRS (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and Cotton's (2003) Instructional Leadership Practices

In 2013, Marzano, Carbaugh, and Toth introduced a more thorough conceptual framework for school leader evaluation, drawing from a multi-year study conducted by

Wahlstrom, Seashore- Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, (2010) in conjunction with the Wallace Foundation. They also included work from *What Works in Oklahoma Schools* (Marzano Research Laboratory, 2011), and the previous work of Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2003, 2005) that encompassed the framework of 21 leadership responsibilities. The result was a principal evaluation model with five primary domains, all of which "identify specific leader actions or behaviors correlated with their demonstrable impact on student learning" (Marzano et al., 2015, p. 6). This work was subsequently updated in 2015.

Marzano et al. (2015) claim that their contemporary model has been developed as a means of addressing the gap for implementing lasting, effective instructional leadership. Marzano et al. (2015) argue that the model supports answering the question of "…not only what fosters and constitutes principal effectiveness but also what constitutes best design and implementation of effective principal evaluation systems" (p. 2). The authors contend that the two concepts, principal effectiveness and a subsequent principal evaluation system**,** are interdependent (Marzano et al., 2015).

One of the earliest reviews of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* and its relation to student achievement is found in Kahney (2014). This work explores the correlation between shared leadership practices and student achievement as viewed through the lens of Marzano et al.'s (2015) five domains in the *School Leadership Evaluation Model*. Kahney (2014) claims that not only is there a statistical correlation between student achievement and principal leadership, but, in fact, the aspects of Marzano et al.'s (2015) five domains that address instruction are the only ones which account for variability in student achievement. Specifically, it is posited that Domain 2: Continuous Improvement of Instruction, as well as Domain 4: Cooperation and Collaboration, demonstrate variance while the other domains do not (Kahney, 2014).

Expanding on the claim that the practices found within Domain 2 correlate to student achievement is one of the purposes of this research. The other purposes include continued exploration of elementary principals' self-review of adherence to instructional leadership practices, as well as an inspection of elementary teachers' perceptions of their principal's leadership behaviors as outlined in the construct of Domain 2.

Perception of Instructional Leadership

The literature above reinforces the claim that there are correlations between a principal's instructional leadership practices and student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1985; Marzano et al., 2005). If there is merit to these practices, then it is worthwhile to seek to understand the perception of these practices by teachers and principals alike. "Classroom practices occur within larger organizational systems which can vary enormously in the extent to which they support, reward, and nurture good instruction" (Wahlstrom et al., 2010, p. 77). According to Wahlstrom et al. (2010), principals ignore this fact at their own peril.

Fullan (2006) claims that in order to positively affect student achievement, principals must be the catalyst for developing and sustaining other systematic components over time: It is not enough to simply include instructional practices within the role. Instead, a development of the school culture, including positive relationships with teachers and the right perception of their responsibility as leaders, is required (Fullan, 2006). Principals need to be cognizant of their role in developing the capacity of others through instructional leadership:

> What this means is quite specific: the main mark of a school principal at the end of his or her tenure is not just the impact on the bottom line of student achievement, but also, equally, how many good leaders they leave behind who can go even further (Fullan, 2006, p. 6).

Elmore (2004) extends the idea of the importance of congruence between principal transparency and teacher perceptions one step further. Improving learning for students requires a level of collaborative work that begins with coherence amongst school leaders and teachers regarding instructional practice (Elmore, 2004). One could argue that if a principal is unable to perceive his or her role in the context of instructional leadership and grasp the importance of the teachers' perceptions, then it is less likely that changes will take place in the classroom. When given the task of responding to which instructional leadership responsibilities they subscribe to, a majority of principals list similar responses (Cumming, 2013). Of utmost importance from a principal point of view is "building vision and setting direction, redesigning the organization, developing people, and managing the instructional program" (Cumming, 2013, p. 105)

The literature does explore principals' perception of the 21 leadership responsibilities as outlined by Marzano et al. (2005). In 2012, principals in a Wisconsin school district were asked to rank the importance of these 21 leadership responsibilities and the impact of their leadership choices on student achievement (Webb, 2012). Their "findings indicated culture and communication had the highest mean score for the principal responses followed by ideal/beliefs, visibility, monitors/evaluates, change agent and focus" (Webb, 2012, p. 56). Despite principals indicating within Webb's (2012) work that communication and setting a tone for a school are of utmost importance, the literature seeks to also understand how teachers perceive the responsibilities of principals.

Utilizing quantitative methods, Bedessem-Chandler (2014) explores the perceptions of teachers in elementary through high school in relation to Marzano et al.'s (2005) 21 leadership responsibilities. Bedessem-Chandler (2014) found that relationship, communication, and visibility were among the highest ranked responsibilities by teachers. Of note is that elementary teachers rated involvement in curriculum, assessment, and instruction as being 14th, middle

school teachers rated it as 18th, and high school teachers rated it as 21st out of the 21 responsibilities. All in all, within this work, teachers perceived the importance of instructional leadership as quite low (Beddessem-Chandler, 2014).

Understanding the perception of Marzano et al.'s (2015) model has implications beyond the implementation of instructional leadership practices. As noted, a grasp of teachers' perceptions lends itself to the idea that some instructional leadership practices may impact teachers to a greater degree than others because they feel that they are more important. Blase and Blase (1999) claim that principals must collaborate, communicate, empower, and allow for discourse on instruction with teachers. The essence of their work reflects the belief that teachers need to feel as if they have a voice in their schools and they are indeed heard by their leaders (Blase & Blase, 1999).

As principals are relying on teachers to implement instructional methods within the classroom, they must also establish meaningful relationships with teachers (Packard, 2011). The most established models of instructional leadership require a level of perception on the part of the principal and may also be determined to an extent by the perceptions and expectations of, as well as the barriers presented by faculty (Packard, 2011). Packard (2011) argues that "the presence or lack thereof of instructional leadership may have more to do with the self-perceived role of the principal, and the perception held by supervisors and teachers of the principal" (p. 80). It stands to reason that if the presence of instructional leadership is shaped by the perceptions of principals and teachers, then student achievement is impacted as well by those perceptions. .

In fact, this is exactly what Mumphord (2013) found when considering teachers' perceptions of their principals as instructional leaders. Utilizing quantitative methods, Mumphord (2013) explored four aspects "of instructional leadership: setting goals, providing

professional development, monitoring and providing feedback, and establishing high standards" (p. ii). Through teacher survey and analysis of student achievement on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills reading test, Mumphord (2013) found a modest, direct relationship between instructional leadership and reading achievement. More specifically, teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership were marginally statistically significant and a positive predictor of school variations in student achievement in reading (Mumphord, 2013). Additionally, the study revealed that the school socioeconomic status, ethnic composition, and prior achievement did not predict instructional leadership.

Law (2013) supports this claim by writing "teachers' perceptions of their principal's influence the implementation of school improvement initiatives, which, in turn, influence student achievement and school improvement" (p. iii). Law (2013) explores not only the congruence between principal and teacher perception of instructional practices but also separates out categories in teachers that reflect differences in perception. The study determined that there were minimal differences that existed between the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the leadership actions that increase teachers' implementation of school improvement initiatives. Law's (2013) analysis indicates "that there were significant differences among novice teachers, experienced teachers, and principals in their perceptions regarding the leadership actions that increase teachers' implementation of school improvement initiatives in each of the five school improvement categories" (p. iv). One of the more interesting findings within this work is that the principal consistently rated instructional practices higher than the experienced teachers did (Law, 2013). Implications of this finding may include the claim that the principal needs to keep the experience of the teacher in mind and adjust accordingly. Law (2013) concludes with the thought that "to move beyond the status quo is more difficult…the principal as the instructional leader

must be able to recognize the status quo in their teachers and embrace their role as instructional leaders in order to improve instruction" (p. 24).

What occurs when there is congruence between what teachers perceive as positive instructional support from principals and their own instructional practices? In a mixed methods study in 2010, Kaster argues that teachers are more likely to be more open to feedback, reflect on, and amend their instruction when "effective instructional leaders exhibit appropriate human relations skills (respectful, trustworthy, professional)" (p. 98). Exploring the perceptions of instructional leadership through surveys and semi-structured interviews with teachers in Wisconsin, Kaster (2010) concludes that a positive social climate, clear educational goals, human relationships, professional development, and visibility are all imperative for school leaders. The results of the study indicate "principals' instructional leadership practices do affect the teaching and learning that happens in schools" (Kaster, 2010, p. 93).

The next question that the literature covers is "what it means if teachers and principals 'agree' or 'disagree' on the principals' leadership effectiveness" (Ham, Duyar, & Guma, 2015, p. 227). Exploring principals' beliefs in the efficacy of their instructional leadership behaviors as well as teachers' perceptions of a principal's adherence to those behaviors, Ham et al. (2015) define five areas of instructional leadership. The recurring themes of primarily focusing on school wide goals, having a vision**,** fostering positive culture**,** engaging in instructional feedback and discussions, and offering knowledge of instruction are included within the quantitative research. Overall, the authors claim that if principals and teachers have incongruent views of the adherence to instructional leadership practices, then the teacher is likely to hold a negative self-view (Ham et al., 2015). Whether or not this would result in poorer student achievement based on low teacher efficacy is a question that is yet unanswered. However, "teacher efficacy appears to be nurtured and sustained more successfully in schools where teachers perceive their

principals as effective instructional leaders and the principals were also confident accordingly" (Ham et al., 2015, p. 240). If congruence between principal and teacher perception of enacted leadership practices is related to better student outcomes, then it is possible that lack of congruence results in worse student outcomes.

In 2012, Schindler examined the perception of principals and teachers with regard to the 21 instructional leadership behaviors outlined by Marzano et al. (2005). Schindler (2012) argues that "principals' and teachers' perception of instructional leadership behaviors, and the congruence between perceptions, were not related to student achievement (average effect size)" (p. vi). At the surface of this work, the results are deceiving: When the behaviors were individually examined, "statistically significant relationships were found" (Schindler, 2012, p. vi). As the level of congruency increased between instructional actions and the perception by teachers of those actions, so too did student achievement (Schindler, 2012).

Summary

Considering the longitudinal changes that accountability pressures have created for school leaders, specifically principals, it is no wonder that the methods through which principals perform their work is of high interest (Fullan et al., 2015; Lyons & Algozzine, 2006). The literature review above represents not only the many theories of leadership, but also highlights the recurring theme of instructional leadership as a key component in principal practice (Cotton, 2003; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Marzano et al., 2015). Visible correlations can be seen across instructional leadership models. Of note is the idea that instructional leadership is more than teacher supervision, includes elements of vision and knowledge of instructional practices, and requires communication about instructional data and its correlation to student achievement (Marzano et al., 2015). The literature claims that principal practice of instructional leadership

does not stand in isolation, and so there is need to consider teacher perception of those leadership practices as well (Ham et al., 2015).

The paucity of previous literature on instructional leadership focuses this author's exploration on specific instructional practices as viewed through Domain 2 of Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*, as well as the consideration that has been given to teacher perception of those practices and any possible correlation to student achievement. Chapter Three will explore the survey design, overall methodology of data collection, and analysis conducted within this research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Chapter Three considers the research design, sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis that were utilized in this study. In 2005, Marzano et al. conducted a meta-analysis that supported the development of 21 school leadership responsibilities that relate to positive student achievement. Based upon that work, Marzano et al. (2015) designed the *School Leader Evaluation Model*. This model includes five domains that are "identified as leading to substantive whole-school improvement and increased student achievement" (p. 14).

One such study conducted by Kahney (2014) explored the relationship between the five domains and correlations between positive student achievement utilizing quantitative survey methods. Results indicated "the variance in student achievement could be attributed to Domain Two: Continuous Improvement of Instruction and Domain Four: Cooperation and Collaboration" (Kahney, 2014, p. v). No correlation was found between Domains 1, 3, and 5 and positive student achievement (Kahney, 2014). This research study demonstrates the importance of the development of a shared vision and mission, in other words**,** the essence of Marzano et al.'s Domain 2. The current gap in the literature with regard to analyzing Domain 2 apart from the other domains is the basis for this study.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the relationship between the instructional support practices of elementary principals and student achievement, as well as the exploration of elementary teacher's perception of their principal's adherence to Domain 2 practices in grades 3-5 in average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State (NYS). Instructional leadership is defined as principal adherence to specific practices that

positively impact teachers and subsequent student achievement (Hallinger & Wang, 2015; Marzano Research Laboratories, 2011; Schlinder, 2012; Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Research Questions

1. What is an elementary principal's self-reported degree of adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?
2. How do elementary teachers perceive the actions of elementary principals with regard to Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?
3. Is there a relationship between elementary principal adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015) and student achievement outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5, New York State English Language Arts assessment?

Hypotheses:

H_0 = There is no relationship between elementary principal adherence to Domain 2 practices and student outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5, New York State English Language Arts Assessment.

Research Design

This quantitative research study allowed for examination of principal adherence to the specific leadership practices as defined by Marzano et al.'s *School Leader Evaluation Model* (2015), Domain 2, through direct self-reporting utilizing an electronic survey design. According to Vogt, Gardner, and Haefffele (2012), "surveys are best utilized when data is obtained through analytical questions directly from participants" (p. 16). Electronic surveys are a cost-effective means of accessing a larger number of respondents, while also decreasing the chance of the researcher influencing the respondent (Vogt et al., 2012)**.** In addition, examining self-reported instructional behaviors of principal and underlying teacher perceptions allows for the description of trends and explanation of the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2015).

Sample and Sampling Procedures

In order to include the largest number of school districts from the general population of school districts in New York State, elementary principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts were chosen for the study's population. All high need and low need resource capacity districts, which are a smaller percentage of total number school districts in New York State, were excluded. According to the New York State Education Department, all districts found between the 20th% and 70th% on the needs/resource capacity distribution curve would represent an average school district as defined by New York State. By choosing an average needs/resource capacity school district, more of the general population of school districts in New York State were accounted for. In addition, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers, and New York City School Districts were excluded due to the fact that their governance model is structured through each respective city and their financial structure is part of the municipal budget, a major difference from all other school districts in New York State (NYSED, 2016b). These districts were not included as they are not average needs/rsource capacity school districts.

The primary unit of analysis within this study was elementary principals within average needs/resource capacity school districts. As the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* is geared toward evaluating principals; principals were chosen as the primary sample. Secondary principals and teachers were excluded in this study because the structure of instruction is delivered differently: Teachers are primarily content focused, and thus the instructional leadership aspects for principals may be different. At the date of the study, there were 580 elementary principals and 4,877 third through fifth grade teachers within the 356 school districts within New York State that met criteria as average needs/resource capacity. (NYSED, 2016b). Given that there were 733 school districts in New York State, average needs/resource capacity school districts represent approximately 49% of them.

Instrumentation

Electronic surveys were created utilizing Domain 2 and the elements of Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* with copyright permission from Dr. Robert Marzano (see Appendix I). Each survey asked the same self-reported, demographic questions of respondents, including the length of their experience as a principal or teacher**,** the length of tenure in current position**,** the approximate percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, the approximate percentage of students identified as English Language Learners**,** the approximate percentage of students identified as having special needs**,** and the approximate percentage of students who scored in the proficient range on the New York State (NYS) English Language Arts (ELA) Exam for the 2015-2016 academic year.

The other components of the survey included Likert scale questions related to the five elements found within Marzano et al.'s (2015) Domain 2. Those five elements comprised questions 9a-e; 10a-c; 11a-d; 12a-f and 13a-g (See Appendix II). The figure below denotes each of the elements found within Domain 2. The Likert scale itself allowed for the respondent to answer on a scale of 1 through 5:

1. We do not do this at our school**;**
2. We are starting to move in this direction**;**
3. We are making good progress here**;**
4. We have this condition well established**;**
5. We are refining our practice in this area.

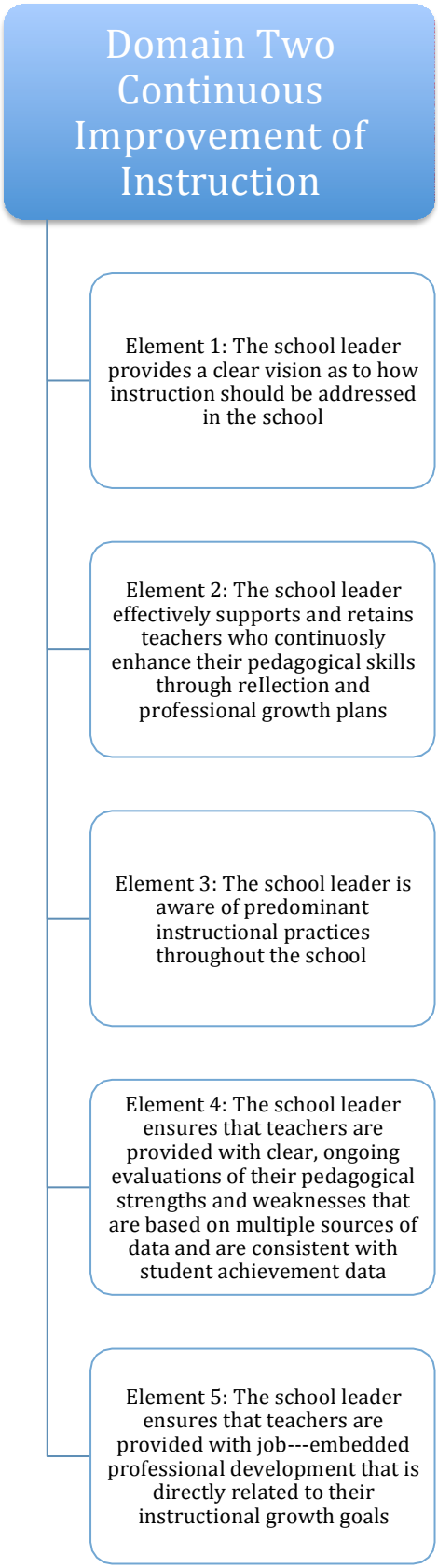

Figure 10. The Five Elements of Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*

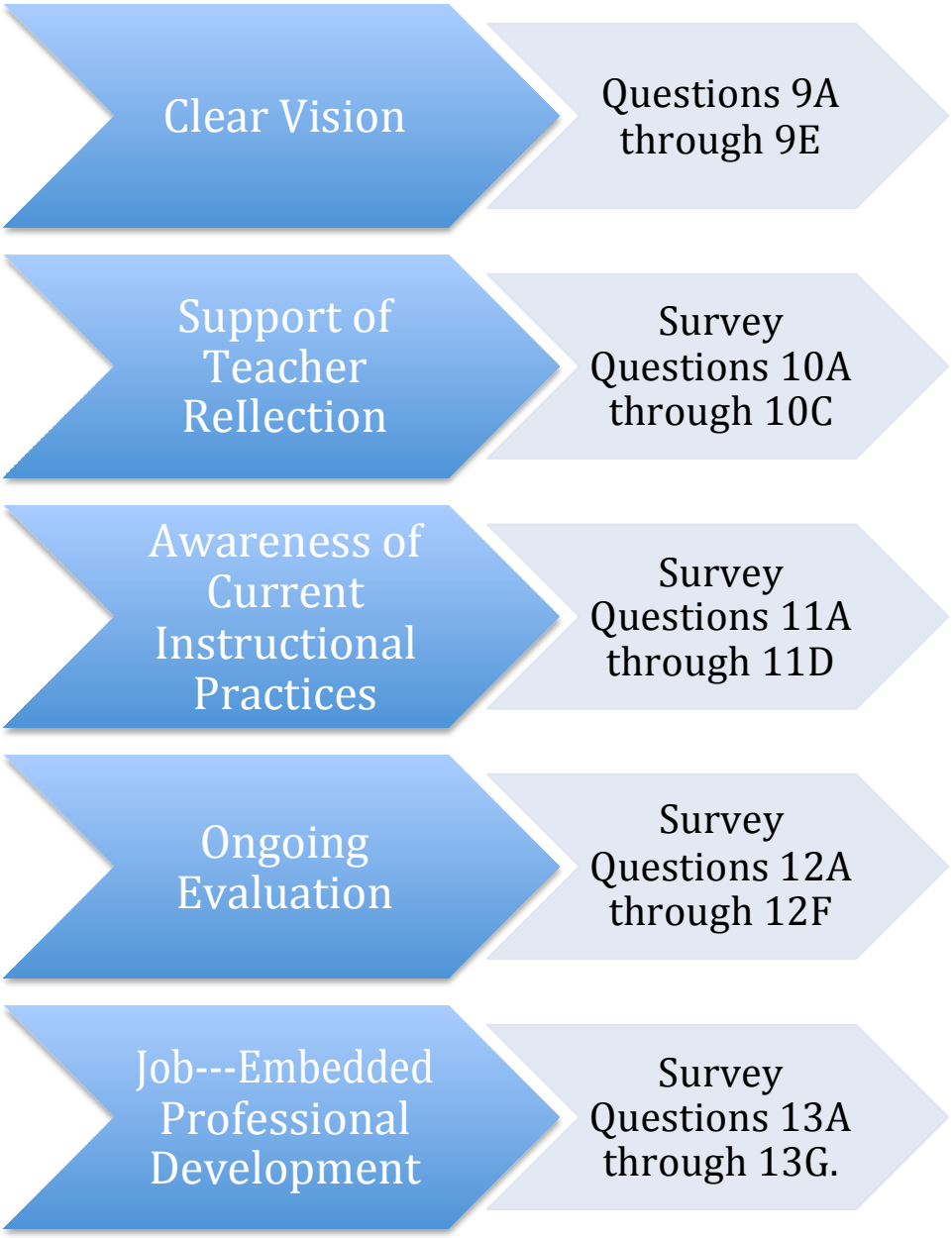

Figure 11. Survey Questions connected to Elements of Domain 2.

Surveys to both principals and teachers were administered electronically via SurveyMonkey.com and were approved through the Sage Colleges Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to its administration. Informed consent letters were placed at the start of the electronic survey. Language within the letter was structured in a manner encouraging participation and excluding compulsory implications. Included within the survey research was the consideration of possible harm towards participants. Participants had the right to withdraw

their informed consent at any time. Vogt et al. (2012) report privacy is often the most salient concern in survey research and "tied to consent and harm" (p. 247). SurveyMonkey, according to its website, meets all United States criteria for privacy and security (SurveyMonkey, 2016).

Participants were informed that all responses and data supplied would be confidential. All responses were aggregated to ensure confidentiality to the respondents. Participants had the ability to exit the survey at any point during its administration even if they consented on the first page.

Data Collection

Data collection included sending an introductory letter to the superintendents of average need and resource capacity school districts, and notifying them of the purpose of the study and intent to elicit survey responses from both principals and third through fifth grade teachers in their elementary schools. Average needs/resource capacity school districts and superintendents were identified through use of the National Center for Education Statistics search for public school tools and use of publicly available data published by the New York State Education Department as a part of the State Education Department Reference File (SEDREF) Directory (NYSED, 2016a).

All 356 school district superintendents were sent hard copies of an introductory letter about the confidential study. Of those letters, only one was returned to sender. Five superintendents of the 356 school districts specifically opted out either via email or phone call, while eight school districts opted directly into the research through email or phone confirmations. The remainder of the school superintendents did not respond and subsequently 580 elementary principals were sent the survey through SurveyMonkey. Of those 580 emails, 13 bounced back as undeliverable, 20 of the principals opted out of the survey, and 117 opted in. Of those 117 who opted in, 89 fully completed the survey. Subsequent follow up emails elicited 22 more responses, totaling 141 elementary principal survey responses, leading to a 24% response

rate. However, not all 141 responded to each question, resulting in not every question having the same response rate.

With regard to elementary teachers in grades 3-5 who work within the average needs/resource capacity school districts, there were 4,877 emails addresses procured and the same number of emails sent. Of those, 73 emails bounced back, possibly due to email security from the school districts. One hundred ten teachers opted out, while 371 total responses were collected. Of those 371 teachers who responded, 188 completed the full survey. After six email reminders, a total of 246 elementary teachers took the survey (5% response rate). Again, not all of those 246 valid responses answered each question on the survey, resulting in different response rates per question.

Data Analysis

Data was exported from Surveymonkey and imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data analysis was conducted through both descriptive and inferential statistics. In order to measure the degree of the relationship between elementary principal survey responses and teacher survey responses, both parametric and non-parametric statistical analysis were considered. Two levels of analysis were conducted. Descriptive analysis allowed for summarization of the data in such a way as to allow for possible patterns to emerge. Correlational statistics measured the relationship between variables.

Researcher Bias

In order to account and control for researcher bias, it is essential to identify possible beliefs that can confound the research. The beliefs of the researcher include the theory that the adherence of elementary principals to Domain 2 of Marzano et al. (2015) practices will be correlated to teachers' instructional practices and higher levels of proficiency as rated by standardized test scores on the third through fifth grade New York State ELA Exam. The

researcher is a practicing administrator in New York State and has familiarity and affinity for the practices found with Marzano et al.'s (2015) five domains as found within the *School Leadership Evaluation Model*. According to Smith and Noble (2014), "researchers bring to each study their experiences, ideas, prejudices and personal philosophies, which if accounted for in advance of the study, enhance the transparency of possible research bias" (paragraph 3). In order to address this bias potential, "clearly articulating the rationale for and choosing an appropriate research design to meet the study aims can reduce common pitfalls in relation to bias" (Smith & Noble, 2014, paragraph 3).

Acknowledging a personal belief in instructional leadership is the first step in addressing the possibility of personal bias. "A consideration of self as a researcher and self in relation to the topic of research is a precondition for coping with bias" (Norris, 1997, p. 174). The author holds a personal belief that instructional leadership practices are essential for principal leadership. In order to address this bias, the author conducted a thorough review of the literature in order to explore other instructional leadership theories.

Validity and Reliability

According to Creswell (2003), construct validity and content validity are traditional measures of validity to consider. Each of these forms of validity will be reviewed separately below. First, in order to address the question of construct validity, the survey questions, with permission from the authors (Marzano et al., 2015), were designed with verbiage taken directly from Domain 2 of the *School Leader Evaluation Model*. Each element presented within Domain 2 became a direct question posed to survey respondents through a Likert scale model. Consideration was given to the response scale, and each question was posed in the first-person singular (I am), although the rating scale was written as a first person plural response (We are). Iarossi (2006) argues "…no matter whether we use adjectives or numbers to define the

continuum, different respondents may interpret the categories differently" (p. 65). The survey's very structure as it relates to questions and format influences the ways in which respondents might or might not answer. For example, demographic questions were placed first as a means of allowing the respondent to ease into the questions. Consideration was given to the ways in which the questions were phrased and in what order they were asked. The survey itself may have reflected bias towards the belief that instructional leadership is essential to effective leadership. In addition, the reliability of the tool may impact the answers that are given by the participants.

Hertzog (2008) argues "for assessing clarity of instructions or item wording, acceptability of formatting, or ease of administration, a sample of 10 or even fewer may suffice" (p. 182). Ten elementary principals within New York State reviewed the survey. Those included within the pilot sample were not included within the final sample. The educators reviewed the format and survey questions and then provided the researcher with written feedback. No recommendations were made as to the format, questions, or ways in which the survey was presented; therefore, no changes were made.

Since bias may occur due to survey format. Muijs (2004) recommends "avoiding double negatives, ambiguous or unclear questions, and double questions, keeping questionnaires brief and being culturally sensitive can help minimize bias" (p. 60). The questions posed to the ten expert educators of the survey were framed with the above points in mind.

Second, the content validity of the survey was addressed through the design of the survey, which related specifically to the identified research questions related to instructional leadership. Vogt et al. (2012) claim "Likert scales are especially good for assessing degree of agreement with or support for a belief, policy, or practice" (p. 26). By utilizing a Likert scale in measuring the respondent's degree of practice or perception aligned to Domain 2, the internal

validity of the survey was further supported. An extensive review of the literature conducted in Chapter Two also served to address the question of content validity (Muijis, 2004).

Reliability is defined by Creswell (2009) as "an examination of the stability or consistency of responses" (p. 191). Vogt et al. (2012) write: "inter-consistent reliability refers to the degree to which multiple items on a scale are measuring the same thing; if they are, they will be highly correlated" (p. 350). Survey items were structured in such a manner as to support internal reliability. Therefore, Chronbach's alpha formula was utilized to assign a numerical value to the survey (Creswell, 2009).

Reliability can also be influenced by rater bias. According to Vogt et al. (2012), "nonresponse bias arises from the fact that if a substantial number of those in your planned representative sample do not respond, those who do respond no longer constitute to a representative sample" (p. 131). In order to avoid as much nonresponse bias as possible, a mixture of mail letters and electronic surveys were utilized in order to maximize participation.

In order to determine the internal consistency of the survey, calculation of Cronbach's alpha (or *α)* was conducted. "The more consistently individual item scores vary with the total score on the test, the higher the value of Cronbach's alpha" (Salkind, 2014, p. 114). Cronbach's alpha (or *α)* measures consistency among individual items and "the higher the value, the more confidence you can have that this test is internally consistent, or measures one thing, and that one thing is the sum of what each item evaluates" (p. 114). As noted, Cronbach's alpha, *(α),* was run for both set of surveys. Cronbach's alpha for the pilot of the principal survey was found to be .899, while Cronbach's alpha for the pilot of the teacher survey was .919. Cronbach's alpha *(α)* calculation indicated a high level of reliability for each survey.

Summary

Previous works of literature highlight the effect that instructional leadership practices have on student achievement (Hallinger, 2008; Kahney, 2014; Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2003). The five domains of effective principal leadership, as outlined by Marzano et al. (2015) create an evaluation system that highlights specific principal practices. Kahney (2014) posits that Domain 2 and Domain 4 correlate to student achievement, forming the foundation for this research. Chapter Three reviews the overall methodology of the study, including but not limited to research data, data collection, population, and data analysis of this study. Both descriptive and correlational statistics were utilized within this quantitatively designed study. Collection of all data was conducted electronically through administration of an electronic survey using SurveyMonkey. Both elementary principals in general and teachers of third through fifth grade in average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State were surveyed. Chapter Four will provide results and discussion of the data collected from the surveys.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

Principal leadership, in the form of instructional leadership, has been considered second only to teacher influence on student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). According to Marzano et al. (2015), "we have entered the age of school leader accountability" (p. 1). School leaders, specifically principals**,** are at the heart of accountability initiatives that "include standards-based systems, high accountability, measurable yearly achievement growth, and research-based teacher and leader evaluations" (Marzano et al., 2015, p. xx). Instructional leadership has emerged as one of the prevalent theories highlighting the principal as an essential component in student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). Components of instructional leadership are found throughout the literature and are ubiquitous in different school leader evaluative models. The *School Leadership Evaluation Model* created by Marzano et al. (2015) provides a framework for considering the ways in which principals provide instructional leadership.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the relationship between the instructional support practices of elementary principals and student achievement, as well as explore teacher perceptions of their principal's adherence to the instructional leadership practices in grades 3 through 5 in average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State. In order to further explore the specific practices and perceptions of Domain 2 of Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*, an electronic survey was sent to both elementary principals and third through fifth grade elementary teachers from average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State. Chapter Four presents the culmination and analysis of that data to address the research questions:

1. What is an elementary principal's self-reported degree of adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?
2. How do elementary teachers perceive the actions of elementary principals with regard to Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?
3. Is there a relationship between elementary principal adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015) and student achievement outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5, New York State English Language Arts assessment?

Organization of Survey

Both surveys were developed by the researcher and crafted from the five elements found within Domain 2 of Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*, with permission from the author (see Appendix I). The survey contained both demographic and Likert scale questions. The survey was sent via SurveyMonkey.com through acquired email addresses to both elementary principals and third through fifth grade elementary teachers in average needs/resource capacity school districts.

Profile of the Sample

There were two levels of analysis designed to create a profile of the respondents. Keeping the research questions at hand, along with the quantitative design utilized, it was determined that descriptive statistics was the best fit for the data sets.

The first was elementary principals within average needs/resource capacity school districts. The second unit of analysis included teachers of grades 3-5 from average needs/resource capacity school districts. At the date of the study, there were 356 school districts within New York State that met the criteria to be an average needs/resource capacity school district (NYSED, 2016b). Of the 356 school districts, 580 elementary principals were sent the survey through SurveyMonkey. Of those 580 emails, 13 bounced back as undeliverable, 20 of

the principals opted out of the survey, and 117 opted in. A total of 141 elementary principal took the survey, which equated to a 24% response rate. However, not all 141 responded to each question, resulting in not every question having the same response rate.

4,877 elementary teachers in grades 3-5 were sent an email with a link to the survey on Surveymonkey. A total of 246 elementary teachers took the survey, resulting in a 5% response rate. Due to varying participant completion, not every question had the same response rate.

Tables 4.1 through 4.7 represent the descriptive analysis of the demographics of the sample of elementary principals, and Tables 4.8 through 4.14 represent the data from third through fifth grade elementary teachers in average needs/resource capacity school districts.

The most frequent respondents from the sample of elementary principals were those with 1-5 years of experience (25.5%). The second largest group of respondents consisted of the 21.8% of principal respondents who had 6-10 years of overall experience as a principal**,** followed closely by more than 15 years and 11-15 years with response rates of 20% and 19.1% respectively. Elementary principals with less than a year of experience were the least represented at 13.6%.

Table 4.1

Principal respondents by overall experience

Years of Experience	Responses	Percent
<1 year	15	13.6%
1-5 years	28	25.5%
6-10 years	24	21.8%
11-15 years	21	19.1%
More than 15 years	22	20.0%
Total	**110**	

Principals were also asked to report how long they have been in their current elementary principal position. Elementary principals who had been in their current position for 1-5 years were among the most frequent in responding, with 33.3% of the sample represented in this

category. Another 24.3% of principals had 6-10 years year of experience and were the next most often to respond, with elementary principals who had 11-15 years following at 18%. Respondents with less than one year of experience in their current role represented 18% of the sample, while those reporting having more than 15 years comprised 6.3% of the respondents.

Table 4.2

Time in current role by principal respondent

Years of Experience	Responses	Percent
<1 year	20	18.0%
1-5 years	37	33.3%
6-10 years	27	24.3%
11-15 years	20	18.0%
More than 15 years	7	6.3%
Total	**111**	

Enrollment at the schools of the responding elementary principals is reported in Table 4.3. A total of 65.4% of them reported working in buildings with 251-500 students. Buildings with 501-750 students were represented by 21.8% of the respondents. About 9.1% of respondents worked in buildings with an enrollment of 1-250. On the other end of the enrollment spectrum, schools with enrollment greater than 750 students were represented by 3.6% of respondents.

Table 4.3

School enrollment by principal respondents

Numbers of Students	Responses	Percent
1-250 students	10	9.1%
251-500 students	72	65.4%
501-750 students	24	21.8%
>750 students	4	3.6%
Total	**110**	

The remainder of the profile from survey respondents related to eligibility of students for free and reduced lunch (see Table 4.4), percentage of English Language Learners (see Table 4.5),

Students with Disabilities (See Table 4.6), and rate of proficiency on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) evaluation for 2015-2016 (See Table 4.7).

With regard to eligibility for free and reduced lunch, an indicator for poverty levels, the greatest number of principals responded that 26-35% of their student population took utilized free and reduced lunch. A total of 50% of students in New York State are overall eligible for free and reduced lunch according to NYSED (2016b). School districts with 46%-55% and those with less than 25% were represented by 21% and 20% of principal respondents respectively. This was followed closely by 16.4% of principals leading schools with 36%-45% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch. Moving towards greater numbers of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch, 10% of principals came from schools with 56%-65% eligible students, while 6.4% of respondents came from schools where 66%-75% of students were eligible for free and reduced lunch. Lastly, less than 1% of principal respondents were from schools that had greater than 75% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Table 4.4

Percentage of free and reduced lunch by principal respondents

Percentage of Students	Responses	Percent
<25%	22	20.0%
26%-35%	28	25.5%
36%-45%	18	16.4%
46%-55%	23	21.0%
56%-65%	11	10%
66%-75%	7	6.4%
>75%	1	.09%
Total	110	

The special education classification rate most often selected by elementary principals was 11%-15% (32.6%). According to NYSED (2016b), the average amount of students identified as having special education needs is 17%. However, 24.8% of principal respondents indicated that

6%-10% of students were identified through special education, followed by 15.6% indicating 16%-20% of their student population are identified as having special education needs. Lastly, both ends of the spectrum, those identifying 0-5% of students and those identifying more than 20%, were represented by principal respondents at 2.1% and 2.8%, respectively.

Table 4.5

Percentage of special education classification rate by principal respondents

Identified Students	Responses	Percent
0-5%	3	2.1%
6%-10%	35	24.8%
11%-15%	46	32.6%
16%-20%	22	15.6%
>20%	4	2.8%
Total	**110**	

The most frequent principal respondents worked in schools with less than 10% of English Language Learners (ELL) (82.6%). According to NYSED (2016b), the average percentage of ELL in a school district is 8%. Therefore, the sample is similar to that of New York State in terms of English Language Learners. Ten percent of principal respondents were from schools that had 11%-15% ELL, 5.5% were from schools with 16%-20%, and only 1.8% were in schools with greater than 25% of ELL.

Table 4.6

Percentage of English Language Learners by principal respondents

English Language Learners	Responses	Percent
0-10%	90	82.6%
11%-15%	11	10.1%
16%-20%	6	5.5%
>25%	2	1.8%
Total	**109**	

Principal respondents self-reported most often that 31%-40% of their students were rated as proficient on the New York State (NYS) English Language Arts (ELA) Exam for 2015-2016

(29.4%). 31.3% of students on average are rated as proficient on the New York State 2015 ELA exam according to NYSED (2016b). Therefore, the principal respondents from the sample closely align with the general population of school districts in New York State. The largest group of principal respondents, 21.1%, came from schools where 21%-30% of students scored in the proficient range. 15.6% of principal respondents worked in schools where 41%-50% of students were rated proficient on the 2015 ELA exam. The number of principal respondents dropped at both ends of the spectrum where students scored less proficient: 5.5% and 1.8% of principal respondents indicating working in schools where only 11%-20% of students scored proficient and then 0-10% students scored as proficient. At the other end of the spectrum, where 51%-60%, students scored proficient, principal respondents were represented with 11.9% of the sample. Schools where 61%-70% of students scored proficient on the ELA Exam was noted for 7.3% of principal respondents. Lastly only 4.6% of principal respondents indicated working in schools where 71%-80% of students scored proficient and only 2.8% of principal respondents indicated that 81%-90% of their students scored as proficient.

Table 4.7

Proficiency on NYS ELA Exam 2015-2016 by principal respondents

% Student's rated as proficient	Responses	Percent
0-10	2	1.8%
11-20	6	5.5%
21-30	23	21.1%
31-40	32	29.4%
41-50	17	15.6%
51-60	13	11.9%
61-70	8	7.3%
71-80	5	4.6%
81-90	3	2.8%
Total	**109**	**100%**

The analysis of the second unit involved elementary teachers of grades three through five in average needs/resource capacity school districts, most teachers who responded indicated over 15 years of experience (62.4%). Nineteen percent of elementary teachers responded as having 11-15 years of experience while 10% had 6-10 years of experience. Lastly, 8.8% of respondents had 1-5 years of experience.

Table 4.8

Overall experience of teacher respondents

Years of Experience	Responses	Percent
1-5 years	20	8.8%
6-10 years	22	10%
11-15 years	43	19%
More than 15 years	141	62.4%
Total	**226**	**100.0%**

Thirty-five percent of elementary teachers responded that they had 1-5 years of experience in their current role; the next largest group consisted of the 20.4% of teachers in their role for more than 15 years. The elementary teachers with 6-10 years of experience made up 17.3% of respondents. Those in their current role less than 1 year made up 7.5% of the respondents.

Table 4.9

Time in current role by teacher respondents

Years of Experience	Responses	Percent
<1 year	17	7.5%
1-5 years	79	35%
6-10 years	45	19.9%
11-15 years	39	17.3%
More than 15 years	46	20.4%
Total	**226**	

Teachers who work in buildings with enrollment of 251-500 students made up 31.1% of the responses; followed closely by respondents in schools with 501-750 students (26.7%) and

fewer than 750 students (23.3%). The least number of respondents reported working in schools with enrollment with 1-250 students (16.7%).

Table 4.10

School enrollment by teacher respondents

Numbers of Students	Responses	Percent
1-250 students	15	16.7%
251-500 students	28	31.1%
501-750 students	24	26.7%
>750 students	21	23.3%
Total	**90**	

21.8% of elementary teacher respondents reported that 26%-34 of their students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. In addition, 21.8% of teachers reported that 46%-55% of students were eligible for free and reduced lunch. Another 18.8% of teacher respondents reported working in schools with students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch at the 36%-45% range. This was followed closely by 16.2% of teacher respondents reporting both less than 25% and 56%-65% of students as eligible for free and reduced lunch. At the higher rates of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch (66%-75% of students and greater than 75% of students), 9.6% and 5.6% of teacher respondents stated they worked in schools with those rates.

Table 4.11

Percentage free and reduced lunch by teacher respondents

Percentage of Students	Responses	Percent
<25%	32	16.2%
26%-35%	43	21.8%
36%-45%	37	18.8%
46%-55%	43	21.8%
56%-65%	32	16.2%
66%-75%	19	9.6%
>75%	11	5.6%
Total	**197**	

The special education classification rate most often selected (37%%) by teachers was 11%-15%. This is just below the state average of 17% according to NYSED (2016b). Another 28.3% of teacher respondents came from schools where 6%-10% of students were identified with special needs, and 15.5% of teacher respondents were noted to be in schools with 16%-20% of students identified with special needs. Lastly, 9.6% of teacher respondents were found at either end of the continuum with 0-5% and greater than 20% of students identified.

Table 4.12

Percentage of special education classification rate by teacher respondents

Identified Students	Responses	Percent
0-5%	21	9.6%
6%-10%	62	28.3%
11%-15%	81	37%
16%-20%	34	15.5%
>20%	21	9.6%
Total	**219**	

Most teacher respondents worked in schools with less than 10% of English Language Learners (67.6%). The average New York State Schools have 8% of students who are English Language Learners. Another 14**%** of teacher respondents were from schools with 11%-15% English Language Learners. This was followed by 7.2% and 7.7% of teacher respondents that were from schools that had 16%-20% and greater than 25% of English Language Learners. Only 3.6% of teacher respondents came from schools with 21%-25% English Language Learners.

Table 4.13

Percentage of English Language Learners by teacher respondents

English Language Learners	Responses	Percent
0-10%	150	67.6%
11%-15%	31	14.0%
16%-20%	16	7.2%
21%-25%	8	3.6%
>25%	17	7.7%
Total	**222**	

Finally, teachers most often reported that 31%-40% (22.4%) of their students were rated as proficient on the New York State (NYS) English Language Arts (ELA) Exam for 2015-2016. According to NYSED (2016b), the New York State average for rates of proficiency on the 2015 ELA exam for 2015-2016 was 31.3%. The teacher respondents came from schools that closely mirror the proficiency average of student's performance on the New York State ELA Exam for 2015-2016. The second largest group of teacher respondents, 16.3%, came from schools with 51%-60% of students who scored proficient. This was closely followed by 14.8% of teacher respondents with students who were proficient at 21%-30%. Next, 13.4% of teacher respondents indicated that 41%-50% of the students in their schools were rated as proficient, while 10% of teacher respondents indicated that 61%-70% were rated as proficient. Moving towards both ends of the continuum reveals that 10% or less of teacher respondents worked in schools with less than 0-20% and greater than 61%-100% in terms of student proficiency on the NYS ELA Exam.

Table 4.14

Proficiency on NYS ELA Exam 2015-2016 by Teacher respondents of rates

% student's rated proficient	Responses	Percent
0-10	6	2.9%
11-20	17	8.1%
21-30	31	14.8%
31-40	55	26.3%
41-50	28	13.4%
51-60	34	16.3%
61-70	21	10%
71-80	13	6.2%
81-90	3	1.4%
91-100	1	.4%
Total	**209**	

The profile presented includes elementary principals who primarily have 1-5 years of experience. Most principal respondents were within the 1st to 5th year of their role. With regard to the profile of the teacher respondents, the majority had more than 15 years of experience and

more than 15 years in their current teaching role. The most principal and teacher respondents both came from schools that enrolled 251-500 students. Both principal and teacher respondents reported similar rates of students who are English Language Learners and scored proficiently on the New York State English Language Arts Exam for 2015-2016; both of which are similar to the average amount of English Language Learners and students who scored proficiently in the overall state of New York increasing the ability to generalize results.

Research Question One

In order to first describe the principals' self-reported degree of adherence to the practices found within each element of Domain 2, the mean of the instructional practices was calculated for each individual element. The mean is "an average [which] is the one value that best represents an entire group of scores" (Salkind, 2014, p. 21). The next calculation of principal data included the mode and was chosen as a way to consider the frequency with which respondents chose specific answers. Lastly, the standard deviation was determined to examine the variation in responses.

Table 4.15 denotes the mean, mode, and standard deviation of survey question for Element 1. Although the sample consisted of 141 principal respondents, there was variance in the number of respondents for individual components found within each element. The mean of each element below is within the range of 3.37 to 3.55. This suggests that principal respondents answered in the range of "we are making good progress here" in terms of all aspects of Element 1. The practice with the highest mean was found to be "Teachers in my school can explain how strategies in the current instructional model promote learning for the school's diverse populations" with a mean of 3.63.

Table 4.15

Element 1: The school leader provides a clear vision as to how instruction should be provided in the school

Practice	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
I communicate the vision of what effective instruction should look like (n=100)	3.55	3.00	.730
I use a shared language regarding instruction in faculty meetings and/or department meetings (n=100)	3.58	4.00	.741
Teachers in my school use a shared language around instruction in their grade level; department or faculty meetings (n=100)	3.60	4.00	.696
Teachers in my school can explain how strategies in the current instructional model promote learning for the school's diverse populations (n=100)	3.63	4.00	.677
Teachers in my school can describe the major components of the school's current instructional models (n=100)	3.37	3.00	.895

Table 4.16 depicts the statistical analysis of practices within Element 2 of Domain 2. Elementary principal respondents reported the most frequent observance of the practice of scheduling meetings with teachers regarding their instructional growth goals beyond the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) cycle, with a mean of 2.97. This practice also had the most amount of variability in the ways in which principal respondents answered, with a standard deviation of 1.18, meaning that some elementary principal respondents reported that they were not doing this at their school while others reported having the condition well established.

Table 4.16

Element 2: The school leader effectively supports and retains teachers who continuously enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans

Practice	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
I collaborate with individual teachers on their instructional growth goals (n=100)	3.42	4.00	.901
I schedule meetings with teachers regarding their instructional growth goals beyond the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) cycle (n=100)	2.97	4.00	1.18
Teachers in my school can share examples of how reflection has improved their instructional practices (n=100)	3.19	3.00	.884

Table 4.17 describes adherence to the practices found within Element 3. The statistical analysis for Element 3 suggests that principals generally report that they are "making good progress" with regard to all the practices found within this particular element. The highest mean of 3.63 was found for "Teachers in my school can describe the predominant instructional practices expected in the school in similar ways." While conversely, "I conduct informal walkthroughs for the purpose of observing our current instructional model" was found to have a mean of 3.37.

Table 4.17

Element 3: The school leader is aware of predominant instructional practices throughout the school

	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
I conduct informal walkthroughs for the purpose of observing our current instructional model (n=100)	3.37	4.00	1.01

I provide objective feedback to teachers in my school outside of structured observations regarding instructional practices (n=100)	3.16	4.00	.950
I provide objective feedback to teachers in my school regarding their instructional practices with students in subgroups (e.g. students identified as having special needs, English language learners, etc.). (n=100)	3.18	4.00	.947
Teachers in my school can describe the predominant instructional practices expected in the school in similar ways (n=100)	3.63	4.00	.814

Table 4.18 considers the self-rating of principals for practices found within Element 4. Principals responded as only "starting to move in this direction" of using teacher evaluation data as a subject of conversation between teachers at faculty meetings, producing summary data that reflects themes from the observations of teachers, and making objective observational data available to teachers that becomes the topic of professional development (e.g. scripted quotes, number of higher level question during the lesson, etc.). This is in contrast to the practice of making student achievement data available to teachers in order to collaboratively analyze patterns of student strength and weakness, for which principal respondents indicated that they are making good progress with a mean of 3.69.

Table 4.18

Element 4: The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses, which are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data

	Mean	**Mode**	**Standard Deviation**
I provide objective feedback referencing highly specific instructional practice(s) on teacher evaluations (n=99)	3.51	4.00	.761

I use a teacher evaluation data as a subject of conversation between teachers at faculty meetings (n=100)	2.50	1.00	1.24
I produce summary data that reflects themes from the observations of teachers (n=99)	2.54	3.00	1.11
I make objective observational data available to teachers that becomes the topic of professional development (e.g. scripted quotes, number of higher level question during the lesson, etc.). (n=100)	2.56	2.00	1.08
I make student achievement data available to teachers in order to collaboratively analyze pattern of student strength and weakness (n=100)	3.69	4.00	.861
Teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement (n=99)	3.12	3.00	.848

Table 4.19 includes data with regard to Element 5. Principal respondents indicated that they were making good progress in relation to the majority of the practices. The one area that was less developed, with a mean of 2.97, was the practice of providing opportunities for teachers to observe each other.

Table 4.19

Element 5: The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals

	Mean	**Mode**	**Std. Deviation**
I provide a variety of professional development opportunities for teacher's regarding their instructional growth goals (n=100)	3.26	3.00	.895
I monitor teacher participation in professional development activities (n=100)	3.40	4.00	.899

I provide opportunities for teacher-led professional development regarding instructional goals (n=100)	3.39	4.00	.840
I provide opportunities for teachers to observe each other in the classroom. (n=100)	2.97	3.00	.958
I provide opportunities for teachers to engage in teacher led professional learning communities (n=100)	3.35	4.00	936
Teachers in my school can describe how the professional development offered supports their attainment of instructional growth goals (n=100)	3.22	3.00	.883
I provide professional development opportunities for teachers regarding the school's instructional model	3.20	3.00	.876

Overall, the above data suggests that principals self-report the highest level of observance of the instructional practices found within Element 1. Means ranged from 3.35 to 3.6 (out of 5.0) for the five practices within this element. Principals also reported more consistent practices found within the practices of Element 3. Means range from 3.16 to 3.63 (out of 5.0) for the 4 instructional practices within this element. With regard to Elements 2 and 5, principals again rated their utilization of practices as primarily within means of 2.97 to 3.42, which ranges from "we are starting to move in this direction" to "we are making good progress here." Element 4 included the least amount of self-reported adherence to instructional practices found within the elements, reporting the least amount of adherence to three out of the six practices. Those practices include using teacher evaluation data as a subject of conversation between teachers at faculty meetings, producing summary data that reflects themes from the observations ofteachers,

and making objective observational data available to teachers that becomes the topic of professional development (e.g. scripted quotes, number of higher level question during the lesson, etc.). Principal respondents primarily reported that they have only started to move in the direction of observing those instructional practices with a mean ranging from 2.50 to 2.56.

Research Question Two

Teacher response data with regard to how they rate their principal's adherence to practices found within Element 1 is found below (Table 4.20). Teachers most often reported that the principals they work with are making good progress (means ranging from 3.18 to 3.41) on all practices found within Element 1.

Table 4.20

Element 1: The school leader provides a clear vision as to how instruction should be provided in the school

	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
My principal communicates the vision of what effective instruction should look like (n=217)	3.21	4.00	1.09
My principal uses a shared language regarding instruction in faculty meetings and/or department meetings (n=216)	3.24	4.00	1.06
Teachers in my school use a shared language around instruction in their grade level, department or faculty meetings (n=215)	3.41	4.00	.923
Teachers in my school can describe the major components of the school's current instructional model (n=216)	3.18	4.00	.928
Teachers in my school can explain how strategies in the current instructional model promote learning for the school's diverse population (n=217)	3.19	3.00	.926

Table 4.21 depicts teacher responses with relation to Element 2. Teacher perceptions of principals' adherence to practices in relation to Element 2 suggest that they feel that their principals are only starting to schedule meetings with teachers regarding their instructional growth goals beyond the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) cycle (mean of 2.78). This also holds true for teacher responses on whether their principal collaborates with individual teachers on their instructional growth goals, with a mean of 2.93.

Table 4.21

Element 2: The school leader effectively supports and retains teachers who continuously enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans

	Mean	**Mode**	**Std. Deviation**
My principal schedules meetings with teachers regarding their instructional growth goals beyond the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) cycle. (n=213)	2.78	4.00	1.36
My principal collaborates with individual teachers on their instructional growth goals (n=214)	3.10	4.00	1.21
Teachers in my school can share examples of how reflection has improved their instructional practice (n=214)	2.93	4.00	1.81

Table 4.22 depicts teacher responses with relation to Element 3. Teacher respondents indicate that they feel their principals are only starting to move in the direction of using half of the instructional practices found within Element 3. These include their principal providing objective feedback to teachers outside of structured observations regarding instructional practices (mean of 2.93) and their principal providing objective feedback to teachers regarding their instructional practices with students in subgroups, that is students identified as having special

needs, English language learner, (mean of 2.92). The other practices principals conducting formal walkthroughs for the purpose of observing a current instructional model and teachers in describing the predominant instructional practices expected in the school in similar ways were found to be areas where teacher respondents felt there was good progress being made with means of 3.31 and 3.09 respectively.

Table 4.22

Element 3: The school leader is aware of predominant instructional practices throughout the school

	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	**Mode (*Mo*)**	**Std. Deviation (σ_X)**
My principal conducts formal walkthroughs for the purpose of observing our current instructional model (n=215)	3.31	4.00	1.20
My principal provides objective feedback to teachers in my school outside of structured observations regarding instructional practices (n=215)	2.93	4.00	1.33
My principal provides objective feedback to teachers in my school regarding their instructional practices with students in subgroups (e.g. students identified as having special needs, English language learner, etc.) (n=213)	2.92	4.00	1.29
Teachers in my school describe the predominant instructional practices expected in the school in similar ways (n=214)	3.09	3.00 ($_a$)	1.02

($_a$) = Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Teacher data related to Element 4 is found in Table 4.23. Considering the above data for Element 4, there are three areas within which teachers rated their principals as only starting to move in the direction of utilizing that instructional practice. These included the principal using

teacher evaluation data as a subject of conversation between teachers at faculty meetings, the principal producing summary data that reflects themes from the observations of teachers, and the principal making objective observational data available to teachers that then become the topic of professional development (e.g. scripted notes, number of higher-order thinking questions during lessons, etc.). Means in these areas ranged from 2.48 to 2.55. Of note, this data includes the teacher respondents' perception that their principals provide objective feedback referencing highly specific instruction practice or practices on teacher evaluations as being the an area in which good progress is being made, with a mean of 3.51.

Table 4.23

Element 4: The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses, which are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data

	Mean	**Mode**	**Standard Deviation**
My principal provides objective feedback referencing highly specific instruction practice(s) on teacher evaluations (n=214)	3.51	4.00	.761
My principal uses teacher evaluation data as a subject of conversation between teachers at faculty meetings (n=214)	2.53	1.00	1.37
My principal produces summary data that reflects themes from the observations of teachers (n= 212)	2.48	1.00	1.30
My principal makes objective observational data available to teachers that become the topic of professional development (e.g. scripted notes, number of higher-order thinking questions during lessons, etc.) (n=214)	2.55	2.00	1.32

My principal makes student data available to teachers in order to collaboratively analyze patterns of student strength and weakness (n=213)	3.31	3.30	1.13
Teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement (n=211)	3.04	4.00	1.04

Table 4.24 includes the data in relation to Element 5. Teachers report the least amount of established practice with regard to principals providing opportunities for peer observation in the classroom setting with a mean of 2.43, or report that this practice has just started to be moved in that direction. The other areas were rated to be primarily within the "starting to move in the direction of" (means of 2.2.85 and 2.86), which includes that their principals monitor their participation in professional development activities and provide them with a variety of professional development opportunities regarding their instructional growth goals. The ability to then describe how the offered professional development supports the teacher respondents' attainment of instructional growth goals was also rated in the "starting to move in the direction of," with a mean of 2.95.

More well-established practices rated by teacher respondents as making good progress included providing opportunities for teacher-led professional development regarding instructional goals and providing them with opportunities to engage in teacher led professional learning communities (means of 3.04 and 3.01, respectively).

Table 4.24

Element 5: The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals

	Mean	**Mode**	**Std. Deviation**

I am provided with a variety of professional development opportunities regarding my instructional growth goals (n=214)	2.86	4.00	1.12
My principal monitors my participation in professional development activities (n=213)	2.85	4.00	1.28
I am provided with opportunities for teacher-led professional development regarding instructional goals (n=212)	3.04	4.00	1.07
I am provided with opportunities for peer observation in the classroom setting (n=214)	2.43	1.00	1.23
I am provided with opportunities to engage in teacher led professional learning communities (n=213)	3.01	2.95	1.11
I can describe how the offered professional development supports my attainment of my instructional growth goals (n=213)	2.95	4.00	1.12
I am provided with professional development opportunities regarding our school's instructional model	3.03	3.00	1.03

The data for Research Question Two indicates that teachers reported their principals as most consistently practicing the instructional supports found within Element 1 (means of 3.18 to 3.41). Within Elements 2, 3, 4 and 5, teachers reported less consistent adherence to instructional practices by their principals: The means ranged from a low of 2.42 to a high of 3.31. Overall, teachers rated their principals as having less established practices within those elements.

Research Question Three

In order to allow for the analysis of the null hypothesis (H_O = There is no relationship between elementary principal adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al.,

2015) and student achievement outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5, New York State English Language Arts assessment) a *Spearman rho* (r_s) correlation coefficient was run. According to Creswell (2015), "researchers use the *Spearman rho* (r_s) correlation coefficient for nonlinear data and for other types of data measured on categorical (rank-ordered) scales" (p. 347). Interpretation of the statistical significance of data was viewed through the lens of *Spearman rho* (r_s) descriptors as outlined by Davis (1971): 0.0 to .09 = negligible; .10 to .29 = low; .30 to .49 = moderate; .50 to .69 = substantial; and .70 to 1.00 = very strong.

There is no statistically significant relationship ($p < .05$) between 24 of the 25 instructional practices of Marzano et al.'s Domain 2 of the *School Leadership Evaluation Model* and student achievement as measured by the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam for the 2015-2016 academic year in the schools in this study (Appendix III). One instructional practice was statistically significant: "teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement ($r_s = .224$; $p<.05$). However, this relationship was considered a weak relationship at .224 (See Table 4.25).

Table 4.25

Relationship Between Principal's Adherence to Element Four of Marzano et al. (2015) *Domain Two and Student Achievement Scores on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam*

Practice	**Spearman Correlation (r_s)**
Teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement (n=99)	.224*

* Correlation is significant at the <.05 level (2-tailed), respectively

However, considering the number of instructional practices and the fact that there was only one statistically significant relationship, albeit a weak one, the null hypothesis is not

rejected. The one instructional practice that was statistically significant, albeit with a weak relationship ($r_s = .224$; $p<.05$), was "teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement."

Summary

This study considers three primary research questions. The first two research questions relate to the perception among principals and teachers regarding adherence to the instructional support practices based on Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. *School Leadership Evaluation Model*. The third research question focused on the relationship between elementary principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts self-reporting adherence to the instructional support practices as found within Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. *School Leadership Model* and student rates of proficiency on the New York State English Language Arts Exam for the 2015-2016 academic year.

The first two research questions were addressed through descriptive statistical analysis considering the mean, mode, and standard deviation. Elementary principals reported themselves as primarily "making good progress" towards or having specific "conditions well established" in relation to all individual practices within the five elements of Domain 2 (Table 4.12 through 2.16). Of note within Element 4, principals rated themselves less established in the instructional practices, as reflected in lower means (Table 4.15)

In consideration of Research Question Two, "How do elementary teachers perceive the actions of elementary principals with regard to Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?" the same descriptive statistical analysis of calculating the mean, mode, and standard deviation was conducted for all individual practices within the five elements of Domain 2 of Marzano et al.'s *School Leadership Evaluation Model*. Elementary teachers of average needs/resource capacity school districts primarily rated their principals as less consistent within the instructional

practices. Element 1 had the most consistent means of 3.18 to 3.41. The other elements included means that ranged from 2.43 to 3.31. Of particular interest is that for 50% of the practices found within Elements 2 through 4, teacher respondents rated their principals as less established. Within Element 5, teacher respondents rated their principals as having the least amount of adherence to instructional practices, with means starting at 2.43 and topping out at 3.04 (Table 4.21).

The final step included analysis of data in relation to Research Question Three, "Is there a relationship between elementary principal adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015), and student achievement outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5, New York State (NYS) English Language Arts (ELA) assessment?" This was evaluated through bivariate correlation statistics; specifically a *Spearman rho* (r_s) correlational analysis was applied. Results conclude that there was no statistically significant relationship (p. <.05) between 24 of the instructional practices of Marzano et al.'s (2015) Domain 2 of the *School Leadership Evaluation Model* and student achievement as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam for the 2015-2016 academic year. However, one practice, "teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement" had a weak, but significant relationship ($r_s = .224; p<.05$). The null hypothesis was**,** therefore**,** not rejected for Research Question Three based on the above data.

Chapter Five: Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between the instructional support practices of elementary principals and student achievement, as well as the perception of classroom teachers in relation to principal instructional leadership practices in grades 3 through 5 in average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State.

This study focused on the second domain of Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model.* Domain 2 includes the theory that a principal's practices support the development of a school culture that holds teacher instructional methods as one of the most important factors related to student achievement (Marzano et al., 2015). Narrowing the field to focus on elementary principals in New York State who self-report on the practices found within Domain 2 allowed for consideration of their personal perception of adherence to the instructional leadership practices. In addition, third through fifth grade teacher perceptions of principal adherence to Domain 2 practices were highlighted through a double survey method. Further statistical analysis of possible correlations between principal practice and student achievement was also conducted.

This researcher created a survey reflecting the practices of Domain 2 with permission from the authors; the survey was then administered electronically via SurveyMonkey.com after approval from the Sage Colleges IRB. The electronic survey outlining the practices found within Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* was sent to all elementary principals and third through fifth grade elementary teachers of average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State. Primary research questions were posed as follows:

1. What is an elementary principal's self-reported degree of adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?
2. How do elementary teachers perceive the actions of elementary principals with regard to Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015)?
3. Is there a relationship between elementary principal adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 (Marzano et al., 2015) and student achievement outcomes as measured by the grades 3-5, New York State English Language Arts assessment?

Chapter Five provides a summary and discussion of the findings related to elementary principal instructional leadership and adherence to the practices found within Domain 2 of the *Leadership Evaluation Model* created by Marzano et al. (2015) as they specifically relate to the above research questions. Connections between previous research on instructional leadership as well as specific research and literature related to Marzano et al.'s (2015) *Leadership Evaluation Model* and the outcomes of this particular research are highlighted. Conclusions drawn based on the data presented along with recommendations for further practice and possible future study are also included in the summary.

Summary of Findings- Demographics

The initial level of analysis included consideration of the demographics of the samples of both elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers of average needs/resource capacity school districts. The sample of elementary principals revealed that principals with between one and five years of experience represented the largest number of principal respondents. Conversely, teachers with more than 15 years of experience made up the largest set of teacher respondents. Both elementary principals and teachers most often reported working in schools with enrollment that ranged from 251-500 students. In addition, there were similarities in terms of elementary principals and teachers reporting the amount of English

Language Learners (0-10%), students who are identified as having special needs (11%-15%), and free and reduced lunch eligibility (26%-35%). Both elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers responded that 31%-40% of students were rated as proficient on the New York State English Language Arts Exam (NYS ELA Exam) for 2015-2016. The sample itself was similar to the general population of elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers of average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State.

Summary of findings and discussion

This study utilized descriptive statistical analysis to consider the first two research questions. Ech research question is considered individually.

Research Question One

Finding one. Elementary principals of average needs resource capacity school districts responding to this survey primarily reported the highest level of adherence in not only being aware of the instructional practices in their schools, but also in providing a vision for those instructional practices (Element 1). Conversely**,** the data related to this research question indicated that elementary principal respondents reported adhering less to the practices that focus on supporting and retaining teachers who reflect and grow their pedagogical skills. They also reported less adherence to practices that highlight provision of ongoing evaluations on pedagogical strengths and weaknesses based on multiple sources of data related to student achievement (Elements 2 and 4).

Specifically, principals in this study reported less engagement in the instructional practice of scheduling meetings with teachers regarding their instructional growth goals beyond the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) cycle. This was also true for the level of fidelity paid to using teacher evaluation data as a subject in faculty meetings. This might include principals producing summary data reflecting themes from the observations of teachers and

making that observational data available to teachers in the form of professional development. In essence, the principals in this study are discussing observations of teacher instructional practice in isolation from the individual teachers, but are not expanding beyond that practice to continue discussion into larger systems and are not connecting those conversations of instruction to student achievement data. Leithwood et al. (2006) assert that in order to support teachers and positively affect student achievement, school leaders need to successfully implement building level communication and collaborate with faculty.

Finding two. The second finding relates to how principals provide job-embedded professional development for teachers that connects to their instructional growth goals (Element 5). According to the data, elementary principals report that they adhere less to the practice of providing opportunities for teachers to observe each other in the classroom. This finding indicates that principals may not be connecting teachers to one another in collaborative efforts, thus maximizing job-embedded professional development opportunities. Marzano et al. (2015) posit that structures or practices**,** such as peer observation and opportunities for peer coaching, are an essential component of effective instructional leadership. It is apparent from the responses that this is a less adhered to practice by elementary principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State.

Research Question Two

Finding three. In general, teachers in this study also observe their elementary principals providing a vision of instructional practices in their schools (Element 1). Marzano et al. (2015) suggest that "it is extremely important to implement and support a school-wide common language of instruction and encourage understanding of, and agreement about, best classroom practices – specifically those practices most closely correlated to gains in student achievement" (p. 47). Elmore (2004) posits "the ability of a school to make improvements has to do with the

beliefs, norms, expectations, and practices that people in the organization share." This finding implies that the foundation of the instructional leadership practices as outlined in the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* are present and ready to be built upon. Congruence between teachers and principals in the vision of what instruction should look like and how it will be delivered only furthers the organization towards its goal of positive student achievement (Elmore, 2004).

Finding four. The perception of responding teachers in grades 3-5 revealed that they find that the principals they work with observe the instructional practices found within Elements 2 through 5 less frequently. This finding is similar to that of Law (2013) who argues that principals rated themselves as adhering more often to instructional leadership practices than experienced teachers did. Incongruence between perceptions can also lead to a negative self-view by the teacher, potentially impacting their instructional capacity (Ham, Duyar, & Guma, 2015). This self-view may also lend itself to the idea that conversations will stall at the individual level and that teachers will be less likely to have discussion amongst peers and school leaders regarding their instructional practices and how they correlate to student achievement, possibly limiting their own professional growth.

Of note is that teachers in this study reported that their principals were less likely to meet about instruction outside the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process, and that the teachers themselves were less likely to connect how meeting with the elementary principal and reflecting on the evaluative data supports their instructional methods. In turn, teacher respondents reported that their principals were not as established in the practice of organizing teacher evaluation data and either presenting it as a topic of discussion in the larger school context (i.e. faculty meetings), or connecting it to specific professional development. This finding mirrors that of Bedessem-Chandler's (2014) that elementary teachers also rated their

principal's involvement in curriculum, assessment, and instruction as less important than the principal's overall visibility in the building and personal relationship with staff. This may imply that teachers are not as connected to how principals can support them in growing their own instructional practices and are not leveraging results from observations in order to increase their individual instructional capacity.

Finding five. Third through fifth grade teachers in this study also indicated that they were not fully aware of how their professional development supported attainment of individual instructional growth goals. Included within their responses was data that suggests that teachers felt they were provided less opportunity for professional development related to their individual growth goals. Furthermore, there was a perception that their principals were less likely to observe the instructional leadership practice of monitoring their professional development activities. Embedded professional development is an essential component of instructional leadership as it supports teachers in the attainment of their instructional growth goals (Marzano et al., 2015). Teachers of grades 3 through 5 in this study rated one type of embedded professional development, peer observations**,** as not well established. Marzano et al., (2015) state that Element 5 "should be the culmination of continuous improvement." It is the last element in the continuous improvement of instruction model, and based upon the responses from these teachers, is the weakest link.

Research Question Three

Finding six. As indicated in Chapter Four, there was no statistically significant relationship (p.<.05) found between 24 of the 25 of the instructional practices found within Domain 2 of the Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* as measured by the New York State English Language Arts Exam for the 2015-2016 academic year"(r_s = .224; p<.05), with the exception of the instructional practice "teachers in my school are able to

describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement" (Marzano et al., 2015). Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Conclusions

The elementary principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts who responded to the survey feel they are consistently applying a majority of practices found within the *School Leadership Evaluation Model* as created by Marzano et al. (2015). The responses provided indicate that the principals find themselves to be either "making good progress" or at least "starting to move in that direction" throughout the elements. There was some variability in degrees of observance to the individual practices found within the elements. As noted above, elementary principals felt the most secure in providing and communicating a clear vision of how instruction should be in schools, but reported less established practices in terms of utilizing teacher evaluation data for system level discussions on how instruction relates to student achievement. This in turn was also reflected in their diminished confidence in utilizing the practice of offering professional development aimed at instructional practices.

Opportunities for growth include determining how to move from conversations in isolation about individual teacher growth plans to whole system discussions. If the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* is to be implemented with fidelity, instructional leaders would need to move beyond those individual observational conversations with teachers and toward whole faculty communication about best instructional practices, including the data related to the teacher evaluations and how it connects to overall student achievement. Moving beyond individual conversation builds both coherence at the system level and increases the capacity of the organization to continuously examine its practices and work towards student achievement.

Grade 3- 5 teachers in this study also reported that their principals are observing**,** to some degree**,** most of the instructional practices as outlined by Domain 2 within the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*. Their responses reported less adherence to practices across the board, but were observed nonetheless. Principals are reported to communicate and share a district vision of quality instruction. Yet, evaluations tend to happen in isolation with lack of collaborative partnering around district instructional goals derived from teacher evaluations and student achievement. Teachers similarly reported a lack of awareness of how professional development could support their instructional practices, one of the very tenants that Marzano et al. (2015) posit as part of the instructional leadership model.

The most relevant finding is not that elementary principals and third through fifth grade teachers report some degree of adherence to practice**s** related to Domain 2, but rather that despite their reported adherence, there is no statistical significance in relation to the New York State English Language Arts Exam for 2015-2016. In essence, responding elementary principals report that these practices are observed and implemented to at least to some degree, but there is no numerical relationship with student achievement found within this study.

There are two initial conclusions that can be drawn. Either the degree of observance and implementation is not enough to affect student achievement or the level of adherence to the instructional practices found within Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* was over-estimated by respondents.

There is, of course, a third conclusion that could be drawn: The implementation of instructional leadership practices related to Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* is performed in isolation outside of the framework of the model itself. Elementary principals may be clear on their district's instructional vision, but, by operating in isolation and outside the framework*,* they are not fulfilling the practices with fidelity or to the

degree that creates improvement. In addition, the data indicates that principals were less observant of instructional practices that required them to extend the conversation of teacher evaluation data to the larger systems level. They also reported adhering less to practices that involved connecting teacher evaluation data to student achievement and speaking about it at the systems level, versus in individual conversations with teachers. Without incorporating shared leadership practices and implementing the second layer of the instructional practices found within the elements, student achievement may not be impacted in the ways expected if the model was fully embraced and operated with fidelity.

Previous literature indicates that the practices of shared instructional leadership and standardized tests scores are correlated (Kahney, 2014). This research also posits "as a tool, Marzano's model did not successfully predict student achievement," however, "secondary analyses demonstrated that the relationship between shared leadership and student achievement were associated with *Domain 2: Continuous Improvement of Instruction*" (Kahney, 2014, p. 95). This research reaffirms that when utilized strictly as a simple rubric, Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* does not share a statistically significant relationship with student achievement. This may be because the application of collaborative leadership is required in order to demonstrate a statistically significant relationship.

Another hypothesis that could be drawn from this study suggests that it is not simple adherence, but rather the degree of adherence, which impacts student achievement. It was beyond the scope of this research to consider whether or not specific levels of adherence within the elements of Domain 2 correlated more or less to student achievement. The *School Leadership Evaluation model* (Marzano et al., 2015) highlights many of the practices found within current state and Federal regulations related to teacher and principal evaluation criteria and curriculum implementation related to Federal and state regulations. It can be inferred that despite the

reporting of some level of observation and implementation of the instructional practices found within the Domain 2, the lack of cohesion and system wide implementation through collaboration and shared leadership practices between principals and teachers impacts the correlation to student achievement.

This is especially noteworthy when consideration is given to the few practices that both principals and teachers reported as being implemented to a lesser degree: Specifically, Element 4, which includes the practices of teacher observation and subsequent reflection on observational data. Elementary principals report less use of evaluation data amongst individual settings and in groups, while also offering less professional development based on that evaluative data and how it links to student achievement. Teachers likewise report less connection to discussions of their instructional practices and how it relates to student achievement. Marzano et al. (2015) argue that there are multiple embedded constructs that are essential within Element 4 such as on-going evaluation of teacher strengths and weaknesses based on several sources of data and evaluations that are consistent with student achievement. It can be hypothesized that without full implementation of the entire domain with fidelity, especially with regard to the element that directly relates to supporting teachers in connecting their instructional practices to student achievement, there is less chance of a correlation between use of Domain 2 of Marzano et al.'s (2015) *Instructional Leadership Evaluation Model* and the 2015 New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam.

Recommendations for Policy

Current New York state policy indicates that within the policy guidelines of the Board of Education of the school district and under the direction of the superintendent, each principal shall provide leadership in the development of the educational program in the school to which he or she is assigned, including the supervision and administration of the school program, involvement

with the selection and retention of staff, professional consultation, direction and assistance to the faculty and students of the school, and effective home/school/community partnerships (NYSED, 2015).

Considering New York State education policy in relation to principals, it is apparent that a lack of specificity around principals and evaluation methods still exists as seen through multiple iterations of the law over the past several years. The New York State Board of Regents approved Chapter 103 and Chapter 21 in the years 2010 and 2012, implementing Education Law §3020-c which began to change and outline the need for the ways in which teachers and principals were evaluated (NYSED, 2015).

In May of 2016, and then again in March of 2017, New York State Board of Regents further complicated the evaluation model by rolling out further evaluative measures and formulas through Education Law §3012-d and Subpart 30-3 of the Commissioner's regulations sections 30-2.14 and 30-3.17 (EngageNY, 2017). These regulations focus on the scoring and rating of teachers and principals as it relates to student assessment outcomes, offering guidance on how to develop a teacher and leader evaluative model that can be negotiated at the local level. Since these regulations allow a level of latitude at the local level, it is recommended that the focus for change in terms of school leader evaluations begin at the local level by negotiating assessments systems that explicitly detail expected instructional leadership behaviors through a research based model.

Rather than dictate policy change at the state level, it is recommended that at the local level, boards of education and school districts consider the following in outlining their principal evaluation procedures. The first suggestion would be to amend evaluation procedures to include having the same observer conduct the two mandatory observations utilizing the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* as the primary rubric for principal evaluation.

Currently, local educational agencies only need to include one school visit or observation by a supervisor or other trained administrator of the principal and one by another impartial evaluator or other administrator (EngageNY, 2017). The law also notes that at least one of these observations and visits must be unannounced with points connected to an observable rubric and related to the six standards of the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). At the local level, this can be a hardship for small districts and it is not always feasible for districts to have two separate people observe principals. In addition, it creates disparity in how evaluators may view principals as there is no specific guidance on what the ISLLC standards could look like in practice. Having one evaluator observe the principal twice while utilizing the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model,* which subsequently ties into the ISLLC standards, would create quality and consistency in evaluation practices at the building level. It would also allow for the evaluation system to be in service to building level leaders, one of the essential functions of central office administration. Specifically, it would help central office administration focus professional development for principals on specific areas of need that are identified at the building level.

The second part of this recommendation, in addition to having one observer follow the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model,* would be to include professional development for principal supervisors with regard to principal evaluation and the model. Specifically, principal supervisors would need to be trained in the evaluation model itself and in how to communicate observation results to principals in a manner that could drive the discussion on how principals reflect on their own instructional leadership practices and how they then bring the data back to the building level to effect results. This would benefit the district in increasing both the capacity of the principal supervisors, as well as the principals themselves. It would take the practice of observing and evaluating principals from being simply another unfunded mandate

to a systems level process that builds capacity across the school district. By incorporating the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* at the local level, in connection to Education Law §3012-d, sustainability and consistency is introduced into the evaluation procedures for the district even when there is leadership turnover.

Further policy recommendations relate to secondary institutions, specifically those geared towards educational administration. These institutions can turn their eye to supporting new administrators to the field of education in understanding and putting into practice the aspects of instructional leadership as they pertain to the most effective school leader practices. The implementation of coursework specifically targeting instructional leadership, utilizing the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* would prepare future leaders to understand the importance of their work with teachers as well as the importance of continuously reflecting and growing in their own personal practices. It would support new administrators in moving towards more consistent practice of the essential elements of effective instructional leadership.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendation one. Implications from this work relate directly from the initial findings to Research Questions One and Two. Elementary principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State report they are observing, to some degree**,** the instructional practices found within Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*. However, they report less confidence with regard to aspects of the model that require them to extend beyond the external accountability demands placed on them by New York State mandates. Specifically, they report that in isolation they are talking about individual teacher pedagogical practices, but that they are less confident in extending those conversations to the whole faculty. They are not yet reporting that they are connecting data from teacher observations

to student achievement data and then using this as a springboard for group discussions in faculty or team meetings. Therefore, recommendations for practice should focus on how to create cultures that support the idea that all school leaders are learners first and foremost. This would encourage all principals to make the elements of instructional leadership practices as found within Domain 2 the focus for building level discussions. Operationally, this would mean that the evaluation model itself would be utilized as the rubric for principal evaluations and be a starting point for ongoing discussion regarding personal practices around instructional supervision with supervisors and then in turn with the teachers. According to Leithwood et al. (2004), "neither superintendents nor principals can do the whole leadership task by themselves. Successful leaders develop and count on contributions from many others in their organizations. Principals typically count on key teachers for such leadership, along with their local administrative colleagues" (p. 7).

In practice, this would mean that principals are taking the evaluation model, sharing it with the faculty as a whole, and focusing on key instructional practices found within Domain 2. Creating transparency of the evaluation model, would allow for the use of a common language around key school leader instructional practices. It would also create internal consistency for the school district, as a common language that could be carried between leaders who may change roles within the system or leave the system altogether.

This would also allow for further discussion regarding instructional practices and beliefs, all of which can evolve over time. Specifically, it would allow for a mutual agreement among faculty and the principal about the priority of each instructional practice within the elements of Domain 2 as well as a mutual understanding of what those elements looks like in practice. This would support the creation of individual leader goals, but also measurable and specific building level goals that align with the district's vision. Without congruence between expected leadership

practices as well as clarity on how they relate to what is occurring in the classroom, there will always be a disconnect that may lead to a lack of effectiveness.

Recommendation two. Much of what is rooted in the call for educational leadership accountability includes the need for leaders to be able to conduct useful teacher evaluations and support teacher reflection of their instructional practices (Marzano et al., 2015). This is typically an external pressure (state or Federal law) that pushes school leaders to conduct observations without regard for how they can shape classroom practices, support teacher pedagogical development or student achievement goals. Marzano et al. (2015) posit that "most school leaders need training, practice, and feedback to become reliable observers" (p. 45).

Utilizing Domain 2 as a reference point, principals can reflect on where they feel they are successfully adhering to observational practices and where they may need to focus more efforts. As posited by Seashore Louis and Robinson (2012), when external accountability pressures are married to school leader internal accountability, better instructional practices and procedures are created, positive student achievement is realized. Gonzalez and Firestone (2013) posit that "there are indications that the schools where principals feel internalized accountability and achievement is high are also those where teachers and administrators now work together" (p. 398). Internal accountability suggests that principals would be internally motivated to reflect and focus on deliberate instructional leadership practices that they can improve. Marzano et al. (2015) describe it as "deliberate practice – a system where the practitioner identifies specific skills for improvement and hones those skills on feed back from a coach- has been applied as a way to improve teacher pedagogy" (p. 53). The principal is acting as both lead learner and lead teacher in this model. Marzano et al. (2015) argue that beginning with intentional planning and deliberate practices leads to "a focused plan to improve, no matter how high the level of current expertise" (p. 54).

In essence, by identifying the practices within Domain 2 the principal needs to focus on, a more thorough roadmap on how to support their own continuous improvement of instruction can evolve and be shared with the faculty. Figure 12 below represents how Domain 2 completes the cycle by not only implementing but also improving on the practices as new spheres are moved through. This begins with the expectation that there is planned, deliberate discussion with the faculty around what constitutes best practice in the classroom (well articulated knowledge base for teaching) which then opens the conversation for focused feedback as a group. This discourse needs to occur when the leader is purposefully creating time for discussing instructional knowledge, helping create plans for improvement, and allowing teachers to recognize the leaders' skills and expertise in instruction. A specific level of trust in the process is established and, thus, in the school leader themselves. Once these initial steps are taken, a more clearly articulated plan can be created focused on best practices in the classroom.

Continuous improvement for Deliberate Practice and Intentional Practice

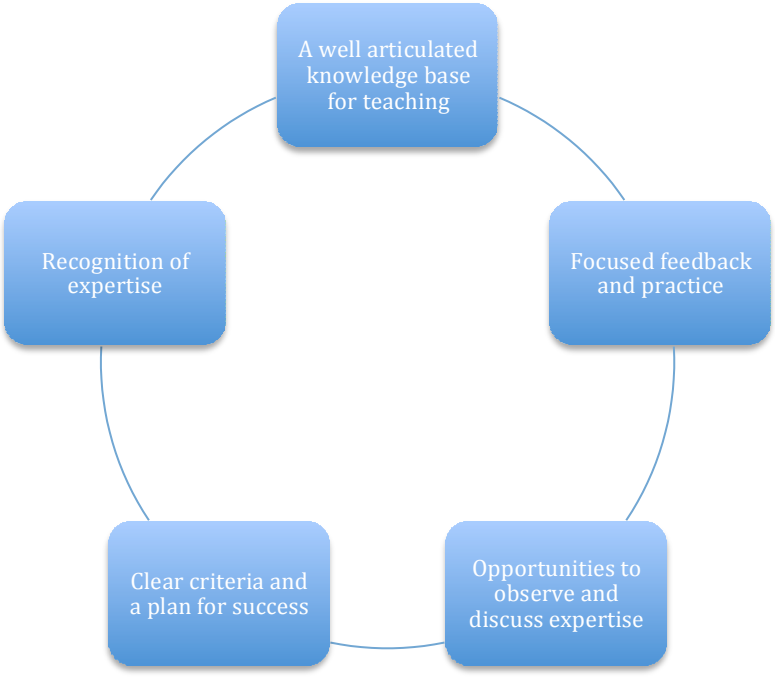

Figure 12. Marzano et al. (2015) Continuous Improvement with Deliberate Practice and Intentional Planning

Organizational capacity is built when meaningful conversations are held at the building level around highly effective instructional leadership practices. By utilizing Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model* as a way of framing that conversation, the school district will ensure a process that is committed to continued growth at every level and ultimately connected to positive student achievement.

Considerations for Further Study

There are many ways in which this current research could be expanded. Alternative questions include connecting the elementary principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts to teachers within their own buildings to analyze the data for any statistically significant correlation on the views of principal adherence to Domain 2 of the Marzano et al's. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model.* In addition, this particular study could be expanded to include both high and low needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State. It would be of particular interest to note which disparities and similarities exist in principal practice across these environments, if any at all. Expanding this particular study to include middle and high school level principals would also support the analysis of the levels of adherence for those school leaders. Analyzing middle and high school principal perceptions may also increase the knowledge of how to support instruction when content and curriculum is more focused within departments versus individual classrooms.

Considering the research questions through a qualitative lens would also garner additional information and provide further research on instructional leadership with regard to elementary principals and Domain 2 of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model*. Specifically, outlining a process to observe principals while they are engaging in the instructional practices of Domain 2, such as observation of teachers in the classroom and coding these observations qualitatively, would be valuable. This would allow for an interview of the

principal to examine and analyze consistency and fidelity of the practices. This may also lead to the discussion of how principals can move beyond individual conversations regarding teacher observational data in isolation and begin to talk in a group format, delving into how professional development can connect those conversations.

Principal supervisors could also incorporate the practice of instructional rounds at the building level in order to further the discussion on what instructional practices are currently being utilized, what pedagogical methods should be the focus for improvement, and how best to plan out professional development related to those observations.

Summary

As accountability demands have increased, so too have the calls for consideration to be given to the ways in which school leaders support student achievement (Kaye, 2010). At the heart of this discussion is the theory of instructional leadership (Bell, 2003; Hopkins, 2006; Johnson, 2004). In particular, which school leadership practices support student achievement? According to Marzano et al. (2015), there are 25 instructional practices comprising a total *School Leadership Evaluation Model* that supports student achievement. Connected solely to instructional leadership is Domain 2 of the model that considers five elements, all of which are related to Continuous Improvement of Instruction. Previous literature supports the use of utilizing Domain 2 as a means of evaluating levels of adherence to instructional leadership for principals and its possible correlation to student achievement (Kahney, 2014). This study examined which specific practices elementary principals of average needs/resource capacity school districts in New York State reported utilizing in Domain 2. Additionally, through a double survey method, third throufh fifth grade elementary teachers of similar districts were also surveyed to ascertain their perceptions of how these Domain 2 leadership actions were implemented by elementary principals.

Conclusions drawn from survey results indicate that both principals and teachers within these districts reported varying levels of adherence to the practices as outlined in Domain 2. Teacher evaluation in the form of observation and feedback is an essential component of many Federal and state accountability practices. Of note is that these are also the practices about which principals and teachers in this study report a diminished focus. Due to the fact that teacher evaluations and subsequent observations take time and require a large commitment from administrators, the question becomes when does the act of teacher observation become a hindrance and rather than a support to the leader in giving appropriate guidance? Do the accountability demands of the school leader, specifically the principal in this case, negatively impact the ability of those leaders to implement the instructional leadership practices as outlined in Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model,* Domain 2.

Utilizing the outcomes of this research to frame continued growth in school leadership practice and reflection on practice is of the utmost importance, regardless of the statistical significance to student achievement on a single measure, such as the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Exam. At least within New York State, for average needs/resource capacity elementary principals, there is a preliminary acknowledgement of the instructional practices found within Domain 2 (Continuous Improvement of Instruction) of the Marzano et al. (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model.* This is especially apparent in the first element of the model, providing a guiding vision of a district model of instruction, which was reported to be the most often observed of the elements within Domain 2. What needs to be further considered and implemented are the practices within the other four elements. Further support of this conversation around instructional leadership and the practices of Domain 2 can only continue to support school leaders in affecting teachers and subsequent student achievement.

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Appendices

Appendix I

1. Principal Survey and Informed Consent

Colleague,

Thank you for taking the time to fill out my survey.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw from the study until such time as the work is accepted for publication. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating, you will not be penalized. There is minimal risk related to participation in this study for you or your school district.

The procedure involves filling an online survey that will take approximately 10 minutes.

We will do our best to keep your information confidential as this survey is not anonymous. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, I will only be reporting a final summary of responses and there is minimal risk to participants and their affiliated school district. Results may inform future leadership practices within schools and districts.

If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided below. You may also contact Dr. Deborah Shea at SheaD@sage.edu if you would like to speak to a representative of the College.

Survey Monkey's privacy policy may also be found at:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/privacy-policy/

Thank you for your time,
Rebecca DeVries

* 1. ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are at least 18 years of age

◯ Agree

◯ Disagree

2. Demographic information

2. Approximately how long have you been a principal?

- ◯ < 1 year
- ◯ 1-5 years
- ◯ 6-10 years
- ◯ 10-15 years
- ◯ more than 15 years

3. Approximately how long have you been a principal in your current setting?

- ◯ < 1 year
- ◯ 1-5 years
- ◯ 6- 10 years
- ◯ 10-15 years
- ◯ more than 15 years

4. What is the approximate enrollment in your school?

- ◯ 1-250 students
- ◯ 251-500 students
- ◯ 501-750 students
- ◯ >750 students

5. Approximately what percentage of your students qualify for free and reduced lunch?

- ◯ <25%
- ◯ 26%-35%
- ◯ 36%-45%
- ◯ 46%-55%
- ◯ 56%-65%
- ◯ 66%-75%
- ◯ >75%

6. What is the approximate percentage of English Language Learners in your school?

- 0-10%
- 11%-15%
- 16%-20%
- 21%-25%
- >25%

7. What is the approximate percentage of Students with Disabilities in your school?

- 0-5%
- 6%-10%
- 11%-15%
- 16%-20%
- >20%

8. What is the approximate percentage of students in your school who were rated as proficient (scoring a 3 or 4) on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment in 2015-2016?

- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- 71-80
- 81-90
- 91-100

3. Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership is defined as a school leader who creates a school culture with a focus on instruction.
An instructional model refers to a teaching framework (e.g. Project Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, Bloom's Taxonomy, Guided Reading, etc.).

9. Thinking of your role as an instructional leader, please rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this at our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress here	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
I communicate the vision of what effective instruction should look like.	○	○	○	○	○
I use a shared language regarding instruction in faculty meetings and/or department meetings.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school use a shared language around instruction in their grade level, department or faculty meetings.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school can describe the major components of the school's current instructional model.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school can explain how strategies in the current instructional model promote learning for the school's diverse population.	○	○	○	○	○

10. Thinking of the supervisory and feedback system(s) in your school, please rate the following statements:

	1. We do not do this at our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress here	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
I collaborate with individual teachers on their instructional growth goals.	○	○	○	○	○
I schedule meetings with teachers regarding their instructional growth goals beyond the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) cycle.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school can share examples of how reflection has improved their instructional practices.	○	○	○	○	○

11. Thinking of your role in relation to utilizing multiple sources of data for teacher evaluation, please rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this in our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress here	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area.
I conduct informal walk-throughs for the purpose of observing our current instructional model.	○	○	○	○	○
I provide objective feedback to teachers in my school outside of structured observations regarding instructional practices.	○	○	○	○	
I provide objective feedback to teachers in my school regarding their instructional practices with students in subgroups (e.g. students identified as having special needs, english language learners, etc.).	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school describe the predominant instructional practices expected in the school in similar ways.	○	○	○	○	

12. Thinking of your role in evaluating teacher instructional practice(s), (e.g. guided reading, differentiated instruction, universal design, use of formative assessments, use of higher-order thinking questions, metacognition, etc.), rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this in our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress here	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
I provide objective feedback referencing highly specific instructional practice(s) on teacher evaluations.	○	○	○	○	○
I use teacher evaluation data as a subject of conversation between teachers at faculty meetings.	○	○	○	○	○
I produce summary data that reflects themes from the observations of teachers.	○	○	○	○	○
I make objective observational data available to teachers that becomes the topic of professional development (e.g scripted quotes, number of higher level questions during lesson, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
I make student achievement data available to teachers in order to collaboratively analyze pattern of student strength and weakness.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement.	○	○	○	○	

13. Thinking of your role in providing professional development related to instruction, rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this in our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress here	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
I provide a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers regarding their instructional growth goals.	○	○	○	○	○
I monitor teacher participation in professional development activities.	○	○	○	○	○
I provide opportunities for teacher-led professional development regarding instructional goals.	○	○	○	○	○
I provide opportunities for teachers to observe each other in the classroom.	○	○	○	○	○
I provide opportunities for teachers to engage in teacher led professional learning communities.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school can describe how the professional development offered supports their attainment of instructional growth goals.	○	○	○	○	
I provide professional development opportunities for teachers regarding the schools instructional model.	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix II

2. Teacher Survey and Informed Consent

Colleague,

Thank you for taking the time to fill out my survey.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw from the study until such time as the work is accepted for publication. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating, you will not be penalized. There is minimal risk related to participation in this study for you or your school district.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey that will take approximately 10 minutes.

We will do our best to keep your information confidential as this survey is not anonymous. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, I will only be reporting a final summary of responses and there is minimal risk to participants and their affiliated school district. Results may inform future leadership practices within schools and districts.

If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the email or phone number provided below. You may also contact Dr. Deborah Shea at SheaD@sage.edu if you would like to speak to a representative of the College.

Survey Monkey's privacy policy may also be found at:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/privacy-policy/

Thank you for your time,
Rebecca DeVries

* 1. ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are at least 18 years of age

Agree

Disagree

Teacher Survey

Demographics

2. Approximately how long have you been a teacher?

- < 1 year
- 1- 5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- more than 15 years

3. Approximately how long have you been teaching at the current grade level?

- <1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 10-15 years
- more than 15 years

4. What is the approximate enrollment in your school?

- 1-250 students
- 251-500 students
- 501-750 students
- >750 students

5. Approximately what percentage of the students in your school building qualify for free and reduced lunch?

- ◯ >25%
- ◯ 26%-35%
- ◯ 36%-45%
- ◯ 46%-55%
- ◯ 55%-65%
- ◯ 66%-75%
- ◯ >75%

6. What is the approximate percentage of English Language Learners in your school building?

- ◯ 0-10%
- ◯ 11%-15%
- ◯ 16%-20%
- ◯ 21%-25%
- ◯ >25%

7. What is the approximate percentage of Students with Disabilities in your school building?

- ◯ 0-5%
- ◯ 6%-10%
- ◯ 11%-15%
- ◯ 16%-20%
- ◯ >20%

8. What is the approximate percentage of students in your school who were rated as proficient (scoring 3 or 4) on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment in 2015-2016?

- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- 71-80
- 81-90
- 91-100

Teacher Survey

Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership is defined as a school leader who creates a school culture with a focus on instruction.
An instructional model refers to a teaching framework (e.g. Project Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, Bloom's Taxonomy, Guided Reading, etc.).

9. Thinking of your principal as an instructional leader, please rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this at our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress here	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
My principal communicates the vision of what effective instruction should look like.	○	○	○	○	○
My principal uses a shared language regarding instruction in faculty meetings and/or department meetings.	○	○	○	○	
Teachers in my school use a shared language around instruction in their grade level, department or faculty meetings.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school can describe the major components of the school's current instructional model.	○	○	○	○	
Teachers in my school can explain how strategies in the current instructional model promote learning for the school's diverse population.	○	○	○	○	○

10. Thinking of the supervisory and feedback system(s) in your school building, please rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this in our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress in this area	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
My principal collaborates with individual teachers on their instructional growth goals.	○	○	○	○	○
My principal schedules meetings with teachers regarding their instructional growth goals beyond the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) cycle.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school can share examples of how reflection has improved their instructional practice.	○	○	○	○	○

11. Thinking of your principal's role in relation to utilizing multiple source of data for teacher evaluation, please rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this in our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
My principal conducts formal walk-throughs for the purpose of observing our current instructional model.	○	○	○	○	○
My principal provides objective feedback to teachers in my school outside of structured observations regarding instructional practices.	○	○	○	○	
My principal provides objective feedback to teachers in my school regarding their instructional practices with students in subgroups (e.g. students identified as having special needs, english language learners, etc).	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school describe the predominant instructional practices expected in the school in similar ways.	○	○	○	○	

12. Thinking of your principal's role in evaluating teacher instructional practice(s), (e.g. guided reading, differentiated instruction, universal design, use of formative assessments, use of higher-order thinking questions, metacognition, etc.), rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this in our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
My principal provides objective feedback referencing highly specific instruction practice(s) on teacher evaluations.	○	○	○	○	○
My principal uses teacher evaluation data as a subject of conversation between teachers at faculty meetings.	○	○	○	○	
My principal produces summary data that reflects themes from the observation of teachers.	○	○	○	○	○
My principal makes objective observational data available to teachers that become the topic of professional development (e.g. scripted notes, number of higher-order thinking questions during lessons, etc.).	○	○	○	○	○
My principal makes student data available to teachers in order to collaboratively analyze patterns of student strength and weakness.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement.	○	○	○	○	

13. Thinking of your principal's role in providing professional development related to instruction, rate the following statements.

	1. We do not do this in our school	2. We are starting to move in this direction	3. We are making good progress here	4. We have this condition well established	5. We are refining our practice in this area
I am provided with a variety of professional development opportunities regarding my instructional growth goals.	○	○	○	○	○
My principal monitors my participation in professional development activities.	○	○	○	○	○
I am provided with opportunities for teacher-led professional development regarding instructional goals.	○	○	○	○	○
I am provided with opportunities for peer observation in the classroom setting.	○	○	○	○	○
I am provided with opportunities to engage in teacher led professional learning communities.	○	○	○	○	○
I can describe how the offered professional development supports my attainment of my instructional growth goals.	○	○	○	○	
I am provided with professional development opportunities regarding our schools instructional model.	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix III

Rebecca J. DeVries
Doctoral Candidate
Esteves School of Education
140 New Scotland Ave.
Albany, NY 12208
Devrir@sage.edu
(518) 573-2766

August 4th, 2016

Robert J. Marzano, Phd.
7127 S. Danube Court
Centennial, CO 80016

Dear Dr. Marzano,

I am writing to request permission to utilize the School Leadership Evaluation work in the creation of a survey for my dissertation proposal. Specifically, I am hoping to utilize the School Leadership Evaluation, with focus on the Second Domain: Continuous Improvement of Instruction. A copy of the Scales for Domain II Copyright 2013 is attached.

I request non-exclusive world rights to use this material in my work, in all languages and for all editions and formats, including digital/electronic. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you.

In addition, I would be honored to share the dissertation with you upon its completion. The purpose of my study will be to examine the instructional support practices of New York State (NYS) urban/suburban, grade K-5 elementary principals and the correlation that their practices may have on the instructional practice of general education and special education teachers under their purview, utilizing the lens of Marzano 's (2013) Second Domain of Continuous Improvement of Instruction model, through electronic surveys.

If you agree with the terms as described above, please sign and return the letter to me, specifying any credit line, fees, or other conditions you require.

I would be very grateful for your permission. If you require any additional information, do not hesitate to contact me at the address and number above.

Sincerely,

Rebecca J. DeVries, Doctoral Candidate

The Esteves School of Education, Sage Colleges

Rebecca J. DeVries
Doctoral Candidate
Esteves School of Education
140 New Scotland Ave.
Albany, NY 12208
Devrir@sage.edu
(518) 573-2766

Re: Permission for utilizing School Leadership Evaluation

I grant permission requested on the terms stated in this letter. Credit line to be used (if different from citation given above):

Agreed to and accepted:

[redacted]

Date: 8/7/16

Appendix IV

Tables for calculation of *Spearman rho correlation* and *Five Elements* of Marzano et al.'s (2015) *School Leadership Evaluation Model.*

Relationship Between Principal Adherence to the Averages of the Elements of Marzano's (2015) Domain Two and Student Achievement Scores on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam

Practice	Spearman Correlation (r_s)
The school leader provides a clear vision as to how instruction should be addressed in the school	.117
The school leader effectively supports and retains teachers who continually enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans	.049
The school leader is aware of predominant instructional practices throughout the school	.041
The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses that are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data	.043
The school leader ensures that teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals	.141

** Correlation is significant at the <0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Relationship Between Principal Adherence to Element One of Marzano's (2015) Domain Two and Student Achievement Scores on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam

Practice	Spearman Correlation (r_s)
I communicate the vision of what effective instruction should look like (n=99)	.081

I use a shared language regarding instruction in faculty meetings and/or department meetings (n=99)	.039
Teachers in my school use a shared language around instruction in their grade level, department or faculty meetings (n=99)	.115
Teachers in my school can describe the major components of the school's current instructional model (n=99)	.264
Teachers in my school can explain how strategies in the current instructional model promote learning forthe school's diverse population (n=99)	.138

** Correlation is significant at the <0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Relationship Between Principal Adherence to Element Two of Marzano's (2015) Domain Two and Student Achievement Scores on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam

Practice	**Spearman Correlation (r_s)**
I collaborate with individual teachers on their instructional growth goals (n=99)	.084
I schedule meetings with teachers regarding their instructional growth goals beyond the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) cycle (n=99)	-.029
Teachers in my school can share examples of how reflection has improved their instructional needs (n=99)	.076

** Correlation is significant at the <0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Relationship Between Principal Adherence to Element Three of Marzano's (2015) Domain Two and Student Achievement Scores on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam

Practice	**Spearman Correlation (r_s)**

I conduct informal walk-throughs for the purpose of observing our current instructional model (n=99)	.054
I provide objective feedback to teachers in my school outside of structured observations regarding instructional practices (n=99)	-.054
I provide objective feedback to teachers in my school regarding their instructional practices with students in subgroups (e.g. students identified as having special needs, English language learners, etc.) (n=99)	.020
Teachers in my school describe the predominant instructional practices expected in the school in similar ways (n=98)	.114

** Correlation is significant at the <0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Relationship Between Principal Adherence to Element Four of Marzano's (2015) Domain Two and Student Achievement Scores on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam

Practice	**Spearman Correlation (r_s)**
I provide objective feedback referencing highly specific instructional practice(s) on teacher evaluations (n=98)	-.126
I use a teacher evaluation data as a subject of conversation between teachers at faculty meetings (n=99)	-.129
I produce summary data that reflects themes from the observations of teachers (n=99)	.045
I make objective observational data available to teachers that becomes the topic of professional development (e.g. scripted quotes, number of higher level questions during lesson, etc) (n=99)	.026

I make student achievement data available to teachers in order to collaboratively analyze pattern of student strength and weakness (n=100)	
Teachers in my school are able to describe their instructional strategies that have the strongest and weakest relationship to student achievement (n=99)	.157
	.224*

** Correlation is significant at the <.05 level (2-tailed), respectively*

Relationship Between Principal Adherence to Element Five of Marzano's (2015) Domain Two and Student Achievement Scores on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam

Practice	**Spearman Correlation (r_s)**
I provide a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers regarding their instructional growth goals (n=99)	.150
I monitor teacher participation in professional development activities (n=99)	.036
I provide opportunities for teacher-led professional development regarding instructional goals (n=99)	-.015
I provide opportunities for teachers to observe each other in the classroom (n=99)	.079
I provide opportunities for teachers to engage in teacher led professional learning communities (n=100)	.171
Teachers in my school are able to describe how the professional development offered supports their attainment of instructional growth goals (n=99)	.165

I provide professional development opportunities for teachers regarding the schools instructional model (n =99)	.071

** Correlation is significant at the <.05 level (2-tailed), respectively*

Appendix V

School of Health Sciences

Deans Office
65 1st Street
Troy, New York 12180
518.244.2264
Fax: 518.244.4571
sage.edu/academics/health-sciences

December 16, 2016

Rebecca DeVries
470 Baker Avenue
Cohoes, NY 12047

IRB PROPOSAL #533-2016-2017
Reviewer: Francesca Durand, Chair

Dear Rebecca:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application and has approved your project entitled "The Instructional Leadership Practices of NYS Elementary Principals and the relationship to Student Achievement." Good luck with your research.

Please refer to your IRB Proposal number whenever corresponding with us whether by mail or in person.

When you have completed collecting your data you will need to submit to the IRB Committee a final report indicating any problems you may have encountered regarding the treatment of human subjects, if the project goes on for more than one year.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Francesca Durand, PhD
Chair, IRB

FD/nan

Cc. Dr. Deborah Shea

Permission for The Sage Colleges to release work:

I hereby give permission to The Sage Colleges to use my work (title listed above) in the following ways:

- Place in the Sage College Libraries electronic collection and make publically available for electronic viewing by Sage-affiliated patrons as well as all general public online viewers (i.e. "open access").
- Place in the Sage College Libraries electronic collection and share electronically for InterLibrary Loan purposes.
- Keep in the departmental program office to show to other students, faculty or outside individuals, such as accreditors or licensing agencies, as an example of student work.

[redacted]

Name

11.1.17

Date of Signature