PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS DURING LABOR EVENTS AND THE IMPACT ON SCHOOL REFORM

by

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DEDICATION

To my family,

Kerri, Michael and Savannah, I appreciate the support and love you have shown me through this educational endeavor. I am ever grateful to each of you for your understanding and sacrifices. You allowed me time away from home to continue my education and prodded me along the path. Thank you for your encouragement, support, of my dream to earn this degree. Kerri, I also have to thank you for the hours of corrections and editing. We did this together.

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ABSTRACT

Significant labor events (no contract in effect, mediation, arbitration, and work slowdown or stoppage) are often cited as obstacles to school reform and improvement models. While school improvement models and distributed leadership have the potential to increase staff leadership, improve professional development experiences, and increase self-determination; negative contract events and a lack of relational trust can be an obstacle to school improvement initiatives and reform. This study uses a qualitative approach to examine principal behaviors and relational trust in schools experiencing significant labor events and seeks to determine the factors that foster and deter collaborative reform. Findings of this study have identified behaviors and responsibilities that enable principals to enact second order change in times of significant labor events. The most significant finding was that school improvement work can continue during contract strife. The importance of principal neutrality during significant contract events supports this finding. This theme emerged early in the qualitative study and was universal in both principal and teacher interviews. Without neutrality, relational trust required to lead second order change is compromised. Supporting the finding of neutrality was the ongoing attention to relational trust through principal availability and communication with teaching staff. Research indicates that the responsibility of communication can suffer during second order change. However, a theme of increased communication and input through staff meetings, emails, and personal communication emerged. In both case schools the principals knowingly identified the need to communicate as a means to overcome disengagement by staff during significant labor events.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

A strong link between principal leadership responsibilities and the success of school improvement and reform in schools has been suggested in educational research literature (Blankstein, 2013; Fullan, 2006; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty 2005). The renewal of the Elementary and Secondary School Education Act, now commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act, has brought school reform and educational improvement to the forefront of national, state, district, and school level actions. The efforts to reform the American education system at the school level have centered on collaborative models of distributed leadership between teachers and administrators (Blankstein, 2013; Dufour 1986; Leithwood & Sun 2012; Marzano 2004; NASSP 2011).

Transformational leadership has been cited as an essential element of strategic planning and school reform. However, few studies examine the impact of significant labor events, as defined by no contract in effect, mediation, arbitration, and work slowdown or stoppage; and principal leadership behavior in high achieving schools that implement reform strategies through school improvement planning and processes. Perceptions of contractual limitations (Hess, 2010; Price, 2009) and lack of perceived educational benefit (Day & Smethem, 2009; Ewald, 2013) have restricted fundamental reform efforts to create substantial change. The implementation of school improvement efforts requires a significant departure from working to improve educational systems in
the current mental model of enacting policy without accounting for the complexity of education systems (Cuban, 2013). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) assert the implementation of innovative change and improvement in schools requires second-order change and that second-order change is related to eleven of the 21 responsibilities in their meta-analysis. However, only seven of the responsibilities are positively correlated. The seven responsibilities are:

1. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
2. Optimizer
3. Intellectual Stimulation
4. Change Agent
5. Monitoring/Evaluating
6. Flexibility
7. Ideals/Beliefs. (Marzano et al., p. 70)

Within the 21 Leadership Responsibilities, Marzano et al. (2005) identified key principal behaviors within each area of responsibility. More recently, Leithwood and Sun (2012) have classified these responsibilities into Transformational Leadership Practices and labeled the principal behaviors as follows:

1. Develop a shared vision and building goal consensus
2. Hold high performance expectations
3. Provide individualized support
4. Provide intellectual stimulation
5. Model valued behaviors, beliefs, and values
6. Strengthen school culture
7. Building structures to enable collaboration
8. Engaging parents and the wider community
9. Focus on instructional development
10. Contingent reward
11. Management by exception. (Leithwood & Sun, p. 401).

At the same time, school leaders are reliant on teachers to successfully implement second-order change in schools and must influence teachers’ willingness to engage in
change processes (Bryk, 2010; Ewald 2013). Principals must motivate teachers to attain common goals through personal influence and charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and attention to teachers as individuals (Blankstein, 2013; Kouses & Posner, 2007; Northouse, 2012). Motivation creates an environment where teachers willingly engage and collaborate in reform. However, significant contract events erode trust between principals and teachers and cause resistance to reform efforts intended to improve schools. But, principal effectiveness in the implementation of collaborative school improvement can be enhanced through an understanding of how trust and leadership responsibilities are affected by significant contract events.

Collaborative leadership theory is a continuation of the development of participatory management theory that can be traced to Kurt Lewin’s early social science work at the University of Iowa, known as “action research” and “group dynamics.” Lewin’s key studies affecting the development of participatory management theory were the comparative studies of democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire styles of leadership. Rensis Likert further developed the study of participatory management theory with his studies of productivity in human organizations and business in the 1950’s through 1970’s. Likert’s study of leadership in human organizations applied the model of democratic leadership in a broader spectrum of society through studies in the business work environment. His work described four systems of management in the System 1-4 model. The range is from least ideal System 1 “exploitive authoritative,” to System 2 “benevolent authoritative,” to the more ideal System 3 “consultative,” to the most ideal System 4 “participative group management.” The key concept of participatory
management, using System 4, is shared, high performance goals by management and staff. To achieve shared high performance goals, linkages between management and staff must be established to foster interaction, shared decision making and common organizational values and goals. The values of human worth, trust and dignity build relations between superiors and subordinates in the organization operating at the System 4 level. Research about organizations utilizing System 4 management practice has shown greater worker satisfaction and higher production and profitability (Sapru, 2013).

System 4 theory has continued to grow and develop. Edwards Deming applied the concepts in foreign Toyota car factory models of Total Quality Management. Total Quality Management operates on the fundamental premise that, the expense of poor quality work exceed the costs of developing processes that produce high-quality products and services (Hackman & Wageman, 1995). Applied to educational systems, Total Quality Management employs the knowledge of psychology as it applied to motivation, the theory of knowledge of systems that arises from problems solving by those closest to the work, and the understanding and application of statistics to all proposed system changes (Johnson, 1993). System 4 theory and Total Quality Management has continued to evolve in form for application to education. More recently educational improvement and the engagement of teachers in the improvement model has grown into the transformational leadership model (Northhouse, 2012) and collaborative leadership model (Kouzes and Posner, 2012). Togneri (2003) states that “distributed leadership and the success of strategic planning and reform in school districts also depends on new models of support that allow teachers to engage in the type of instruction, data analysis,
and collaboration demanded of them” (p. 47). Leithwood, Strauss & Anderson (2007) further make a case for collaborative leadership with school staff when stating,

Through increased participation in decision making, greater commitment to organizational goals and strategies may develop. Distributed leadership has the potential to increase on-the-job leadership development experiences, and the increased self-determination arising from distributed leadership may improve members’ experience of work. Such leadership allows members to better anticipate and respond to the demands of the organization’s environment. (p. 29)

The creation of a mission, vision, values, and goals are highly important aspects of professional learning communities (Dufour & Eaker 1998). While the creation of consensus in these four areas is important to the outcome of school improvement, this consensus is secondary in importance to the processes and relationships that take shape when the learning community creates these documents (Blankstein, 2013; Fullan 2006). These processes and relationships create linkages between the levels of the educational community. Fullan (2006) aligns with the original concept of the System 4 model when he proposed a linkage between levels of the educational community in school reform. These linkages are defined as a, “permeable connectivity.” “Permeable connectivity requires a sophisticated and delicate balance, because to work it requires all three levels—school, community and district, and state— to interact regularly across and within levels” (p. 96). These relations and processes, in turn, increase participation in decision making and foster greater commitment to organizational goals. Research addresses the effect of collaborative leadership activity to guide school improvement activities, (Blankstein, 2013; Fullan, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005; NASSP, 2011;) and it is reported that schools
reporting strong relational trust were three times more likely to be categorized as improving (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Ross and Gray (2007) further develop the idea of teacher commitment to organizational values. Their premise that transformational leadership is a more powerful theoretical framework than frameworks such as instructional leadership gives rise to the exploration of workplace conditions that lead to successful educational reform. The transformational leadership framework is cited as a predictor of teacher willingness to exert effort to change as well as align their goals more closely with those of the educational organization (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Fernandez, 1993; Ross & Gray, 2007).

Despite this evidence, school administrators cite teacher unions and labor contracts as obstacles to school reform and improvement models (Price, 2009). At the same time, teachers cite reform as reasons for becoming disillusioned and overwhelmed in their profession (Day & Smethem, 2009; Ewald, 2013). While school improvement models and collaborative reform models have the potential to increase staff leadership, development experiences, and self-determination, contractual issues and negative relational trust frequently cause inaction. *Significant labor events* defined as having no contract in effect, mediation, arbitration, and work slowdown or stoppage can create environments that affect teacher commitment to organizational values. This study examined transformational behaviors and conditions building principals must foster to successfully implement school improvement during significant labor events.
Transformational leadership and the inclusion of teachers in school improvement processes and decisions links educational leaders and teachers in the attainment of common goals (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2012). Ross and Gray (2007) further link teacher commitment to organizational change and values through transformational leadership models. The work of Price (2009) studies the perception of school administrators that the language of collective bargaining agreements prevents substantial school reform. Kerchner (2007), Koppich and Kerchner (1990), and Koppich and Kerchner, (2000) examine educational leadership, trust, and school improvement through the lens of mutual agreements between labor and management that fall outside the collective bargain agreement. With research supporting transformational leadership models and confirming the importance of academic optimism, and teacher commitment to school improvement (Beard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2009; Ross & Gray 2007), very little research exists to explore how significant labor events such having no contract in effect, mediation, arbitration, and work slowdown or stoppage affect principal behaviors and responsibilities when implementing collaborative reform strategies.

Purpose of the Study

Current research informs principals that improving schools requires teachers to fundamentally change work habits, metal models, and thought processes in regard to their daily work. These fundamental changes are identified as second-order change and require
complex leadership strategies to engage teachers (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Marzano et al, 2005).

School improvement models identify second-order change as a necessary aspect of school improvement. To initiate improvement, schools are required to identify system weaknesses and develop strategies to address these weaknesses. Advanc-ED/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools is one such accreditation model that requires schools to identify weaknesses and develop improvement plans that result in the implementation of second-order change.

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine the effect of significant labor events on principal behaviors and relational trust in relation to collaborative reform. The results reported will assist superintendents, principals, school boards, state and federal policy makers, and education leadership preparation programs to better prepare school leaders for the implementation of lasting collaborative reform models.

In the current environment of school reform and improvement, building principals are called upon to plan and develop strategies to improve educational work. However, principals cite contract restrictions and union relations as obstacles to school reform (Price, 2009). Further complicating the reform environment is research indicating that teachers cite reform as reason for dissatisfaction with their profession (Day & Sethhem, 2009; Ewald, 2013). Teacher dissatisfaction can lead to labor discord or a possible significant labor event. School reform initiatives are required in these contentious environments and principals are charged with initiating school reform, even during contract discord. This study sought to better understand the effects of significant contract
events on principal behaviors and actions in relation to the implementation of second-order change during school improvement processes.

The purpose of this study was to examine, describe, and compare the leadership responsibilities and behaviors school principals that have enabled the case study schools to successfully implement required Advanc-ED strategies of school reform in the environment of a significant labor event.

The effect of labor relations on the effective learning community dimensions as outlined in Blankstein, (2013) and Marzano et al., (2005) will be explored in Montana schools that are engaged in the Advanc-ED/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools collaborative improvement model. Specifically, the relationship between administrative responsibilities to lead second-order change during significant labor events will be explored.

This study uses a qualitative approach to examine principal behaviors and relational trust in schools experiencing significant labor events and seeks to determine the factors that foster and deter collaborative reform.

Research Questions

This study is designed to focus on the research question of how do principal responsibilities and behaviors during a significant labor event influence school improvement processes? Supporting sub-questions will be: 1) How do labor events influence teacher engagement in the school improvement process? 2) How do labor
events influence relational trust between the principal and teachers? and 3) How do principals influence teacher engagement during significant labor events?

**Significance of the Study**

The results reported will assist superintendents, principals, school boards, state and federal policy makers, and education leadership preparation programs to better prepare school leaders for the implementation of lasting collaborative reform models. Similar studies in a wide geographic and demographic spectrum will be needed to explore the applicability of this study for school administrators in a broad spectrum of schools. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that a wide variety of administrative and labor union related attitudes may exist in schools. The impact of relational trust could be affected by both/either administrative or teacher attitudes and behaviors. However, the research and literature cited above indicate the importance of transformational leadership, leadership responsibilities, and professional learning communities when initiating school reform and improvement. The results of this study give school leaders insight and understanding into the perceived impact of significant contract events and how these events affect leadership behaviors to implement improvement and reform models.

**Assumptions**

The complexities of local school environments in regard to trust relationships and second-order change required for true reform, are difficult to measure in defined
timeframes. Schools and the requirements for accreditation are highly variable. While the researcher worked diligently to maintain credibility through the identification process for the case studies, each school was varied in their school improvement timeline. This process variability could have unforeseen effects on relational trust and second-order change. Credibility may also be affected by variability in contract negotiation timelines in the study schools. Interviews with only those members who had experienced both the significant labor event and engaged in the school improvement process were used to increase trustworthiness in this area.

This study is also limited by the differing staff characteristics of each school studied. The researcher included a range of novice and veteran teachers as well as teachers who were highly engaged in school improvement and those less engaged. Again, interviews were restricted to teachers who had been employed in the district long enough to experience a significant labor event as well as school improvement and reform work through accreditation processes. This criteria necessarily excluded some teachers with short tenure in the study schools.

**Researcher Bias**

The researcher is employed as the high school principal in a school district in Montana that has been a member of Advanc-ED/Northwest Association of Schools for 80 years. While in the role of principal, the researcher was charged with contract negotiations with the teacher union as well as leading school improvement and reform through the Advanc-Ed/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools process. The
bargaining process was founded in interest based bargaining and building level principals alternated serving with board members to represent the school. The process became more contentious as school funding waned. This led a change in the process to exclude principals by the board of trustees in 2011. The main reason cited in discussion between the board and union was the negative effect contentious negotiation processes were having on the principals and their building level relationships.

The accreditation and school improvement processes referenced in this study were initially based in the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. This organization merged with Advanc-Ed. The researcher served first on the Montana state executive committee for the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools and subsequently continued on the Montana state executive board for Advanc-Ed. In this capacity, the researcher led and participated in school accreditation visits, reviewed annual school reports, and voted on recommendations for accreditation. This may contribute to researcher bias of accreditation as a viable school improvement model.

Another potential bias is the fact that the researcher was the building principal in a school and was one of the district contract negotiators just prior to a significant labor event in the district. After the building level administrators were removed from the negotiations team the district did start a school year without a contract in place. Yin (2014) states that conditions of good case study research can be “negated if a research only seeks to use a case study to substantiate a preconceived position” (p.76). However, the researcher was interested in how and why building principals were able to continue to successfully implement school improvement and reform with fidelity despite adverse
contract conditions. The researcher worked to avoid predispositions regarding the conditions and actions leading to a significant contract event.

Research Methods

As the above research questions are well suited for a case study method. Yin (2014) advocates that research questions that seek to answer the question of “how” are well suited for case study research.

The embedded multiple-case study was selected to follow replication logic instead of a sampling logic. Thus, the case schools are similar to multiple experiments with similar or contrasting results (Yin, 2014). This design ensured that the orientation of the research questions remained appropriate and guard against slippage. Slippage can be indicated by a maturation or change in the environment being studied. Examples of slippage in this study could include a departure from the Advanc-ED improvement model or departure of a school leader and lead teachers. If during the implementation of the research strategies, slippage did occur, a new research design would have been implemented to re-examine interview protocols, and study design to explore emerging themes not yet identified.

The design of multiple-case studies falls into two categories: holistic or embedded. The holistic design calls for the study of multiple cases, and the data is then pooled into a single unit of analysis. Embedded design maintains individual units of analysis within each case study and is appropriate when surveys are used at each site (Yin, 2014). Surveys of relational trust and principal leadership traits were available and
were administered at both school sites to the principal and faculty. The results of the surveys were not pooled across the two cases. The results were used as a means to inform questions selected for the qualitative interview protocol.

Individual cases were identified through embeddedness which refers to the use of two criteria to identify case study models. The two criteria for selection of cases in this research were schools that experienced a significant labor event defined as a strike, work slow-down, mediation, arbitration, or failure to begin an instructional year with a contract in place, and schools demonstrating fidelity to school improvement. Two schools were identified by experts in labor disputes and Advanc-Ed accreditation. First, the Montana Executive Director for Advanc-Ed/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools was contacted to identify schools that had completed the school improvement planning process through Advanc-ED Northwest Accreditation with fidelity. From this list, an education law attorney and the chief labor contract negotiator for the Montana School Boards Association identified schools that had experienced significant labor events as defined above in the prior four years. This process identified two schools that model the criteria of school improvement fidelity and significant labor events.

Data were collected and analyzed for thematic strands in each embedded case school individually. Each case analysis examined the unique themes related to principal behavioral responsibilities during significant contract events and their effect on school improvement. Upon completion of individual analysis, a cross case synthesis examined and reported both divergent and convergent themes across the case schools.
The Northwest Association of Accredited School division of Advanc-ED requires schools belonging to the organization to engage in a framework of modeling school improvement. The Advance-ED model is a regional and trans-regional affiliation and carries with it the ability to compare school improvement models beyond local, state, and national levels. This accreditation is a set of rigorous protocols and research-based processes for evaluating an institution’s organizational effectiveness...today accreditation examines the whole institution—the programs, the cultural context, the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of students (Advanc-ED 2013).

This accreditation assessment through Advanc-ED includes five core standards for quality schools that are embedded in current research.

For schools in Montana, membership in this organization is optional. Currently 54 schools and job corps facilities hold membership in the Advanc-ED/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. Each school is required to engage in a validated school improvement model addressing five standards of quality schools.

Advanc-ED accreditation requires transformational leadership activities that engage teachers in assessment of current school conditions as well as the execution of school reform work. The requirement to engage in transformational leadership, is a valid and reliable strategy as indicated in the research cited above. The Advance-ED accreditation model is used on national and international levels for school accreditation. In addition, Advanc-ED research correlates the five standards of quality schools to school
improvement (Advanc-ED, 2013). The widespread use and research associated with this accreditation model provides both validity and reliability for use of this school improvement model. Research also links second-order change to relational trust (Bryk, 2010; Bryk & Schneider 2002; Forsyth, Barnes, & Adams 2006; Sebring, Allensworth, et al 2006). At the same time, significant labor events have a chilling effect on the ability of school leaders to implement school improvement models (Price, 2009). However, Price found that unions and collective bargaining agreements, while impacting school reform, do not limit reform to the degree suggested by the interviewees in his study.

To examine this phenomenon, this embedded multiple-case study examines the behavioral responsibilities of the school principal in two schools that were identified by experts in the field as showing fidelity to the Advanc-Ed Northwest Association of Accredited Schools school improvement process and having experienced a significant labor event in the past four years. Fidelity to the school improvement process was judged by adherence by the principals to school self-study, identification of strengths and weakness in the five standards of quality schools, goal setting to address weaknesses, and reporting of progress.

The conceptual framework of this study examines the eleven behavioral leadership responsibilities listed by Marzano et al., (2005) as leadership for second-order change. Seven positively correlated responsibilities are: knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, optimizer, intellection stimulation, change agent, monitoring/evaluating, flexibility, and ideals/beliefs. Four negatively correlated responsibilities are: culture, communication, order, and input. The study specifically
seeks to examine how principal responsibilities during a significant labor events influence school improvement processes.

**Definition of Terms**

For purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

- **Advanc-ED/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools Accreditation**—a non-profit non-partisan accrediting agency that conducts on-site external reviews of educational systems and agencies resulting in school accreditation by the agency (Advanc-ED, 2013)

- **Goals 2000**—Also known as the Education America Act, defined as a more systematic educational reform as it required “establishing ambitious educational goals, and then comparing content standards, instructional goals, and periodic assessments of student performance with those goals” (Heise, 1994).

- **No Child Left Behind**—current federal education law requiring that all children reach proficient levels of performance by the year 2014 as measured by standardized test performance.

- **Outcome Based Education**—a movement intended to prescribe the content and performance tasks to be learned by all students (Spady, 1994).

- **Principal**—the head of a public school (Scribner-Bantam English Dictionary)

- **Professional unionism**—view that teaching is a profession, not a craft, and teachers are charged with insuring the well-being of the education system in
which they work and teachers are perceived as comprising an organization built around knowledge work (Cooper & Sureau, 2008)

- **Relational Trust**—trust in which respect, competence, integrity, and building interpersonal relationships build capacity to confront the uncertainty associated with change (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

- **Significant Labor Event**—no contract in effect, mediation, arbitration, and work slowdown or stoppage.

- **Second Order Change**—deep change in a system that alters the fundamental operations which requires a dramatic shift in direction and new ways of thinking and acting associated with double loop learning and new mental models (Marzano, et al., 2005).

- **System 4 Theory**—theory of democratic leadership models in human organizations and business developed by Rensis Likert.

- **Total Quality Management**—the approach to improving organizational effectiveness developed by Edwards Deming that takes into account how people and organizations actually operate based in the philosophy that an organization’s purpose is to stay in business, promote stability in the community, generate products and services use to consumers, and provide for the satisfaction and growth of workers in the organization (Hackman & Wageman, 1995).

- **Transformational Leadership**—a participatory model of leadership which engages leadership and others creating a connection that raises the level or motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Northouse 2012, p. 176).
• Industrial Unionism-- model of unionism where the teachers’ union represents the interests of economic and work concerns, while management is responsible for policy (Koppich 2007).
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review explores the connections of educational reform through a historical perspective of increased federalism, unionism, leadership theory, trust, and school improvement models. The common thread throughout the review is the foundations of the current education reform efforts and leadership theories that have resulted in the linkage of teachers, their unions, and management in the common goal of improving American education.

The current American education system holds its foundations in Jeffersonian ideals of sustaining democratic government, and in the Prussian Industrial Revolution model of the 19th Century. Much like the factories of the time, the public education system was designed to educate the masses in what has been called a one-size-fits-all model of education where all students receive the same input in a lock step time frame. The resulting output was intended to be an educated populous trained to function as workers in the industrial factories (Bracey 2009; Grant 2007).

An outgrowth of the industrial factory was the industrial union. Employment in the industrial education model emulated its industrial counterparts. Workers feared exploitation by owners as conceptualized by Karl Marx, and owners/management feared workers organizing and withholding services in the form of a strike (Cooper & Sureau 2008). While key industrial union work stoppages have been numerous, it was 1962
before a pioneering educational strike took place in New York City. Since the 1962 strike in New York, when the United Federation of Teachers walked off the job, the term professional unions (Kerchner & Koppich 1993) has replaced the industrial union model for the educational context. With the mindset of a professional role, teachers departed from the industrial union mindset of attending to work conditions and salaries to a mindset “work[ing] to support and defend public education… [T]eachers’ unions have become a (perhaps the) major spokes-group for public schools and key defender of the system at all three levels of government” (Cooper and Sureau 2008, p. 89).

Research regarding reforms in industrial style unionism toward a more professional union orientation has become the basis for increased teacher engagement in school reform (Kerchner & Caufman 1995; Kerchner & Koppich 2007; Koppich 2007; Koppich & Kerchner 2000; Price 2009). In addition, research and literature in the field of leadership are finding improved institutional capacity to reform and improve when transformational leadership styles are implemented (Bryk, 2010; Leithwood & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Researchers increasingly call for the leadership-union relationship to engage beyond the areas of salary and work conditions to address school reform. As engagement requires trust between school leaders and teachers/unions, perceptions of trustworthiness of school leaders affects teacher and union engagement in school improvement and reform models. (Blankstein, 2013; Byrk & Schneider, 2002; Swain, 2007;) However, little research has been conducted to explore how school leader perceptions of teachers’ trustworthiness affect administration decisions to engage teachers in school reform efforts.
**Education Reform**

The industrial educational model was implemented with little criticism until the launch of Sputnik in 1957. With this launch, misinformed blame of the American education system for substandard education took root (Bracey 2009). As Bracey (2009) explores the political advantage, history, and science surrounding the launch of Sputnik he concludes that “none of these reasons had anything to do with what was happening in schools. It didn’t matter. The scapegoating began almost immediately” (p. 38). Thus, the launch of Sputnik served to give momentum to the effort to reform the public education system.

The current culture of school reform gained a strong foothold in 1983 with the “A Nation at Risk” report authored by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). This commission reported that “If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war” (p. 5). While the commission is frequently associated with an attempt by then president Ronald Reagan to shrink and/or eliminate the United States Department of Education, the commission also brought school reform into the political spotlight. With this strong statement regarding mediocre education from the commission, schools were thrust to the forefront of national debate on quality education and international testing comparisons. Ongoing attention to public schools and educational outcomes has resulted in the implementation of a series of efforts aimed at improving learning outcomes and demonstrating educational progress. These initiatives
were first grounded in state initiatives to provide standards leading to a common curriculum framework for all students (Grant, 2007). Other initiatives such as Total Quality Management were outgrowths of the application of business models to the school reform movement.

In the 1990’s, many states adopted outcome based education (OBE). Outcome based education was a movement intended to prescribe the content and performance tasks to be learned by all students (Spady, 1994). Most states adopted these standards that were based in the six broad educational goals agreed upon by President George H.W. Bush and the National Governors Association in 1989, which reallocated the roles of the federal, state, and local governments in education providing for more federalization of education. The Education America Act was regarded as a more systematic educational reform as it identified educational goals, and then compared content standards, instructional goals, and periodic assessments of student performance with those goals (Heise, 1994).

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act was adopted by the Clinton administration in 1994 and furthered the content and performance tasks of outcome based education. The goals adopted in the legislation were that by the year 2000:

- All children will start school ready to learn;
- 90 percent will graduate from high school;
- All will demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter in English, math, science, foreign languages, civics, economics, the arts, history and geography;
- The United States will be first in the world in math and science;
- All adults will be literate;
- No school will have drugs, violence, firearms or alcohol;
- Teachers will have needed skills;
- All schools will get parents involved (Stedman & Riddle, 1998).
Rothstein (1999) spoke to the fact that none of the goals set forth in the Goals 2000 legislation were met when he wrote,

faced with unmet goals, it's easy to maintain that sincere effort was all that mattered. That is the approach taken by the National Education Goals Panel, an agency run by governors, members of Congress, state legislators and federal education officials. Ducking accountability, the panel earlier this year proposed changing the name ‘Goals 2000’ to ‘America's Education Goals,’ dropping any mention of deadlines. Then, in its 1999 report, it stated that its ‘bold venture’ had worked, because the goals had ‘helped stimulate reforms’ (p. 15).

While the attempt to federalize education was not seen as a success, congress continued to attempt to implement educational reform through standards and assessment measures. Despite the unmet standards of Goals 2000, by 2001, Congress had enacted the No Child Left Behind Act, which became law under President George W. Bush and has continued into the Obama administration. This law required that all children would reach proficient levels of performance by the year 2014 as measured by standardized test performance. Thus, Ravitch (2010) states, “the passage of No Child Left Behind made testing and accountability our national education strategy” (p. 30).

Most of these efforts were decried as failures when student test scores reportedly lagged in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) international averages and when norm referenced tests such as the SAT and ACT failed to show significant gains over time. While the use of these tests and their comparisons are frequently debated, the fact remains that the PISA, ACT, and SAT provide a metric of comparison for students. The PISA is an international assessment of math, science, and reading, and the ACT and SAT are both common measures of reading and mathematics on a national level.
There are numerous factors affecting the national testing results and comparisons. In making his argument against using PISA, SAT, and ACT comparisons, Bracey (2009) points out that the SAT was designed for white, male, upper-class students from the New England states. He continues the argument by stating that today the students taking the SAT in no way represent the original norming group. Bracey continues his attack on many tests including the PISA, citing international concerns of cultural bias, exclusion of special education students, and schools refusing the test (specifically in England). Further compounding the argument against the PISA, Tirozzi (2013) contends that other countries test select students and only those students still in their education systems. He states, “those who lament the PISA rankings of U.S. students should actually take pride and comfort in the fact that ninety-nine percent of our fifteen-year-olds are in school, and that as a nation we have responsibly passed the litmus test on randomization” (p. 14).

Still, critics of education have continued to advocate that American public schools are not serving the needs of their students. The federal government and privately funded think tanks such as the Gates Foundation, Teach for America, and the Walton Foundation, have invested significant amounts of money in schools that are willing to implement reforms based on criteria these foundations espouse as needed improvements to education (Cuban, 2013; Tirozzi, 2013). Frequently, these reforms are not based in current research and are theoretical in nature. Ravitch (2010) exposed this flaw when she wrote that while the Gates “foundation officials regularly claimed that their decision to support small schools was based on research, most research available at the time was written by advocates of small schools” (p. 204). She further points out that when studied,
small schools did outperform comprehensive high schools in language arts but trailed comprehensive high schools in mathematics. Another questionable example of resource investment in school reform by external bodies is the U.S. government’s Teach for America program. The program enlists high achieving college graduates and professionals to commit to teach for two years in high poverty schools. However, eighty percent of these “success story” recruits leave the classroom within four years (Tirozzi, 2013).

Similarly, Ravitch (2010), and Tirozzi (2013) assert that the Walmart Family Foundation is synonymous with charters and privatization despite the fact that charter schools have been shown to perform no better than public schools. Supporting this assertion, Stanford University based Center for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO) wrote that English language learners and economically disadvantaged students perform well in charter schools. However, “the flip-side of this insight should not be ignored either. Students not in poverty and students who are not English language learners on average do notably worse than the same students who remain in the traditional public school system” (Center for Research on Educational Outcomes, 2009, p. 7). Nonetheless, political efforts to provide public funding to non-public schools through vouchers, charters, and school choice, have become the norm in most states. Currently, forty two states and the District of Columbia allow for charter schools (Center for Education Reform, 2013) and vouchers are available to support school choice in 12 states and the District of Columbia (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2013).
With this environment as a backdrop, the political organizations of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association have advanced their own ideals regarding education reform. The outgrowth of this effort is the Common Core State Standards, which outline in more detail, prescriptive educational outcomes and performance tasks. The Common Core State Standards were developed through a consortium of states and have been adopted by 47 states (one state has withdrawn). This effort continues the Goals 2000 and No Child Left Behind federalization of school curricula with a criterion based assessment strategy for all students.

Further adding to the reform of education through standards is the new College and Career Ready initiative developed by the U.S. Department of Education under President Obama and Education Secretary Duncan. President Obama touted these standards as the “reenvisioned federal role in education” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p.1). This initiative is the federal vehicle to carry the school reform effort by giving broad goals to the pending reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Education act. These summarized goals are:

- **Rigorous College- and Career-Ready Standards.** Following the lead of the nation’s governors and state education leaders, the administration is calling on all states to adopt both state-developed standards in English language arts and mathematics that build toward college and career readiness by the time students graduate from high school, and high-quality statewide assessments aligned with these standards.
- **Rigorous and Fair Accountability and Support at Every Level.** Building on these statewide standards and aligned assessments, every state will ensure that its statewide system of accountability rewards schools and districts for progress and success, requires rigorous interventions in the lowest-performing schools and districts, and allows local flexibility to determine the appropriate improvement and support strategies for most schools.
- **Measuring and Supporting Schools, Districts, and States.**
State accountability systems will be expected to recognize progress and growth and reward success rather than only identify failure. To ensure that accountability no longer falls solely at the doors of schools, districts and states will be held accountable for providing their schools, principals, and teachers with the support they need to succeed.

- **Building Capacity for Support at Every Level.**
  As the administration asks more of each level of the system, it will also build state and district capacity to support schools, school leaders, teachers, and students. The administration’s proposal will allow states and districts to reserve funds to carry out such activities.

- **Fostering Comparability and Equity.**
  To give every student a fair chance to succeed and to give principals and teachers the resources to support student success, the administration will encourage increased resource equity at every level of the system (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. 2-8).

This history of legislated reform efforts has created a landscape of change in public school systems. This context requires ongoing efforts by school leaders, teachers and teachers’ unions to critically analyze local performance in terms of local, state, and national expectations for student outcomes.

**Unionism in Public Schools**

The move of education into the realm of industrial unions began in 1944. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Wagner act allowing collective bargaining for private sector employees. However, public employees, including teachers, did not enjoy this right until the 1960’s and 70’s. Due to the fact Congress did not specifically enact bargaining for public employees, these decisions were reserved to state legislation and local boards (Cooper & Sureau, 2008; Koppich, 2007). A climate of fear was also at play in regard to teacher unionization, and this climate served to retard policy allowing for unionization. School boards and superintendents feared teachers would quit, strike, or
organize, resulting in an implosion of the public education system. Additionally, the perception that teaching was a civil servant job relegated to women in low paying positions, delayed the push for unionization (Cooper & Sureau, 2008).

In the absence of unions, and bargaining agreements, teaching employment conditions were set in a process called “meet and confer” which Kerchner (2007) identifies as a paternalistic system where teachers were spoken for by school board and administrators (p. 9). At the same time, teachers were angered that decisions about pay, working hours, class size, preparation, and curriculum did not include them. “The bonds of meet and confer finally frayed irreparably in the social activism of the 1960’s. Teachers came to see their interests as different from administrators’ and began to seek an alternative means to dealing with their employer. They turned to industrial-style collective bargaining” (Koppich, 2007, p. 9).

The first notable union action was when 20,000 New York teachers walked off the job in April of 1962. Following this act, legislative activity in the states enacted collective bargaining laws covering teachers. Eventually, under the union leader Al Shanker, teachers did organize in 32 states and the District of Columbia, gaining the right to collectively bargain (Cooper & Sureau, 2008). Today, 45 states and the District of Columbia legally recognize teacher collective bargaining (Johnson et.al, 2009). It is worth noting that even in states without collective bargaining, teacher unions can and do exist under the Freedom to Assemble amendment of the U.S. Constitution. In these states, teacher unions can and do exert political pressure in efforts to garner improved salaries and work conditions.
Since the inception of teacher unions, the shared management and union ideal was to narrow the scope of bargaining in which management reserved rights to set policy, and teacher unions concentrated on wages and work conditions (Kerchner & Koppich 2007). Traditional bargaining emphasizes separation of labor and management with the assumption that the two sides have conflicting interests. This arrangement posits teachers as workers who follow orders and submit to authority while viewing management as overseers of policy, directives, and work. These agreements reinforce the industrial style bargaining that restricts teacher voice to conditions of work while giving management control over the content and conduct of the work. This bargaining represents the industrial model of unionism where the teachers’ union represents the interests of economic and work concerns, while management is responsible for policy (Koppich 2007; Koppich & Kerchner 2000; Koppich & Kerchner 2007).

With the onset of education reform created with the release of A Nation at Risk (1983), the role of the teachers’ union has experienced an evolution. This evolution has been referred to as “reform unionism” (Kerchner & Mitchell 1986). Kerchner and Mitchell advocate four options to reform labor relations. Option one is to leave the union/management relation as is with the ideal that the process is a developmental activity that responds to its changing environment. Option two is to revise the dispute-resolution practices in the current labor relations act which follow the view that employment is conflictual, and unionism is a means to manage the conflict. Option three is to repeal state collective bargaining acts which entail that teaching is viewed as an activity to be controlled and managed. This option would eliminate unionism as a failed
experiment. The fourth option is to make deliberate changes to labor statutes to allow for a redefinition of the scope of bargaining. This means including in the bargaining process, those items to enhance education and professionalization and by default including the union as a responsible party to educational improvement.

More recently, the term *reform unionism* has been replaced with *professional unionism* (Cooper & Sureau, 2008; Kaufman & Kerchner, 1995; Kerchner & Koppich, 2007). Professional unionism embraces the ideal that teaching is a profession, not a craft, and teachers are charged with insuring the well-being of the education system in which they work. As unions transform away from industrial unionism, the perception of union members must change. Instead of teachers being viewed as workers who deliver prepackaged solutions, they would be perceived as comprising an organization built around knowledge work (Cooper & Sureau, 2008; Kerchner & Caufman, 1995).

Knowledge work requires craft, artistry, and dedication, and it requires teachers to assume responsibility for authority and reform. Kerchner, Koppich and Weeres (1998) wrote that “unions must have a new vision built around the principles of ‘organizing around quality, organizing around individual schools, and organizing around teaching careers’” (p. 23). Organizational quality requires that unions and teachers internalize the debate around standards, assessment, and the consequences of failing to achieve these benchmarks. This can be accomplished through professional development and a strong system of peer review. This requires that teachers define, measure, and support good teaching and ultimately make decisions about colleague performance and employment. Organizing around individual schools requires that unions expand the scope
of bargaining to embrace policy and resource allocation related to student achievement. Organizing around teacher careers instead of jobs is a concept that predates the current union tradition. Organizing around an occupation allows members to change jobs as well as the nature of their work easily (Kerchner, Koppich & Weeres 1998).

Unfortunately, reform efforts and professional unionism have moved forward at an unsteady pace. Public suspicion, legal decisions, and current collective bargaining laws make change difficult from a policy standpoint. Most collective bargaining laws limit the scope of bargaining. This scope is generally compensation and work conditions, and the law is intended to separate the intentions of “public good” and “private interests” (Kerchner & Koppich, 2007). Innovative practices such as peer review, joint labor management committees, and student achievement goals have been outside the scope of current collective bargaining laws. Kerchner and Koppich (2007) advocate for the expansion of collective bargaining through legal reform. This reform of traditional management and union relations would allow for innovative practices that address student achievement, resource allocation, and professional growth issues. Teachers in a professional unionism setting are required to abandon traditional union roles. Instead of salary and work conditions, the preservation of public education through reformation and ultimately high level student achievement become the focus of the union and management in collaboration (Kerchner & Koppich 2007). Kerchner et al. (1998), summarize this change by stating that,

Organizing a union, and a school, around knowledge work is far different. Knowledge workers assume that most educational solutions will be created from the classroom up rather than assembled centrally and handed down. Knowledge workers know that high levels of craft, artistry, and
dedication are necessary, and that a new kind of bargain needs to be struck that gives teachers both authority and responsibility for reform. (Kerchner, Koppich, & Weeres, 1998 p. 23)

Teacher unions and contracts have some impact on the implementation of school reform and redesign work. However, Price (2009) studied schools in Ohio, Washington, and California and based the study on interviews regarding obstacles to school reform. This study, focused on personnel autonomy and scheduling flexibility, found that unions and collective bargaining agreements, while impacting school reform, do not limit reform to the degree suggested by interviewees. Educators tend to view contractual language as barriers to school reform. However, Price found that collective bargaining agreements are more flexible than perceived. The difficulty arises in the complex provisions of the agreements and the time required to comply with elaborate procedures. Thus, there is management paralysis.

Koppich and Kerchner (1990) further point out that as labor relations generationally mature, there is a change in the substance and character of negotiations. First generation relations are characterized as generally selfless, second generation relations are characterized as good faith bargaining where conflict often becomes a part of the process, and finally the third generation is represented by negotiated policy and professional unionism. However, Swain’s (2007) research noted that trust in school districts between the union, and specifically, the superintendent, is not bound by a collective bargaining process. Other factors such as relational trust, decision input, working for consensus, delegation, recruiting those who trust, providing training, allowing autonomy, nurturing, and setting logical limits, all play a role in a working
relationship with administration and teachers. In contrast, Kerchner and Caufman (1995) acknowledge that the professional unionism model broadens the potential areas of conflict between management and the union and generally exceeds the scope of the contract bargaining relationship as allowed by current labor laws.

Negotiating the pitfalls and nuances of the leadership and teacher/union roles is at best difficult. As Blankstein (2013), states,

Creating common understandings, therefore, is hard work. Getting commitment from the school community is even more difficult. And changing fundamental assumptions or beliefs is harder still. Yet these are the challenges inherent in building a true learning community, and the payoff for doing so is enormous. The challenge then becomes how to build trust within the school community to foster the ideal of change (p. 52).

**Leadership Theory**

It is clear that educational reform has become the topic of ongoing debate in government policy, educational institutions, the press, and schools. With greater reliance on a global economy and the innovation brought on by technology, the current American education system is being called upon to retool to meet those specific needs. All parties involved in this debate acknowledge the need for reforms to education, and research is beginning to provide direction for those charged with public education to work toward a common goal of reformation of industrial style educational models. The traditional role of industrial model school management leadership that excluded teachers and unions from the policy and educational practice decisions is likely a relic of the past. As teachers and unions turn to the professional union model, unions expect to engage in roles that exceed the boundaries of salary and work conditions.
An indicator of this trend is that current literature reflects a transition from an industrial union relationship between school leaders and teachers to a more participatory model in which school leadership and teachers share in common goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Northouse, 2012). This model is frequently identified as transformational leadership (Bass, 1997; Avolio & Bass, 1989). The foundation of these works were early studies in participatory management by Lewin and Likert.

Kurt Lewin and Rensis Likert pioneered studies of the relationship between workers, leadership, and productivity in American factory settings. Kurt Lewin’s early social science work at the University of Iowa became known as “action research,” studying phenomena associated with “group dynamics.” Lewin’s key studies affecting the development of participatory management theory were the comparative studies of democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire styles of leadership.

Rensis Likert is known to have further developed the study of participatory management theory with his studies of production in human organizations and business in the 1940’s through the 1970’s. In his early work, Lewin and his constituents performed two action research works in the field of management. These works studied leaders of youth activity groups such as Boy Scouts. The first, (Bavelas and Lewin, 1946) focused on autocratic, low performing leadership with low morale levels. These leaders were retrained in democratic leadership skills which resulted in a greater sense of calm, poise, and satisfaction in the effect the newly learned democratic method had on the children they were leading. Likert’s continuation of the study of leadership in human organizations further applied the model of democratic leadership in a broader spectrum of
society through studies of participatory management in industrial factories. In his extensive twenty-five year studies, Likert developed the System 1-4 continuum.

“These systems can be defined by using a limited number of key human organizational dimensions. These dimensions are those that have been found through extensive research to correlate highest with performance across a wide variety of different kinds of organizations” (Likert, 1978, p.17).

Likert’s continuation of the study of leadership in human organizations further applied the model of democratic leadership in a broader spectrum of society through studies in the business work environment. His work described four systems of management in the System 1-4 model. The range is from least ideal System 1 “exploitive authoritative,” to System 2 “benevolent authoritative,” to the more ideal System 3 “consultative,” to the most ideal System 4 “participative group management.” The key concept of participatory management, using System 4, are shared, high performance goals by all members. To achieve this performance level, it is necessary that overlapping group links create a structure to integrate all individuals into the organization (Likert, 1978).

The action research by Likert has resulted in the development of leadership theories centered on the concepts of democratic leadership. From the ideals of democratic leadership, the concepts of transformational leadership and collaborative leadership have become prominent ideals in educational reform initiatives.

These models are gaining in popularity as current literature and research continue to contribute to the evolution of the concept known as participatory management. The
term transformational leadership emerged in the work by political psychologist James MacGregor Burns in his work *Leadership* (1978). Northouse (2012) states that “Burns attempted to link the role of leadership to followership” and contends that those in leadership positions work to tap the motives of followers to attain common goals (p. 176). Northouse (2012) further defines transformational leadership as the “process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (p. 176).

Transformational leadership is summarized in the four factors that leaders exhibit to be transformational. These factors are: Factor 1 - idealized influence and charisma. These leaders have high standards and are strong role models who instill the desire to emulate these standards and skills in their subordinates. Factor 2 - inspirational motivation. This factor calls for the leader to communicate and inspire high expectations through a shared vision. Factor 3 - intellectual stimulation. Through this factor, followers are supported in their efforts to be creative and innovative in challenging personal and organization beliefs and values. Factor 4 - individualized consideration, where leaders provide a supportive environment through coaching and advising their followers. In this context, leaders assess the needs of individuals and provide support through personal challenges, training, and specific directives (Northouse, 2012, pp. 181-183). In this instance, a leader may grant a follower more authority, such as becoming a training expert. Conversely, an individual needing extensive support may be forced to accept affiliation with those in appointed authority positions.
Northouse (2012) further states that transformational leadership produces greater effects than transactional leadership (exchanges between leaders and followers) by emphasizing influence and charisma, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. However, most educational leaders use a variety of leadership models to attain desired outcomes. Supporting this statement was the work of Avolio & Bass (1988) who advocate that effective leadership must function in both the transactional and transformational leadership practices to engage teachers. In later work, Bass (1997) further advocates that the transformational leadership paradigm does not replace conceptions of leadership as exchanges between leaders and subordinates. He posits that transformational leadership “does not replace the conceptions of leadership as exchanges of reinforcements by the leader that are contingent on follower’s performance” (p. 130). Instead, the role of transformational leader simply enlarges the view of leadership to include the role of elevating followers’ motivation, understanding, maturity, and self-worth. Because transformational leadership increases human potential, researchers advocate a change in schools toward a transformational style to improve student achievement and maintain public confidence (Anderson, 2008; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Kerchner & Caufman, 1995; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Kerchner & Mitchell, 1986).

The development of transformational leadership was documented by Bennis and Nanus (1985) when they identified four common strategies of transformational leaders. These strategies were a clear sense of vision, social architectural ability, trust building by communicating personal standards, and deployment of self through positive self-regard.
The identification of these four strategies is significant in that it is a departure from the measurable competencies generally associated with leadership. Previously, leadership skills could be quantified and were generalized into areas such as technical competency, prior leadership record, conceptual skills, and interpersonal skills, all of which are often used in the evaluation of leadership. This change is reflected by Hoy & Miskel (2013) when they write that transformational “leaders become change agents and ultimately transform the organization. The source of transformational leadership is in the personal values and beliefs of leaders” (p. 452).

More recently, Kouzes and Posner (2012) weighed in on transformational leadership suggesting that leadership is comprised of an observable set of skills and abilities. In their study, Kouzes and Posner (2012), identified five observable practices of exemplary leadership. These practices are:

- Model the way - Exemplary leaders gain commitment from their followers by earning the right and respect to lead. This is accomplished through interpersonal involvement and actions that model what is expected of others. The leader is willing to do what they ask others to do
- Inspire a shared vision - Leaders enable vision by building unity around a common purpose. “Leaders must know their constituents and speak their language. People must believe that leaders understand their needs and have their interests at heart…leaders must have intimate knowledge of people’s dreams, hopes, aspirations, visions and values
- Challenge the process - Leaders know that status quo is not acceptable. They know that in the process of innovation and change there is risk of mistakes and failure. Despite this, leaders move ahead in small steps to produce small wins and incremental change
- Enable others to act - Leaders enlist others to act through a sense of group belonging. Trust is a foundation in enabling others to act; higher degrees of trust result in an organizational willingness to change, take risks, and foster growth. This individual strength within the organization results in people taking a leadership role. Leadership is “founded on trust, and the more people trust their leaders, and each other, the more they take risks,
make changes, and keep organizations and movements alive. Through that relationship, leaders turn their constituents into leaders themselves”

- Encourage the heart - Leaders know that celebrations and rituals that are authentic and honest build a sense of support, spirit, and identity in the organization. “It’s part of the leader’s job to show appreciation for people’s contributions and to create a culture of *celebrating values and victories.*” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, pp.15-22)

Adding to this research, Northouse (2012) described transformational leadership as a process where the leader “engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (p. 176). The leader in this type of model has strong personal values and ideals, and the leader is effective in the motivation of followers to support greater group interests over personal self-interest. The result of this leadership model is that the result produced exceeds the expected outcome.

However it was Blankstein (2013) who directly applied the principles of transformational leadership to educational practice. In addition to describing the technical “what” and “how” of school leadership, Blankstein states that “the ability to articulate such a clear and compelling message to all educational stakeholders—inside and outside of the school building—is the beginning of defining… “moral purpose” (p.3). He goes on to state that these transformational skills answer “why am I doing this and who do I need to be to succeed” (p.5)? The application of this educational moral purpose is developed in the transformational leadership concept through Blankstein’s (2013) application of six principles of strong educational leadership. These six principles are:

- Common mission, vision, values, and goals - Leaders of professional learning communities define the common base on which all work within the organization is built. This base provides the direction for transformational leadership within a school system but “the real gains in
doing this come from the process and the relationships that are shaped along the way

- Ensuring achievement for all - School leaders must foster a belief system and shared school mission that all students can and will learn. This belief unifies staff behavior in a commitment to systemic student success.

- Collaborative teaming - Collaboration among teachers if often superficial. Collaborative teaming should serve enhanced instruction and learning and ultimately the mission, vision, values, and goals of the school. Collaboration specifically calls for an end to isolationist teaching.

- Using data to guide decision making and continuous improvement - Professional learning communities systematically collect, analyze, and confront data. This process is not about leadership pointing fingers. Instead, it is the collective effort to determine strengths and weaknesses. This analysis allows for a collective effort to target specific areas for improvement as well as replicate and celebrate successes.

- Gaining active engagement from family and community - This specific principle stands separate from general transformational leadership models but is important to the school because of the ultimate product - student learning. In a professional learning community (PLC), three key ideas support family relationships. First, the professional learning community (PLC) must have understanding and empathy for the parents as well as community. Second, the professional learning community must effectively engage families in the learning processes and operational environment of the school. Finally, the professional learning community must communicate regularly with families (Dufour and Dufour, 2005).

- Building sustainable leadership capacity - The principal’s job is too big and too complex to do alone. Sustainable leadership is building the capacity in the organization to create enduring change that ensures learning. To accomplish this, the responsibility shared by all is larger than the individual. Thus, the professional learning community is the logical outgrowth of how to build the leadership capacity of a school while fostering reform and improvement in the educational system. (Blankstein, 2013, pp. 36-45)

Teacher Engagement

While Blankstein (2013) asserts the need for building sustainable leadership capacity, it was DuFour and Eaker (1998) who suggested the establishment of professional learning communities (PLC) to implement the concepts of transformational leadership and reform efforts. DuFour and Eaker (1998) coined this phrase to describe a
shared leadership model that replaces educational hierarchy and isolationism. In defining professional learning communities, DuFour’s leadership tenets for those working in schools are similar to those listed in the transformational leadership models. They are: the significance of the work being done, achievement, recognition for accomplishments, increased responsibility, and advancement. DuFour (2005) states “to become a PLC, a school must transcend its dependence on a single leader and develop a culture that sustains improvement despite the departure of key individuals” (p. 24). This is a departure from the accountability model that has historically been adhered to in educational systems.

Marzano et al. (2005) further develop the educational transformational leadership theory in their study that identified twenty-one leadership actions that relate to effective school administration. However, the authors advocate that these traits in isolation do not constitute a plan. Instead, effective leadership should involve traits, responsibilities and actions. The traits are aligned with transformational leadership skills and are listed by the authors as:

- developing a strong leadership team,
- distributing responsibilities to the team,
- selecting the right work,
- identifying the magnitude of the work, and
- matching the management style to the corresponding level of change (first order and second order).
Marzano et al. (2005) further develop this transformational framework through the identification of the seven leadership responsibilities and, consequently, the twenty-one actions of school leadership.

Table 1. Contrasting Models of School Reform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business model</td>
<td>Democratic model</td>
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<tr>
<td>School reform</td>
<td>School improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers as impediments to reform</td>
<td>Teachers as leaders of school improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-way relationships</td>
<td>Mutual relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student achievement</td>
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<td>Test based</td>
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<td>Standardization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stern-father morality</td>
<td>Shared responsibility ethic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transaction</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Top down</td>
<td>Bottom up (or inside out)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exerts control</td>
<td>Builds capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>High stakes</td>
<td>High impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unearned Distrust</td>
<td>Earned trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment of learning</td>
<td>Assessment for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands simplicity</td>
<td>Embraces</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Gallagher 2007, p. 29*

Gallagher (2007) summarized very clearly the movement toward transformational leadership that engages in standards-based school reform in his comparison of the “accountability” and “engagement” models of education reform. In his argument for the engagement model, Gallagher (2007) states that “accountability itself is a bad idea. It is a one-way responsibility model premised on transactions rather than interactions...(the engagement model’s) aim will be to nurture mutually responsible partnerships that are
not reducible to bottom-line transactions (a compliance approach), but are instead marked by rich and dialogic interactions (a commitment approach). It will return teaching and learning to teachers and students (p.8). The stark contrast in Gallagher’s (2007) reform models of accountability verses engagement contrasts the transactional leadership model to the transformational approach (Table. 1).

**Relational Trust**

The ideal of relational trust in school communities has been documented as a key element of the educational reform movement. Current research in the area of school reform has focused on transformational leadership models that align with continuous school improvement. The transformational leadership models generally adhere to a main concept that asserts that leadership is a catalyst which supports four other key reform inputs: parent-community support, professional capacity of the faculty and staff, a student-centered learning climate, and ambitious instruction. In turn, these supports rely heavily on the local context of relational trust across the school community (Bryk & Schneider 2002; Bryk et al. 2010; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Madsen, Schroeder & Irby 2014).

Lack of trust is a serious impediment to many of the reforms taking shape in American schools. Traditional management practices have tended to emphasize social distance and divergent interests among competing parties, and so they have engendered distrust or a low expectation of responsiveness on the part of other parties (Tschannen and Hoy, 2000. p. 548). In defining relational trust, Bryk and Schneider (2002) assert that trust depends on the nature of the social institution in which it is
embedded. They identify three forms of trust. These three forms are: Organic Trust, based on unquestioning belief such as religion, Contractual Trust, in which individuals and institutions are in a social exchange based on material or instrumental exchanges outlined in contracts, and Relational Trust in which respect, competence, integrity, and building interpersonal relationships build capacity to confront the uncertainty associated with change. As such, no one person in this relational organization has absolute power and authority. Schools best fit contractual trust form but the social exchange theory does not fully describe schools. Because of this, the authors coin the term relational trust as schooling is an intrinsically social enterprise. “The social exchanges that occur around schooling also shape participants’ lives in powerful ways. They provide opportunities for self-identification and affiliation around an enterprise of much social value” (p. 19). In addition, “relational trust views the social exchanges of school as organized around a distinct set of role relationships: teachers with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents, and with their school principal” (p. 20).

Relational trust as described explains the uniqueness of the relationship surrounding those engaged in school reform. Understanding the roles and implications of these relationships becomes an important factor in how administrators engage others in efforts to implement reform models outlined below.

**School Improvement Models**

As school communities establish professional learning communities and embark on reform efforts, the vehicle of reform becomes important. School improvement models
associated with school reform are abundant in educational research, for example, Lezotte’s Correlates of Effective Schools, *Breaking Ranks* published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and state accreditation models requiring school improvement, goal identification, and monitoring and assistance models developed to conform to federal mandates and regionalized accreditation models such as Advanc-ED. All require that the entire school community engage in assessment of the current education status of the school and eventual school reform efforts.

While many of these models are based in current research, the Advance-ED model is a regional and trans-regional affiliation and carries with it the ability to compare school improvement models beyond local, state, and national levels. It is also important that while accreditation is a set of rigorous protocols and research-based processes for evaluating an institution’s organizational effectiveness, it is far more than that. Today accreditation examines the whole institution—the programs, the cultural context, the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of students (Advanc-ED 2013).

This accreditation assessment through Advanc-ED includes five core standards for quality schools that are embedded in current research. These standards are:

**Standard 1: Purpose and Direction** - The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

**Standard 2: Governance and Leadership** - The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.
Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning - The school’s curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems - The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement - The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement (Advanc-ED 2013).

Advanc-ED accreditation requires transformational leadership activities that engage teachers in assessment of current school conditions as well as the execution of school reform work. This requirement, coupled with the fact that Advanc-ED accreditation is used in the regional accreditation process throughout the U.S as well as trans-regionally, lends reliability and validity to comparisons made using this model.

**Summary**

This literature review reflects studies conducted in areas relating to school reform and the relationships required to enact effective change in educational systems. In this ongoing relationship, trust and building leadership capacity play major roles in reform effectiveness. This is modeled through what is commonly referred to as a professional learning community. While there is incentive for leadership to engage in transformational leadership to promote the development of a learning community, the role of unions and
contract issues may affect the school reform process. The function of these roles and the
degree to which they affect administrative decisions to engage in professional learning
community activities are less clear. Significant labor events and relational trust affect the
implementation of reform models such as Advanc-ED accreditation. This study will
further explore these interactions with the methodology that follows in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research defines the role of contractual trust and relational trust in schools (Bryk, 2010; Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Koppich and Kerchner, 1990; Price, 2009; Swain, 2007). Relational trust is defined as the social exchanges characteristic of the institution in which it is embedded. In relation, contractual trust is common in the context of modern institutions. It is defined by a contract with primarily material and instrumental interest related to delivery of goods or services. The role of trust in school improvement models involves shared leadership and is supported in literature and studies founded in the research of Kurt Lewin and Rensis Likert regarding democratic leadership in human organizations. This ideal of a democratic leadership style is further developed in leadership research and literature (Blankstein, 2013; Bennis & Nannus, 1985; Fullan, 1991; Kouses & Posner, 2012; Northhouse, 2012). Research also addresses the positive effect of collaborative leadership activity to guide school improvement activities (Blankstein, 2013; Fullan, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005; NASSP, 2011).

While theory and research currently advocate a model of distributed leadership, there is little research that examines how principal leadership behaviors during significant labor events, as defined by working with no current contract, arbitration, mediation, work slow-down, or work stoppages, influence school improvement and distributed leadership strategies. In addition, little research exists that examines the perceptions of principals
and staff regarding contractual relations and the obstacles that these perceptions may present to administrators implementing school reform through collaborative leadership models.

The purpose of this qualitative embedded multiple-case study is to examine how principal behaviors during significant labor events influence school improvement processes. For the purposes of this study, the research question was: How do principal responsibilities during significant labor events influence school improvement processes? Supporting sub-questions will be: 1) How do labor events influence teacher engagement in the school improvement process? 2) How do labor events influence relational trust between the principal and teachers? and 3) How do principals influence teacher engagement during significant labor events?

As this set of research questions seeks to answer the question of “how” a contemporary event affects schools and because the behavior is well beyond the control of this investigator (Yin 2014), the qualitative research model is appropriate for this study. This research will enable school leaders to better maintain ongoing school improvement models during significant labor events by understanding the effect of pertinent administrative behaviors on staff efficacy.

Population

The population to be studied was the 69 Montana schools accredited by the Advanc-ED/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. The Montana Director of Public School Systems Accreditation for Advanc-ED identified five schools that were
determined to have completed the required school improvement process with high fidelity. Subsequently, Montana school law attorney, Elizabeth Kaleva, and Montana School Boards Association Chief Negotiator, Andy Seever, were used as expert opinions. These legal experts identified two out of these five Advanc-ED schools that also experienced significant labor events in the current or prior two years.

The two schools that fit both selection criteria constitute the unit of analysis for this embedded multiple-case study. Of these two schools, one was a Class “A” secondary school serving 300-400 students located in western Montana, and the other was a class “A” secondary school serving 450-500 students located in Eastern Montana.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Methods

A selection of research methods begins in the type of questions asked by the researcher. Research questions that focus on answering the questions “how many” and “how much” generally focus in the quantitative methods field. These studies generally have a very narrow focus, require numeric data collection, and statistically analyze this data in an unbiased objective manner (Creswell 2008). These studies usually examine a population or population sample with a significant number of participants to achieve statistically significant findings which can then be generalized to the population.

In contrast, qualitative design is more subjective and susceptible to bias. In this study, the researcher has significant experience in Advanc-ED school improvement design. He has served on the Advanc-Ed Montana state committee for multiple years and led high school reform with the Northwest Accreditation Advanc-ED school
improvement model. In addition, the researcher also experienced a number of significant labor events during the five years prior to this study. Despite the labor events, the high school was able to continue to work toward implementing school improvement efforts with fidelity. Because of these experiences, it is hypothesized that carrying out responsibilities of second-order change relating to school improvement builds trust. This trust enables principals to overcome negative contractual events and implement ongoing school improvement plans. This experience and perspective frames the questions of subjectivity and bias that the researcher addressed through the triangulation of data, member checking, and critical peer review. In addition, the use of quantitative surveys is also a means to enhance the credibility of qualitative research by addressing bias and reactivity. This collection of data termed as “quasi-statistics not only allow you to test and support claims that are inherently quantitative, but also enable you to assess the amount of evidence in your data that bears on a particular conclusion or threat” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 113).

This study seeks to answer the questions of “how” and “why” schools can proceed with implementation of school improvement. It relies on the views of participants, is based in data consisting of words and texts from participants, and examines collected data for themes (Creswell 2008). By design, qualitative research does not necessarily include quantitative statistics, and therefore, does not require the larger number of participants or sampling specified in quantitative research.

Qualitative studies can use quantitative data. In the embedded case study design, Yin, (2014) advocates that survey data is not pooled across cases and is “part of the
findings… [Such studies] may be highly quantitative and even involve statistical tests, focusing on the attitudes and behavior of individuals” (p. 62). In the case study design, it is important to note that the quantitative surveys are used to inform, support, and add depth of understanding to enrich the qualitative data.

In this embedded case study, surveys were used to collect quantitative data to inform the qualitative questions used in interviews and follow-up at each school participating in the study. The Tschannen-Moran (1999) survey of Relational Trust and the (Marzano et al., 2005) survey of the 21 Responsibilities for School Leadership relating to second-order change were used to add perspective to qualitative data regarding the relational trust in schools and the seven administrative traits that correlate with second-order change in schools (Marzano et al., 2005).

**Embedded Multiple-Case Study Approach**

Multiple-case study research approaches have both advantages and disadvantage when compared to single case studies. Multiple-case studies can require more resources, and replication logic associated with multiple experiments should be considered to yield similar results or contrasting results due to a predictable reason (Yin, 2014). “The simplest multiple-case design would be the selection of two or more cases that are believed to be literal replications, such as a set of cases with exemplary outcomes in relation to some evaluation question, such as ‘how and why a particular intervention has been implemented smoothly’” (p. 62).
The case studies selected for this research share the exemplary trait of completing a rigorous school improvement process required by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools division of Advanc-ED. These schools have submitted required documentation to the state committee as evidence of their fidelity to the process. The research questions provided an inquiry into the effects significant labor events had on the trust required for completion of school improvement initiatives. A stipulation of this study was that each case study school must still employ the same building principal who led the school improvement process during the significant labor event. There were two schools identified that met this criterion and were identified as meeting the other two criteria by experts in the field.

The design of multiple-case studies falls into the categories of holistic or embedded. The holistic design calls for multiple cases in which the data is pooled into a single unit of analysis. In contrast, embedded design maintains individual units of analysis within each case study and is appropriate when surveys are used at each site (Yin, 2014). For this study, valid and reliable surveys to measure relational trust and principal leadership traits were available. These surveys were administered at both school sites to the principal and faculty. The results of the surveys were not pooled across the two cases. Instead, results were used to inform the qualitative interview protocol. This was required to maintain the individuality of data for the two selected case schools that are bound within the two criteria for the embedded case design.

The research questions of this work explored how principal leadership behaviors and the relational trust between the principal and teachers affected the school
improvement process during significant labor events. The survey of 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader and the surveys of Relational Trust were embedded in the units of analysis within the overall case. Each school served as an embedded case and was one unit of analysis. Upon completion of the quantitative data collection within each unit of analysis (school), a cross case analysis of the data was conducted to determine the common strands of seven leadership practices relevant to second-order change and relational trust as they correlate to implementation of school improvement. The cross case analysis provided validity to the study as it found repeated patterns and provided triangulation for the results.

**Research Design**

Case study research design focuses the researcher on the five components of research. These components are a case study’s questions, propositions, units of analysis, the link of data to propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings. The case study questions of “how,” and “why” are the most likely to be appropriate for case study research (Yin, 2014). These questions are foundational research questions that are an outgrowth of the study’s problem statement and align the data collection with the focus of the study.

The study’s propositions direct attention to something that should be examined within the scope of the study. The statement of propositions gives indication of where to look for relevant evidence. In this study, the propositions include the hypothesis that
school improvement activities are not affected by significant contract events because the work is seen as worthwhile at both an individual and school level.

The unit of analysis sets boundaries that define the case. In addition, other clarifications such as who to include or exclude is called *bounding the case*. In this study, the unit of analysis was each of the two schools identified by experts in the fields of school improvement and contract negotiations. The unit of analysis is also bounded by the restriction that the principals and teachers participating in the study must have been employed at the school during both the significant labor event and the school improvement implementation.

The fourth component of case study research design is linking data to propositions. The data analysis techniques must be appropriate to the propositions or purpose of the study. The data analysis techniques used for this study will be examined later in this chapter.

The final component of case study research is the criteria for interpreting the case study’s findings. In quantitative research this component is the identification of statistical significance by determination of a value. In qualitative research, the interpretation is based in the identification of rival explanations and addressing these explanations. Addressing these rival theories becomes the criterion for interpreting the study, and the more rival explanations addressed, the stronger the findings (Yin, 2014). The criteria for interpreting this study are addressed later in this chapter.
Multiple-Case Study Design

A multiple-case study design was identified as a research model for this study, and the tenets of this format guided the research strategies to ensure standards of trustworthiness and high quality design. As such, the study sought to satisfy the construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability standards of research. The effort to meet these standards is detailed in the following sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Unit of Analysis, (3) Quantitative Instruments and Data Collection, (4) Principal Interviews, (5) Teacher Interviews, (6) Observations, (7) Document Analysis, (8) Analytic Strategy, (9), Analytic Techniques, (10) Final Data Analysis, and (11) Cross-Case Synthesis.

Embedded Multiple-Case Study Design: Introduction

This embedded case study was developed on prior studies linking the principal leadership responsibilities to second-order change as defined by significant departure from the operational status of defining and solving problems. School improvement models based in Advanc-Ed accreditation models have been promoted as a means of assessing and improving student outcomes. Schools engaged in this process and identified by experts as completing school improvement processes engage in second-order change because they identify system weaknesses through data analysis and constituency inputs. Outcomes from this process produce goals and resultant program changes that require a significant departure from working to solve ongoing educational problems in the current mental models of educational practice. Marzano et al. (2005)
label this departure from current mental models as second-order change. Because of this, schools that complete the Advanc-ED accreditation process are appropriate for further study in relation to principal behaviors during significant labor events.

The intent of this study was to collect rich, comprehensive qualitative data to explain the relationship between principal behaviors during significant contract events and school improvement processes. The principal was selected as the determinant as the implementation of school improvement processes is dependent on school leadership (Marzano et al. 2005). The school improvement process is unlikely to affect principal behaviors leading to implementation, and four negatively correlated responsibilities of maintaining culture, effective communication, order, and school community relate directly to trust.

One unique trait of the analytic technique in this case study was the clear definition of the dependent variable. As both case study schools were identified as exemplars of the school improvement process, the dependent variable was known. Because of this, the independent variables of relational trust and principal responsibilities in second-order change during contract events were the dependent variables that were explored by the study’s results.

The single guiding research question for this study was: “How do principal responsibilities during significant labor events influence school improvement processes?” Three supporting sub-questions were: “How do labor events influence teacher engagement in school improvement planning?” “How do labor events influence relational
trust between the principal and teachers?” “How do principals influence teacher engagement during significant labor events?”

While these sub-questions could be framed as central research questions, they more closely examine supporting issues to the phenomena studied. Creswell, (2007) defines the use of sub-questions as those that “take the phenomenon in the central research question and break it down into subtopics for examination (p. 109).

As the research question and sub-questions seek to answer “how” rather than “what” in regard to research, they indicate the appropriateness of qualitative methodology. The context of a contemporary issue in schools and a situation over which the researcher had no control indicated that the case study design was appropriate. The embedded multiple-case study design was selected as the methodology to ensure transferability for other schools. Within this design, credibility, confirmability, and construct validity were strengthened through the triangulation of the data collected from document analysis, principal and teacher interviews, and subsequent member checking.

**Procedures**

Procedures for this embedded multiple case study were conducted in the following order:

1. Case study schools were identified that fit the context of the study. The Montana Advanc-ED executive director identified schools completing accreditation requirements for Advanc-ED school improvement with high fidelity.
   
   Next legal field experts (Legal Staff for the Montana School Boards Association and Kaleva Law firm) identified schools experiencing significant labor events
in the prior four years.

2. Schools fitting the criteria of both contexts were contacted to participate in the study.

3. Two quantitative surveys, Trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2003) with student and parent trust questions deselected and Leadership Responsibilities (Marzano et al. 2005) with first order change questions deselected were administered to principals and teachers at each case school.

4. Quantitative instruments scored within each case to inform qualitative question protocol. High agreement scores and low agreement scores examined for inclusion in qualitative protocol

5. Protocol developed from survey questions, and questions from Gallagher (2007) developed to measure teacher engagement in school improvement processes.

6. Protocol piloted at test case school and revised based on clarity and alignment of responses with study research questions.

7. Qualitative interviews conducted at each case school with the principal and teachers who experienced both the significant labor event and were knowledgeable of school improvement enacted at each case school.

8. Observations of principal and teacher interactions conducted

9. School improvement goals and accreditation documentation reviewed

10. Interviews transcribed verbatim from recordings.

11. Qualitative data coded and grouped by themes.

12. Member checking conducted with interviewees.
13. Revisions to themes/theories made based on member checks.
14. Findings and implications reported.

**Unit Analysis and Boundaries**

The units of analysis for this embedded case study were two schools that participated in the study. This unit was chosen on the basis that the research question focused on how the influence of leadership behavior affects relational trust and, consequently, teacher engagement in school improvement processes during significant contract. As engagement in a school-wide improvement initiative was the level of focus, selected schools were chosen as the unit of analysis rather than individual principals or teachers.

Bounding this study were further factors. First and foremost, units of analysis were bounded by completing the school improvement process with fidelity, as identified by expert opinion Daniel Sybrant, state director of Northwest Association of Accredited Schools/Advanc-ED. Further bounding the study was the identification of schools that had experienced a significant labor event in the last four years as defined by starting an instructional year without a contract, arbitration, mediation, and strikes. Bounding the unit of study by these factors focused the study on only those schools engaged in the school improvement process that could be affected by labor issues.

In addition, principal leadership behaviors were a major part of the study. Thus, it was important to select schools which continued to employ the same principal within the four year window relating to a significant labor event. This four year labor event window also served as a final bounding factor for this embedded multiple-case study. These
bounding factors establish the focus of study for these multiple schools and limit the collection of data to specific areas. As principal leadership behaviors and connection of these behaviors to relational trust were related to school improvement processes, the focus was narrow and did not require that the researcher learn everything about the participant schools. Instead, it was more productive to collect data from the individual principals and a sample of teachers representing each school’s teaching cadre. These data focused on the factors of principal behavior, relational trust, and second-order change as explored through school improvement planning and implementation. This narrow focus also precluded the collection of data from other school stakeholder groups because the principal and teachers of each school were the individuals who engage in the planning and execution of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools school improvement process.

Because the key factor of the research question is principal behaviors, it is necessary to interview each principal about their leadership responsibilities and behaviors. It is also necessary to interview each school’s teachers to assess their perceptions and insights regarding the principal behaviors as they relate to trust. Relative to the issue of relational trust, data regarding contract disputes and staff engagement in the school improvement process was deemed important and collected for analysis.

While it is acknowledged that other individuals such as superintendents and community members are included in the school improvement processes and would be knowledgeable regarding significant labor events, most of these improvement processes are carried out at a building level. School improvement teams and groups are generally
formed at the direction of the principal, and teachers conduct a great deal of the analysis and work. Because of this, it was not anticipated that other individuals would contribute data that was more relevant in nature to the main research question. However, if during data collection it became apparent that others beyond the teaching cadre or principals could have provided necessary information, it would have become necessary to expand case bounding.

**Quantitative Instruments**

The conceptual framework of this qualitative research study centers on the question: “How do principal responsibilities during a significant labor event influence school improvement processes?” This question is well suited for qualitative research design as it asks the question “how?” However, quantitative surveys are frequently used to inform the embedded case study design, and in this instance, findings would not be pooled across the schools (Yin, 2014). Instead, survey data would be a part of the findings for each individual school selected for the study and serve to inform the qualitative question protocol. As Yin (2014) states, “when embedded design is used, each individual case study may in fact include the collection and analysis of quantitative data, including the use of surveys within each case study” (p. 63). The use of surveys enhances the credibility of qualitative research by addressing bias and reactivity. This collection of data termed as “quasi-statistics not only allows you to test and support claims that are inherently quantitative, but also enable you to assess the amount of evidence in your data that bears on a particular conclusion or threat” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 113).
Two separate quantitative surveys were administered to the teachers during initial data collection. The data gained from these surveys were used to inform the interview questions (Creswell, 2007). The questionnaire for 21 Practices of the School Leader (Marzano et al., 2005) was selected as a measure of principal behaviors. Cotton, (2003) first published the findings of her narrative review that identified 25 categories of principal behaviors that positively influence student achievement, attitudes, behaviors, and dropout rates, and teacher attitudes and behaviors. Marzano et al., (2005) identified similar findings in their meta-analysis of principal leadership behaviors. In this analysis, the authors concluded that, “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn in school” (p. 26). The authors further concluded that two factors underlie the 21 responsibilities of leading change in schools. These factors were first order change and second-order change.

First order change is identified as incremental change while second-order change entails significant departure from the current operational models of defining and solving problems. All 21 factors correlated to change in schools were found to be important to first order change but only eleven of these responsibilities were found to relate to second-order change. Of these eleven responsibilities, seven were positively correlated to second-order change. The positively correlated leadership responsibilities are knowledge of curriculum, instruction, assessment, optimization of resources, intellectual stimulation, being a change agent, monitoring/evaluating progress, flexibility, and conveying their ideals/beliefs. The authors identify these responsibilities as enabling schools to engage in second-order change. In contrast, four responsibilities of maintaining culture, effective
communication, order, and school community input were negatively correlated to second-order change. In explaining the negative correlations, Marzano et al., (2005) state, “second-order change not only involves emphasizing the seven responsibilities; it also involves the possible perception that things have deteriorated relative to the four responsibilities of Culture, Communication, Order, and Input” (p. 119).

Because fidelity to the Advanc-ED/Northwest Accreditation school improvement process requires a significant departure from incremental improvements in schools and frequently conflicts with prevailing norms and values, school improvement processes entail second-order change.

The Marzano 21 Responsibilities survey questions associated with second-order change were used, while questions correlated to measurement of first order change were deselected for purposes of this survey. Only questions explaining the eleven principal responsibilities of second order change were used. These eleven areas are instruction and assessment, optimism, intellectual stimulation, change agent, monitoring and evaluating, flexibility, ideals/beliefs, input, communication, culture, and order.

Each of these responsibilities relate to the Advanc-ED school improvement model, which requires schools to use data to engage in ongoing self-assessment and continuous improvement, while documenting results of improvement efforts. Advanc-ED requires that each school have a plan to address needed changes in five defined Advanc-ED standard areas: purpose and direction, governance and leadership, teaching and assessing for learning, resources and support systems, and using results for continuous improvement.
Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Trust Surveys were used as a basis to determine areas of relational trust between the principal and teachers who might be affected during significant labor events. Questions which were not associated with the trust relationship between the principal and teachers were also deselected as this study specifically examined the behaviors and relationship of the school principal and faculty members.

The 21 Responsibilities for Leadership and the Principal/Teacher Trust Surveys were administered to participants in each case school and were used as a comparison between the perceptions of the building principal and the participating teachers. The teacher data collected was pooled within each case school and compared to the corresponding principal survey. Scores were not aggregated across the two units of analysis. This is aligned with the research methodology of embedded multiple-case design (Yin, 2014).

The data from each case school comparison were then used to identify differences and similarities in ratings between the pooled teacher results and the principal results for each school. Questions showing differences approaching 2 or more on a Likert scale and questions approaching .5 difference or less were examined for inclusion in the qualitative protocol. Based on examination survey scores, potential questions were developed to explore the principal responsibilities and practices as well as the relational trust that enabled school improvement to occur during a significant labor event. Additionally, questions were also formed from the Gallagher (2007) model to ascertain a level of engagement in school improvement processes. These questions helped confirm or refute findings related to relational trust and principal leadership responsibilities. The attributes
The survey of the 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader was developed in 2005 and was resultant of the meta-analysis research of Marzano et al. The survey used a four-point Likert scale for respondents to rate themselves and their schools. 652 principals completed the survey, resulting in a reliability of .92 (Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha). The survey of 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader measures the perceived leadership practices of the principal in relation to first and second-order change. The meta-analysis identified the 21 leadership responsibilities from an analysis of multiple studies. This analysis was then examined to correlate each responsibility to leadership behavior. Multiple questions assessing each responsibility result in higher instrument reliability. In addition, the validity of this instrument is high with the authors reporting factor analysis with the probability of a .15 correlation under the null hypothesis being < .0005. These qualities are indications that the Survey of 21 Leadership Responsibilities of the School Leader does in fact measure the second-order change necessary for engaging staff in school improvement planning. However, it is important to note that questions from the survey measuring first order change were deselected as noted earlier.

The Relational Trust Surveys were developed in 2003 to measure trust as defined by “one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open… [C]ompelling evidence is accumulating on the importance of trust to high performing schools” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2003).
The norms for the Faculty Trust Scales are based on a sample of 309 schools. The grade levels of the sampling were 97 high schools, 66 middle schools, and 146 elementary schools. The reliabilities of the three subscales typically range from .90 to .98, and factor analytic studies of the Faculty and Principal Trust Scales support the construct validity of the measure. The norms are based on a sample of 642 principals. The reliability for Principal Trust in Teachers was .87 in the norming sample. Factor analytic studies of the Principal Trust Scale support the construct validity and shows a positive correlation between trust in teachers and self-efficacy $r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$. This study investigates the influences of principal behavior and relational trust during labor events on change related to school improvement initiatives. As there are valid and reliable quantitative measures of relational trust and leadership behaviors relating to second-order change, it is appropriate to use these measures to relate trust to contract events and the implementation of change through school improvement processes.

Participants

Each school principal individually agreed to the case study. Subsequently, each principal was also asked to supply a list of teachers who were employed by the school during the significant contract event and who had been involved in the implementation of Advanc-ED school improvement work. Staff members from the identified list and each principal were administered two surveys in no specific order. One survey was the Marzano 21 Responsibilities survey, and the other survey was the Faculty and Principal Trust Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2003).
Principal Interviews and Quantitative Data Collection

The collection of data began upon approval of the researcher’s university committee and the university institutional review board. Collection began in January to coincide with the start of the new semester in each case school. The researcher visited each case school to conduct qualitative data collection through interviews, observations, and document review.

Prior to the visit, each principal was contacted via phone to discuss the scope of the study. Each principal was forwarded an electronic copy of the informed consent document. These informed consent documents were collected prior to the visitation. Once informed consent documents were secured, selected survey questions from the 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader and the Principal Trust Survey were sent to each principal in electronic form. These documents were also collected prior to the first visitation to inform the interview protocol and inform the principal interview questions. Principal interviews were conducted the first day at each school. The principal of each case-study school had an established professional relationship with the researcher which assisted with trust in the research process; however, a full description of the research was provided to allay concerns.

The interview protocol focused on the principal’s behaviors in regard to relational trust with their staff and the school’s adherence to school improvement planning during the recent or ongoing labor event. Each interview was recorded and personal notes were made to gather insights from each interview. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and subsequently analyzed for thematic data.
The second contact with each school was a phone interview of the principal and selected teachers. This meeting was designed to conduct a member-checking interview to confirm or refute data collected in the first interview. From this interview, clarifications and adjustments to researcher understandings of data were made. This meeting was also recorded and the researcher completed note taking to allow for follow-up data analysis.

Teacher Interviews and Quantitative Data Collection

Parallel to the 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader and Principal Trust surveys, teachers were also administered the Teacher Trust survey. The survey was electronically delivered to selected teachers at each case school with an informed consent document prefacing the survey. All surveys were completed confidentially to alleviate teacher concerns or anxiety regarding the rating of trust with their immediate supervisor.

This teacher data collected from each case school was compiled and a mean score was calculated for the individual schools as noted above. These scores were categorized as high, medium, or low regarding teacher trust. Items rated as consistently high or low in the survey were revisited as interview questions.

Teacher interviews were also conducted on the first visitation to the school. Selection for interview was contingent on the teacher being employed in the school during the time frame in which the significant labor event occurred and was also based on participation in the school improvement process. The principal assisted in the identification of all teachers who fit these criteria. The names of each of these teachers were then randomly drawn to select an interview order. Teachers were then contacted to
request an interview at a time of their choosing. Teachers who consented to be interviewed were scheduled for interviews until all time slots in the researcher’s schedule were filled. As each interview was anticipated to last 30-60 minutes, a maximum of five teacher interviews were possible at each school. Interviews were conducted in a scheduled pattern that prevented overlap with either principal or other teacher interviews. Prior to each interview, informed consent was documented.

The teacher interview protocol was focused on the behaviors of the principal and resultant relational trust in the context of a significant labor event. Relational trust as a function of second-order change behaviors during a contract event were addressed in the protocol. Each interview was recorded electronically, and the researcher compiled additional notes for each interview. Each recording was transcribed verbatim and subsequently analyzed to identify prevailing themes from the data.

During the phone interview, data from each prior interviews that resulted in a new question or need for clarification was reviewed and participants were asked to provide additional input or clarify their previous input. Each of these interviews was also recorded and note-taking was completed to allow for subsequent analysis. If, during the subsequent analysis, new themes had emerged as a result of the follow-up interviews, it would have been necessary to conduct further interviews with subsequent visits or via phone interviews.

Observations

Another aspect of data collection during each case school visitation was the observation of the interactions between the principal and teachers. These interactions
were observed in the context of the school day. Interactions were used to assess trust and principal behaviors relating to second-order change. This data source provided another point of triangulation adding to the validity of the study. Yin, (2014) states that observation “is invaluable in producing an accurate portrayal of a case study phenomenon” (p. 117). In addition, Creswell, (2007) advocates that observational data allows the recording of information in the setting in which it occurs while allowing the researcher to study actual behaviors and individuals who may not verbalize their ideas. Maxwell (2005) further offers that observations give the researcher the opportunity to draw perspective and gain tacit understanding regarding theory-in-use from data collection interviews.

**Document Analysis**

The school improvement process required by Advanc-ED/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools produces a document rich in information regarding the case school and the work required to compile the document. The school mission, goals, and improvement efforts are contained in this document. As such, the analysis of this document relates to the implementation of school improvement processes through leadership responsibilities. Thus, this document was of paramount importance for the analysis of each case school. Other documents collected that provided evidence of engagement in this second-order change process of school improvement as well as documents relating to a significant labor event were collected. These included memos, meeting agendas, leadership team minutes, school wide memos, and documentation of events related to leading school improvement efforts. The goal of this data collection was
to provide evidence of principal leadership behaviors which led to relational trust or lack of trust during the significant labor event.

Analytic Strategies

Analysis of the case study evidence is one of the least developed aspects of doing case studies according to Yin, (2014). However, this circumstance can be mitigated if the researcher develops an overall analytic strategy. Yin identified four of these general strategies in case study research which are: relying on theoretical propositions, working your data from the “ground up,” developing case descriptions, and examining rival explanations. This embedded case-study utilized the general strategies of theoretical propositions, working data from the ground up, and examining rival propositions.

The strategy of examining data based on theoretical propositions led to the examination of the collected data in regard to principal behaviors and relational trust as a basis for second-order change. The hypothesis that principal leadership behaviors and resultant relational trust result in second-order change even during significant contractual issues shaped the purpose, problem statement, and subsequent analysis of this study.

The strategy of working data from the ground up was also used. This strategy, when used with embedded case-study design, calls for the collection of both qualitative data as well as quantitative data using surveys. Yin, (2014) states that “embedded units of study can be the occasion for having collected fine-grained quantitative data. Yet, the main case study question might have been at a higher level…at this higher level, you would have collected and used qualitative data” (p. 138). In this instance, the collection
of the mean scores of principal behaviors and relational trust helped guide the researcher in the data collection and analysis process.

The third strategy, examining rival explanations, was also used as an analytic strategy for this study. Yin, (2014) lists two types of rival explanations: craft rivals and real world rivals. Craft rivals are the null hypothesis, threats to validity, and investigator bias. Real world rivals are direct (another intervention accounts for the results), commingled (other interventions and the target contribute to results), implementation process (process, not the intervention accounts for results), rival theory (other theory explains the results), super rival (larger force including the intervention accounts for results) and societal rival (social trends account for the result). The main craft rival to this study was investigator bias. The single researcher in this study has developed beliefs through professional experience in relation to the phenomena being studied. Thus, the analysis of data collected could be affected. This rival was addressed through researcher awareness, careful note-taking, documentation of data, and collection of artifact documents. The practice of reporting to critical colleagues in the education field was also used to explore rival explanations overlooked due to possible researcher bias.

The critical colleagues used for this study were university instructors familiar with this study as well as the Montana Director for Advanc-Ed accreditation. These individuals were invited to review the researcher’s data collection and thematic coding to explore plausible rival explanations.

Another craft rival that must be addressed is the null hypothesis. This rival explanation would be that the observed circumstance is a result of chance. In this
research, two case schools of similar size, identified by experts as having fidelity to the school improvement process, and having experienced a significant labor event, largely address this rival explanation.

While the craft rival explanations can be addressed, the real-world rivals pose a threat to the validity of this study as they cannot be controlled by the researcher. In this study, the proposition that principal behaviors contribute to relational trust leading to school improvement even during significant labor events, could be threatened by real-world rival explanations. These rival explanations could include a stronger relation to teacher leadership in implementation of school improvement during significant labor events, or the phenomena could be closely related to district level leadership. It is important to note that care was taken to examine and consider such rival explanations and accept or reject them based on data collected.

Analytic Techniques

Yin (2014) lists five analytic techniques for case study research. For this research study, the most appropriate technique is pattern matching. This technique compares the finding of the case study to a predicted pattern the researcher identified before the research. “The concern of the case study analysis, however, is with the overall pattern of results and the degree to which the empirically based pattern matches the predicted one” (Yin, 2014, p. 146).

In this embedded case-study research, patterns of principal behavior and relational trust were examined in relation to the independent variable of school improvement. Recurring themes and patterns that indicated principal behaviors and relational trust in
each case school were explored. In addition, unanticipated patterns that indicated rival explanations were noted by the researcher.

Cross-Case Synthesis

Yin (2014) contends that multiple-case study research that results in similar findings across cases produce more credible results. An embedded multiple-case study which is designed to extend to a higher level of analysis and lends itself to cross case synthesis. This strategy is similar to the use of multiple quantitative experiments that provide credibility. Following the analysis of case school data at the unit level, the data from each case was reviewed and compared to determine similar themes and findings in regard to the leadership responsibilities and relational trust across cases.

Final Data Analysis

High quality data analysis is a hallmark of quality case study research. Yin, (2014) listed four principles underlying good social science research. These principles are documentation of attending to all evidence, attending to all rival interpretations, addressing the most significant aspect of the case study, and using your own prior expertise and knowledge.

The design of this embedded multiple-case study research addressed all four principles listed by Yin. All data collected were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and examined for contribution to thematic evidence. Rival explanations were addressed through sharing of evidence with critical colleagues and researcher reflection. The most significant aspect of the case study, principal responsibilities and relational trust leading
to change during significant labor events, was the focal point of analysis. In addition, the knowledge that the researcher has acquired through research and professional practice relating to school improvement and leadership behaviors for second-order change help develop a strategic approach for the project’s data analysis. These four principles provided a strong foundation for the high quality data analysis suggested by Yin (2014).

**Traditional Prejudices Against Case Study Research**

**Rigor**

The greatest concern regarding case-study research is the presumed need for greater rigor (Yin, 2014). This concern is rooted in incidents in which the researcher has been lax in following protocols, has not been systematic, or has allowed equivocal evidence or personal bias or case studies to influence the direction and conclusions of the research. Concerns of rigor can be alleviated through the processes of commitment to documented research protocols and through reporting all data collection to critical peers in the field. The latter will allow others with field expertise to challenge researcher bias and present rival theories for consideration. Both of these strategies were used in this dissertation study.

**Generalizability**

Another major concern with case study methodology is the ability to generalize findings from a single case. While a legitimate concern, this prejudice can also be levied against other forms of research. Yin, (2014) states, “generalizations in science are rarely based on single experiments; they are usually based on a multiple set of experiments that
have replicated the same phenomenon under different conditions” (p. 20). The use of multiple-case studies creates credibility for generalization, just as multiple experiments generate the same credibility. Thus, both methodologies are “generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes…and in doing case research, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories…not to extrapolate probabilities (statistical generalizations)” (Yin, 2014, p. 23).

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the validation and reliability of the qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the terms “credibility,” “authenticity,” “transferability,” “dependability,” and “confirmability” as equivalents to quantitative terms of “internal validation,” “external validation,” “reliability,” and “objectivity.” Creswell (2007) further synthesizes these concepts to the four primary criteria of “credibility,” “authenticity,” “criticality,” and “integrity.” This study addresses each construct of validation and reliability.

Credibility

Creswell (2007) writes that credibility lies in the accurate interpretation of the participants’ meaning. The use of multiple sources and methods of data collection for triangulation improves credibility (Maxwell, 2005). This study employed a variety of data collection methods which included interviews, observations, document analysis, and quantitative surveys which served to triangulate data for credibility. In addition, the
validation of data collected through all interviews conducted was completed through member checking.

Further contribution to the credibility of this study can be found in the data analysis techniques. Pattern matching, relating collected data to theoretical propositions, was also independently verified by critical colleagues to create a high level of inter-rater reliability. The critical colleagues also reviewed identified data themes to minimize rival explanations and researcher bias regarding the independent variables of principal responsibilities and relational trust.

**Authenticity**

The transferability of the research findings gives indication of whether the results of the research are reliable and can therefore be generalized to a larger population. Case studies provide deep and rich descriptions that can be generalized to populations based on similarity of the sample group. The limiting factor of finding two units of study identified by experts could be construed as limiting transferability. However, because the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools requires a prescriptive process for member schools and the factors of relational trust and principal responsibilities have been proven to be universal through current research, there is cause to believe that the case study can be transferable to other schools engaging in the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools improvement process. In addition, the fact that this research is an embedded multiple-case study increased the transferability to similar schools.
Criticality

Creswell (2007) relates this topic to the critical appraisal of all aspects of the research. In this study the researcher carefully designed the conceptual framework and research question. All aspects of the design were planned, executed and evaluated to insure that research met standards of critical design. The researcher used self-evaluation as well as critical colleague input to insure that all aspects of the research meet this standard.

Integrity

Integrity is listed by Creswell (2007) as evidence that the investigator is self-critical. In short, all aspects of this research were screened for personal bias through member checking and checking rival explanations through self-reflection and critical colleague checking.

Confirmability

While not listed as one of the four values of trustworthiness by Creswell (2007), confirmability was deemed important by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Confirmability is important to this research as it measures whether the study actually measured the phenomena or behaviors intended. The researcher adhered to the study’s singular research question and sub-questions to focus the collection and data analysis of this study. In addition, question protocols and highly valid and reliable surveys were used to identify questions for interview protocols.
Confirmability was also provided through the use of triangulation in the study. Interviews, member checking, and observations were forms of collected data. Similar evidence regarding the variables of principal responsibilities and relational trust as affected by contract disputes in each individual case study and the cross case analysis, give rise to confirmability.

**Pilot Study**

Pilot studies are identified by Maxwell (2005) as a means to understand the meaning of the phenomena being studied and expanding the researcher’s concepts for his or her own theory. In addition, Yin (2014) asserts that the pilot study provides relevant information about field questions and the logistics of collecting field data. A preliminary practice of research collection also provides for design improvement prior to finalization of the study. Finally, the pilot study provides the researcher with practice in data collection. Yin (2014) also advocates that the pilot study is identified often by convenience such as geographic location, congenial subjects, or accessibility.

The school closest to the researcher in regard to geographic location, that had also been identified as completing the Advanc-ED/Northwest Association of Accredited Schools school improvement process with fidelity, was appropriate for the pilot study. Accessibility and familiarity with the school leadership also made this school a logical choice.

The pilot study design was similar to the embedded multiple-case design study. The selected questions from the 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader and the Teacher
Trust and Principal Trust surveys were administered to assess the principal behaviors and the mean level of relational trust. Two teachers and the building principal were interviewed and a focus group session of four teachers was conducted. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Pattern matching logic was used to analyze data from interviews and focus groups for emerging themes.

The pilot study served the purposes outlined in Yin (2014). First, it provided practical experience in collecting and analyzing data in an environment similar to the study. Second, the pilot study identified necessary modifications to the interview protocols and data collection processes prior to the final study. These modifications included rephrasing questions for clarity, adjusting time allowances for interviews, and adding deleting questions that did not elicit responses aligned with the research questions.

Sharing of Results

The results of this dissertation study were provided to each case school as a courtesy for their willingness to assist with this research. Upon completion and approval by the researcher’s graduate committee, a summary of the research was provided to each principal of each case school. The principal has the discretion to share the summary within their school. It is hoped that the research will provide insight to each school for use in their school improvement efforts.
Summary

This embedded multiple-case study collected both qualitative and quantitative data to explain how principal responsibilities during a significant labor event influence school improvement processes. The specific behaviors that were investigated were principal behaviors (Marzano et al., 2005) during a significant contract event in relation to school reform and relational trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). The goal of this research is to provide findings that guide further studies and schools in efforts to develop ongoing improvement efforts. Ultimately, this research will add to the body of research regarding administrative responsibilities to implement school improvement even during times of significant contract events.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

An embedded multiple-case study approach examining two Montana High Schools was used to explore the research question and sub-questions. The research question was: How do principal responsibilities and behaviors during a significant labor event influence school improvement processes? The supporting sub-questions were, 1) How do significant labor events influence teacher engagement in the school improvement process? 2) How do significant labor events influence relational trust between the principal and teachers? and 3) How do principals influence teacher engagement during significant labor events?

The research design for this study was an embedded multiple-case study. The unit of analysis was schools exhibiting fidelity to the Advanc-ED school improvement process. The subunit of analysis for the design was case schools identified by the unique quality of having experienced a significant labor event in the prior four school years. Each case subunit was examined as a unique case. Following the case study analysis of the subunit case schools, the researcher performed a cross case analysis as a method to examine findings at the unit level of Advanc-ED fidelity (Yin 2014).

Case study schools were identified by the Montana Advanc-ED State Director as schools having kept fidelity to school improvement process. Additionally, each case school was identified by Montana school law experts as experiencing a significant labor
event in the previous four years. Each school was analyzed as an individual case study, as well as through cross case analysis. Case school principals individually agreed to the case study.

To select participants, each principal was also asked to supply a list of teachers who were employed by the school during the significant contract event and who had been involved in the implementation of Advanc-ED school improvement work. Staff members from the identified list and each principal were administered two surveys in no specific order. One survey was the Marzano 21 Responsibilities survey, and the other survey was the Faculty and Principal Trust Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2003).

The purpose of the surveys was to inform the qualitative interview protocols used for data collection at each case school. Survey questions from the principal surveys and combined teacher survey ratings were compared for each case school. Questions with high and low levels of agreement between the principal rating and combined teacher ratings were selected for inclusion in the interview protocols. Survey questions with moderate levels of agreement were deselected from the interview protocols.

The teacher interview protocol included nineteen questions. Six questions explored relational trust. Six of these were based in the Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2003) Teacher Trust Survey. Three additional questions in the protocol were based in the Marzano et al. (2005) Leadership Responsibility Survey. Two of those questions explored negative correlates identified in the survey, and one explored positive correlates from the Marzano survey. Six more questions were included that explored transformational leadership from the Gallagher (2007) Engagement model. The survey
concluded with four questions exploring the principal and teacher attitudes and behaviors toward school improvement during a significant labor event.

The principal interview protocol was an eighteen question document. The protocol included four questions exploring relational trust from the Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2003) Principal Trust Survey. The same three questions from the Marzano et al. (2005) Leadership Responsibility Survey used for the teacher protocol were also included in the principal interview protocol. Six questions from Gallagher’s Engagement model were rephrased to fit the perspective of the principal, and the protocol concluded with five general questions exploring principal and teacher attitudes and behaviors toward school improvement during a significant labor event. In addition, one question was added to this section asking principals to reflect on how they would change their behaviors and actions in the face of a new contract event.

Descriptive statistics of the Marzano 21 Responsibilities Survey and the Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Trust Surveys were separately calculated to find the mean and standard deviation for each question in relation to the teacher group and the principal group as shown in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4. All Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Teacher Trust Survey questions used as comparisons to the Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Principal Trust Survey, which were written in negative form, were reverse coded to allow comparison of the means and standard deviation of the questions between groups.

The results of the selected Marzano et al., Leadership Responsibilities Survey and the Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Teacher and Principal Surveys were used to determine a mean score for each comparable question. Differences in the mean scores in both surveys
were examined to determine if differences in teacher and principal opinions warranted exploration. Similarly, mean scores that were highly uniform with differences in mean scores and standard deviations approaching zero, were examined by the researcher for inclusion in the qualitative interview question protocol. It is important to note that the quantitative survey data is only a descriptor in this study. The quantitative data was only used to inform the qualitative interview protocol and was not used as statistical evidence supporting the research.

Table 2. Selected Teacher Questions for Marzano 21 Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility Factor</th>
<th>Selected Questions</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA Knowledge</td>
<td>9,32,54,73</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Agent</td>
<td>17,40,24,77,</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimizer</td>
<td>18,41,63,78</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideals/Beliefs</td>
<td>19,64,79,87</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring/Evaluating</td>
<td>20,42,65,80</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>21,43,66,47</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>23,45,68,83</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>2,48,56,67,92</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>4,27,49</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input</td>
<td>14,37,59</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>12,35,57</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Comparisons of Teacher Means from Tschannen-Moran & Hoy Trust Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Content</th>
<th>Faith</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Principal Looks Out Teachers</th>
<th>Rely on Principal</th>
<th>Principal Honesty</th>
<th>Trust Principal</th>
<th>Suspicious of Principal Motives</th>
<th>Principal Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Mean</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher SD</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Comparisons of Principal Means from Tschannen-Moran & Hoy Trust Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Content</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FaithTeachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Mean</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal SD</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interview question protocol was developed and tested at a pilot school with similar characteristics to the case study schools. The sample school was selected due to the school being identified as an Advanc-ED school that experienced a significant labor event. However the school was excluded from the research because the labor event occurred outside the four year window as prescribed by the research methods of this study.

The school principal and two identified teachers were administered the Marzano et al., and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Surveys with questions deselected. The sample surveys were examined for similarities and differences. Descriptive statistics were not calculated due to the small sampling size. However, teacher and principal responses were compared on like items to determine commonalities and differences in perceptions and actions of the principal and teachers during significant labor events. Survey questions from the Principal Responsibility Survey and the Principal Trust and Teacher Trust Surveys showing differences of more than two points on a Likert scale were examined for initial inclusion in the interview protocol. Similarly, survey questions with uniform high rating were considered for inclusion. Questions were also developed from the Gallagher
School Reform Model to ascertain the level of engagement and type of reform that existed in case schools.

The interview protocol was tested at the sample school in a one day interview. The researcher conducted interviews with the principal and two teachers at the sample site. Each interview lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours. Notations were made regarding each interview question and any clarifications that were necessary to enhance interviewee understanding. Following the interviews, the researcher conducted a follow-up interview with the principal regarding the Advanc-Ed model and how it was implemented in the sample school. All interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim. Sample interviews and researcher notes were then used to clarify interview questions and refine the protocol to focus on the four interview questions.

The data and interview experience gained at the sample school were used to refine the qualitative interview protocol for use at the case school sites. The research questions were explored during qualitative interviews with each case school. The interview protocol developed for case schools took into account the principal and teacher surveys administered at each case school and examined elements of the research questions in the context of Marzano et al. (2005) 21 Leadership Responsibilities, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy’s (2003) Principal Trust and Teacher Trust Surveys, and Gallagher’s (2007) Models of School Reform.

The Marzano 21 Responsibilities (2005) Survey with items deselected was used to examine principal responsibilities and behaviors through the lens of significant labor events. Gallagher’s Models of Teacher Engagement (2007) were used to ascertain
implementation of school improvement activity through engagement or accountability. The Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Principal Trust and Teacher Trust Surveys (2003) with items deselected, were used to examine relational trust during the significant contract events. Finally, the researcher included questions from Gallagher’s (2007) model to ascertain how principals work to influence teacher engagement in school improvement during significant labor events.

**Summit School: Research Question**

**Principal Behaviors**

Summit School teacher interviews revealed that principal behaviors affected the school improvement process. The ability to maintain consistent professional behavior as the school leader was noted by several staff and was aligned with statements by Principal Miner. He stated, “The events of negotiation, in my opinion, don’t seem to interfere with my working relationship with (staff).” He discussed that his behavior stayed student-centered, and he continued to focus on the educational welfare of students for his school. He summarized his behavior in his statement, “Everybody knows my vision. Everybody knows when I took over the school, I wanted to develop a school that was good enough for my own kids. It’s more internal strife of the union than principal to staff….My actions don’t change.” He also took strong responsibility for his decisions and emphasized that his school leadership decisions are best if separated from significant contract events. Miner stated that lack of trust with specific teachers is the result of “[situations] where I get stuck as the middle man between the superintendent and [teachers], or decisions made
in the central office and I get perceived as the bad guy in the middle. Where, if it is my decision, I go and tell the teachers that this is going to be cut or this is what’s going to happen.”

Teachers supported the assertion that the principal behavior did not identifiably change during significant contract events. All teachers stated that the principal remained accessible and communicated well during the contract event. The following quote indicates that the principal remained accessible and communicated with his teaching staff. “[The principal] has been very honest when I’ve approached him. I’ve never gotten the feeling he is hiding something or he’s got an agenda…he’s kept an open door policy with me and with his whole staff. If we have questions or concerns, he’s very willing to hear those [concerns].” Teacher Poole supported this availability and communication, extending the belief that Principal Miner is available to his staff well beyond the school day. Poole stated, “If I called him at two in the morning, he’d answer the phone.”

Interestingly, three teachers stated that the labor event affected communication between teachers more than with the principal. Teacher Kurl asserted that teachers, “get cliques going on and it hinders all communications.” When asked specifically about his peers, he admitted, “There are times during our negotiations that [teachers] do not want to communicate with our peers until we really know what’s going on because one thing is said and it expands to something different….There are some very strong teachers that would put other teachers down if they had a different view instead of being open.” Teacher Kidd further implicated communication with staff when she stated, “If you stray
away from anything that is union, it is not looked upon favorably…. I don’t necessarily agree with it all the time…It’s tough in a union town to have a strong opinion.”

The concept of principal behavior during significant contract events was further developed in teacher and principal interviews that indicated the principal’s behaviors influence teacher engagement and trust. Principal Miner worked to maintain neutrality during the significant contract event, and separation from the labor event appeared to be crucial to the staff. Miner indicated that, “Events of negotiation, in my opinion, don’t seem to interfere with my working relationship with [teachers]….They [teachers] pretty much knew that I was neutral. I would go sit in the negotiations, too, and show my support for the teachers and the school board at the same time.”

This behavior was confirmed by teacher interviews. Quotes from the teacher staff indicated behavioral separation from the negotiation process. Teacher Horn stated, “He [Principal Miner] does keep the union stuff separate from the day-to-day functioning of the school,” and Teacher Nube affirmed this stance by relating that principal Miner, “does a really good job of keeping the personal and professional separate…[the principal doesn’t] really get too involved in the union contracts. He pretty much stays as an outsider.”

Principal Negotiation Responsibilities

There was some disagreement among teaching staff regarding the perception of the principal engagement in school level responsibilities when implementing school improvement processes during significant labor events. The key differences were one view that the principal worked to continue to implement planning. Teacher Nube stated
that the principal continued “business as usual. He just moved ahead. We had our PIR [Pupil Instruction Related] days; we did everything as normal as we usually do,” while the view of teacher Kidd was that, “[the principal] was very cautious with how he approached school improvement, knowing that the union was on fire at that point.” While these differences indicate the principal’s approach may or may not have changed, all but one staff member agreed that the work of school improvement continued to progress to some degree throughout the significant labor event. The principal also acknowledged that the work continued, but at a much different pace and with a differentiated leadership style. Principal Miner stated that moving forward with school improvement “was not anything I was willing to lose my staff over. If I had pushed it harder and harder, I probably would have lost some more staff. I could see the tension was building, so I backed off almost everything, and we just kept moving forward in inches instead of feet.” Principal Miner’s management style also took into account union members who were not willing to work on school improvement beyond their assigned duties. To overcome this issue, both the principal and teachers acknowledged that “[the principal] is giving [teachers] time outside their classroom during the school day… or reimbursing them for time used outside of their regular contract hours [for school improvement work].”

Through these interviews relating to responsibilities and behaviors, both the principal and the teachers acknowledged that the principal responsibilities remained with the school level work, not district level significant labor events. Specifically, the principal was not involved and was kept separate from the parties engaged in negotiations during the significant contract event.
The principal also maintained a visible and open presence in the building, which led to continued open communication regarding both the labor event and school improvement goals and work. This allowed the principal to continue building level school improvement work that was viewed as at least neutral.

At the same time, the behavior of the principal appeared to be viewed through a variety of lenses. First, the principal was available and accessible to staff as an information agent. The principal and teachers agreed that they could ask questions and approach the principal regarding school issues as well as the significant contract event. However, the leadership behavior of the principal was affected by the significant contract event in that school improvement work was slowed and decisions regarding improvement work were more calculated by both teachers and the principal.

Summit School Teacher Engagement

Opinions of teacher engagement in school improvement during significant contract events were contradictory within the principal interview and between teacher interviews in regard to collaboration, communication, and school improvement work in Summit School. The contradictions appeared to be focused on teachers’ desire to improve and the strength of the teacher union and union leadership. Both the principal and the teacher groups acknowledged that the union held some degree of power over both member and non-member teachers. At the same time, the principal and all teachers acknowledged that the school improvement work continued during the significant contract event. All interviewees further acknowledged that the work would continue in
the event of a future significant contract event. Principal Miner stated that, “There wouldn’t be any event to stop [him] from improving [his] school.” In a similar comment, teacher Horn stated, “Most teachers have that inherent attitude that they want to improve and they want to make things better.” Nube added to the complexity of teacher engagement in school improvement when she summarized the relationship between teachers and the union, acknowledging, “The union is very tough…we have some people who…can change the climate for you in the school within the union if you cause too [many] problems.” In a follow-up question, Nube supported the prior sentiment toward the union by re-iterating, “The way the union works, makes it so people are told not to do anything outside their contractual hours.”

The control exerted by the union seemed to be more prevalent in younger staff, and tenure was addressed as a benchmark for some degree of immunity from this union relationship. Teacher Kidd specified that while she did not always agree with the union stance, it was not easy to voice or act on this conviction because, “If you stray away from the union, it is not looked upon favorably…if you’re non-tenured, you just smile and nod and do what you’re told because you know the union is the one who’s going to have your back at the end of the day.”

The researcher probed this line of thinking with Kidd to clarify the meaning and apparent contradictions. Kidd clarified,

I think there’s a halt [to school improvement work] when something big like that [no contract] happens. Nothing is done until that gets resolved and we can move forward….They don’t need to halt in my opinion. People who are doing contract negotiations, they can handle that. If somebody within my union said I was not allowed, for whatever reason, I don’t think I personally would stop [working on school improvement].
This assertion was supported by five teachers. Teacher Kurl stated, “I don’t think it would matter to [teachers] what happened in the contract. They’ll do what’s best for the students,” teacher Kidd concurred adding, “If somebody within my union said I was not allowed [to work on school improvement], for whatever reason, I don’t think I personally would stop.” In addition, three other teachers indicated that their engagement in school improvement work would not change during a significant labor event. Kurl further summarized the opinion that school improvement work would continue when he stated, “We still did it [school improvement]. I don’t think the contract had anything to do with stopping or hindering it. The staff is pretty willing to do what the principal feels we need to do.” However, teacher Kurl qualified his statement by noting that if a significant contract event occurred, he “would be hindered a little bit to volunteer more time.”

The contradiction is further supported by Principal Miner’s interview in regard to teacher engagement. Principal Miner fully acknowledged that school improvement slowed during the labor event, but said teachers were willing to engage, and in fact, some were paid or given professional release time during their contract to complete school improvement projects. When recalling the school improvement work during the significant labor event, Miner stated that while strong union members may have been reluctant to engage in school improvement, they did continue the work. He stated, 

For the strong union people, they wouldn’t budge on anything. They didn’t want to hear about anybody telling them they need to do anything differently… [the union leadership], they kind of run the show during negotiations. Their work day is 8:00 to 3:30. I’m paying them by the hour after school, whereas [another team] are not so union and they’ll sit down until 5:00 at night.
Miner also stated, “The strong union member will not collaborate. They will put up their feathers and say they’re not going to do this outside of contract hours.”

This statement led the researcher to believe that reluctance to complete school improvement work was an issue of contract and compensation, and not engagement. With this acknowledgement, Principal Miner stated that staff was not refusing to engage in Advanc-ED school improvement work. Instead, they viewed the work as outside the work required by the contract. The resulting outcome is as diverse as the teaching staff in that some teachers are willing to work to improve based on intrinsic motivation while others can be engaged through professional compensation of time or remuneration.

**Summit School Relational Trust**

The variability of relational trust survey scores in the area of principal honesty, as well as the variability in the survey scores regarding both principal and teacher motives, influenced the researcher to explore these specific topics during interview collection of qualitative data. The conceptual framework of trust as defined by respect, competence, integrity, and building interpersonal relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) and the relationship of trust to second-order change (Bryk et al., 2010; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Sebring, Allensworth, et al., 2006; Forsyth, Barnes, & Adams, 2006) was examined through qualitative interviews.

Interviews suggest that significant labor events in Summit School had little effect on the relational trust between the principal and teachers. The principal indicated that he felt his relational trust was positive with 80% of the staff while one teacher rated this trust
at 90%. Teachers indicated that competence, student centered decisions, neutrality during significant contract events, and honest communication were key factors affecting their relational trust with the principal. All teachers agreed that principal competence was a key factor for maintaining trust but elaborated very little about what principal competence meant to them in regard to principal actions.

Three teachers specifically identified neutrality during contract events, and four identified the principal’s availability and open, honest communication regarding contract events as well as daily school business as factors building relational trust. Additionally, four teachers and the principal cited student-centered decisions as an important indicator of principal integrity. Miner stated, “Teachers can tell all my decisions are going to be for the kids and not for the teachers,” and four teachers’ interviews specifically supported this assertion. Teacher Poole summarized many of the statements with his comment regarding maintaining trust and student-centered focus with, “He [Miner] rides that line of pure honesty and reminds teachers why we’re here. He does a good job of making sure the kids are first and that’s what your job is.” Poole went on to state that Principal Miner had “never broken any trust that I know of.”

When discussing honesty in communication, teachers affirmed the principal’s efforts to keep open and honest communication lines not only during significant contract events but at all times. Teacher Horn supported the belief in the open honesty of Principal Miner in her interview. “[The principal] has been very honest when I’ve approached him. I’ve never gotten the feeling he is hiding something or he’s got an agenda….If we have questions or concerns, he’s very willing to hear those.” Further support of the importance
of honest communication to the construct of relational trust was shared by Principal Miner when he addressed both communication and honesty by stating,

I will talk about [significant contract events] in staff meetings where it might not be individual teacher’s names, but just letting them know that things are coming down. I have that same relationship with my teachers and they’ll come to me and let me know what’s brewing in the building so I can confront it and take care of it before it becomes a big issue.

Miner further supported the finding of open, honest communication with his summary of his communication style stating, “I’m up front with my teachers all the time about what may be coming down the pike. We’re always talking about it back and forth.”

The above quotes support the key assertions from interviews of both the principal and teachers. These interview clearly defined principal neutrality as an integral key of relational trust. Principal Miner further related that because of his neutrality, “[teachers] would not associate me, my high school building, or my staff meeting, with district negotiations,” and “the events of negotiation, in my opinion, don’t seem to interfere with my working relationship with [teachers].” Nube supported Miner’s neutrality when she stated that Miner, “separates the union issues from the teachers….I’ve never seen him treat anyone with anything other than professionalism….He doesn’t discriminate that you’re a part of the union or anything else.” Kurl also confirmed this assertion of Miner’s neutrality with his opinion that, “He [Miner] never tried to get behind the scenes….He left that up to the union to settle our issues instead of him giving us input….He had a very professional way of, ‘this is where I am. This is what you guys need to do on your own,’ without him interceding.”
In addition to neutrality, communication supported the construct of relational trust between the principal and teaching staff. The researcher identified references to the importance of communication style in teacher and principal interviews. The researcher found that the ability to communicate events without judgment is paramount to maintaining relational trust as evidenced by the above quotes.

While teacher interviews identified the key components of trust, several added aspects of intrinsic motivation to factors contributing to relational trust. Poole summarized a link between intrinsic motivation and relational trust that has developed between the principal and teachers when he stated, “You don’t want to let your boss or the kids down. It’s more of an internal motivation that some people have.”

While these findings indicate that relational trust can be maintained during significant contract events, it is important to note that contract events do damage some relational trust. Principal Miner felt he does not have the trust of his full staff. He comments, “I have a good enough relationship with 80% of the staff that we can sit down and say how can we do both [negotiate contracts and engage in school improvement] and maybe just take an alternative path?” A further indication of this damage is supported by Miner’s comment, “The teacher-focused people…will get to a point where they put up their feathers and bow their neck and basically say, nobody is going to tell me I need to [teach] differently.”

Based on these findings, there is ample interview evidence to suggest that relational trust can be maintained with most staff members during a significant contract event. However, key factors such as neutrality in the negotiations process, availability,
honest communication, and integrity in purpose and action are deemed highly important in this case school.

**Summit School Principal Influence**

Marzano et al. (2005) listed seven leadership responsibilities and supporting actions important to second-order change (p. 120). This research question focused on the actions of the principal in the case study school that influence teacher engagement in the school improvement process during significant labor events.

The responsibility of ideals and beliefs was found to exist through the consistent communication of the personal ideals and beliefs by Principal Miner. Miner stated that he continually shares his ideals and beliefs. He noted several times that “Teachers can tell all my decisions are going to be for the kids and not for the teachers,” and stressed that, “everybody knows my vision.” When discussing his vision, Miner did note that, “It took probably three or four years to get teachers thinking [school improvement] is for the students, not me.” This clear communication of his ideals and beliefs anchors the influence Miner holds with his teachers and is affirmed in the statement by Poole when he said, “He [Miner] is a driven individual with his own goals in mind. He is stubborn; he’s not going to change.” Teacher Nube further affirms Minor’s vision with her assertion that, “[he] always acted in the best interest of children and the student first.” It became clear to the researcher that the leadership responsibility of clear ideals and beliefs was ingrained in the school environment through clear communication of those standards from the principal. The principal interview contained three references to student-centered
goals and decisions, while four of six teachers specifically listed student-centered focus and alignment of goals and innovative practice by Principal Miner.

Principal actions listed in the Marzano (2005) area of Responsibility of Knowledge of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction were evident to the researcher through the examination of current school practices and data, with individual teachers and the teaching staff as a whole to identify school weaknesses and set school improvement goals. The teaching staff in Summit School was regularly included in decisions regarding changes to goals, new programs such as Montana Behavior Initiative, and Graduation Matters through staff meetings and department meetings and individual teacher conferences as referenced by Principal Miner. Miner credited his influence over teacher engagement in school improvement processes to his, “giving ownership to the staff. Any time we design a goal…I will start sitting down with that individual group and asking where we want to go with this.” The researcher found sufficient evidence in the principal interview, as well as all staff interviews, to conclude that communication of data regarding second-order change efforts was a regular practice. Miner summarized the process in the following manner, “I’m in constant communication…we develop the goal, it goes in front of the whole staff, and then all the communication kind of deals with those people who are inside that goal.”

The Marzano (2005) leadership responsibility of “flexibility” was also found to exist by the researcher. It was commonly noted by staff and Principal Miner that he adjusted school improvement work in response to progress and tension present in his staff. Teachers stated that the work of school improvement would ebb and flow with the
level of tension related to significant contract events. Teacher Kurl noted that during the significant contract event, “They [building principals] don’t’ want to make any waves for a while” and practiced, “lying back a little bit until things clear up.” Miner further affirmed this strategy when he noted, “If I had pushed harder and harder, I probably would have lost some more staff. I could see the tension was building, so I almost backed off everything and we just kept moving forward in inches instead of feet.”

Miner also demonstrated flexibility to accomplish school improvement work through the practice of “management by exception” (Northouse 2012). Management by exception was best described by Miner acknowledging staff member’s individual willingness to complete the work of school improvement. This was noted in the researcher interview with the principal. Miner acknowledged that staff strongly aligned with the union resisted additional work associated with school improvement requirements. Miner engaged resistant teacher union-oriented groups by, “paying them by the hour after school, whereas [other teachers] are not so union and they’ll sit down until 5:00 at night.” It was interesting to note that while several teachers acknowledged this management by exception, none seemed to take exception to this differentiated payment for work.

The flexibility demonstrated in the above example can also be referenced as the leadership responsibility as an optimizer. Both the staff and principal acknowledged that Miner would work to find unconventional solutions to complex problems. His use of monetary resources as incentive and his willingness to place value in staff ideas gave staff voice in the school improvement process. Miner was inclusive of staff input and
demonstrated that he worked to optimize their knowledge when he stated, “I find a way to make sure those ideas come to life…. My staff knows my mindset. I am always looking for the next award or that next 10% jump in our test scores.”

A final leadership responsibility found through the qualitative interviews in Summit School was that of the principal as a change agent. Miner referenced the ongoing collection of data in relation to school goals. He used data to compare the current status to desired goals and used other schools’ programs as examples of innovations his school was seeking to implement. Miner also stated he was willing to experience failure while attempting to improve his school. The statements “I don’t care if we fail; you can’t fail unless you try. My staff knows that they’re not going to get hammered by me [for a failure]…they’ll have support from me,” corroborated the change agent role. During his interview, Miner further strengthened his responsibility as a change agent when he referenced how he works with teaching staff to implement change. When leading change, Miner iterated, “I try to be visible and supportive with my teachers. There are some teachers who don’t trust me, but you can’t have everybody’s trust. I think it’s because at first I try to get people to do things the nice way; ask them to [change], have conversations about [change]…. Ultimately, if they don’t want to do it my way, I do ask them to leave.”

This stance gives Miner credibility as a change agent with his staff. This role was tied back to Miner’s communication of a strong vision for the school and his expectation that improvement of the school center on the good of the students, not the needs of the adults. The fact that Miner and four teachers consistently communicated a leadership
vision of student centric decisions builds a common theme based on ideals and beliefs that is foundational to the leadership responsibilities of knowledge of curriculum, assessment and instruction, and flexibility, as well as being an optimizer and change agent. While qualitative interviews did not reveal all seven responsibilities, a case can be made that many of the above statements could be coded to relate to the leadership responsibilities of monitoring, evaluating, and intellectual stimulation. In addition, the acknowledgement that staff and individual discussions, coaching, review of data, alignment of resources, and professional training occurred during the significant contract event and have continued, provide sufficient evidence to indicate that Miner regularly engages in the leadership responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating as well as intellectual stimulation.

**Prairie School Research Question**

**Principal Behaviors**

Prairie School interviews indicated that the school improvement process is influenced by principal behaviors and responsibilities during significant labor events. Two key factors regarding principal behaviors were evident in interviews in Prairie School. The first factor was the open availability of the principal. The second factor was an increased flow of communication to focus the staff on school level improvement work.

The principal availability and line of communication were identified by the principal and the teachers and were consistently cited in all interviews. Interviews indicated that teachers had open access to the principal during significant labor events. While two teachers acknowledged that a building principal can be busy and difficult to
“catch,” teacher Hitz indicated that during the labor event “He [the principal] didn’t hide from us. He’s always been available.” Teacher Craig stated that the principal was available, “anytime,” and that “no one is afraid to walk into [his] office, or wait after school, or before school, or lunchtime to talk to [him]. [The principal is] part of the educational system. That’s just the way it is for us.”

The availability of the principal fostered an environment of communication that the principal and teachers recognized as existing in the building level. Accessibility to the principal was acknowledged as a key to communication by three of the five teachers interviewed. The two teachers that did not acknowledge accessibility were neutral in their statements and indicated they did not have reason or cause to access the principal on a regular basis. These teachers did not indicate they were excluded from access to Principal Lynn. Instead, they both made statements of their comfort level with their professional seniority and indicated little need for access to the principal.

The only statement that suggested a negative communication environment was from a teacher indicating communication issues between the union and non-union teachers, board members and teachers, and central administration and teachers. Teacher Shipps revealed these negative issues with his comment, “There is a lot of miscommunication with the union and the non-union members, the board, and the [district level] administration.” Shipp purposely excluded Principal Lynn from his comment regarding the negative communication environment. In addition, Principal Lynn recognized that his involvement in negotiations could have a deleterious effect on his ability to communicate openly with staff as referenced in the next section.
Principal Lynn also referenced honesty, mutual respect, student focus, and separation of building level improvement initiatives from district level conflict as important principal behaviors during significant labor events. These behavior claims were supported with examples during his interview. Lynn reported that contract negotiation events did not affect his relationship with staff and that a “mutual respect” existed where he allowed for their union meetings while the teachers acknowledged Lynn’s expectation of continued professional work.

Honesty was strongly linked to mutual respect, and Lynn commented that he was very direct with his communication. Lynn felt that teachers deserved to understand decisions but that he did not seek full agreement or support. This stance was supported in Lynn’s stance that, “[I] will be honest with [teachers]. I will give [teachers] an answer of why I have made that decision, but I will not guarantee that we are always going to agree.” He continued, “I have shot straight arrows even if they did not like what I was saying. I have been honest about what I am doing.”

When discussing his professional focus, Lynn stated his decisions were based in, “what is best for kids” which he feels makes him predictable with staff even during times of significant change. This was supported by Teacher Rowe’s description of Lynn’s student focus. “Our principal was very good about acknowledging the issue was there but [was] trying to keep the staff professional and focused on the kids.” At the same time, Lynn acknowledged that change can be disorganized, but his staff understands the basis for his decision process is focused on student welfare.
The last key behavior referenced by Principal Lynn was his ability to separate building improvement initiatives from district level conflict. As such, school improvement planning has not met resistance from the staff. Lynn communicates with his staff that “school improvement is us” and asks staff to “leave that other stuff [contract strife] at home like you ask your students to do.”

While the supportive behaviors of student focus, separation of school improvement from contract events, honesty, and mutual respect were noted in the principal interview, the key principal behaviors that appear to impact the staff are availability and communication. The principal and three teachers referenced these traits, and one teacher specifically noted that communication increased as the school engaged in school improvement planning.

**Principal Negotiation Responsibilities**

Teacher interviews confirmed principal neutrality and exclusion from the contract negotiations process when explaining the relationship of principal responsibilities, significant contract events, and school improvement. All teachers recognized that Principal Lynn’s responsibilities excluded teacher contract negotiations. Teacher Rowe stated, “He is not directly involved in those negotiations, and I think he’s tried pretty hard to remain neutral. Teacher Charles further supported this finding by asserting that, “I don’t think the average teacher would consider that principal on the other side of the negotiations. I think we’re a little smarter than that and we’re not laying the blame there.”

The researcher found evidence of the finding of neutrality and working relationships with teaching staff through comments from Principal Lynn as well. He felt
that he was, “kind of insulated or isolated from the negotiations piece,…The [teachers] are not seeing it as I’m the one who’s pushing against [demands]. I’m neutral in it so they’re able to separate that I’m not the enemy.” Lynn further supported his assertion that his involvement would negatively affect his working relationship with his staff by explaining, “If I were involved more in the negotiations, it would be tough to disconnect those two. If you hurt feelings at 7:00 tonight, it’s pretty tough to work together at 8:00 tomorrow morning.”

Teacher Rowe affirmed the working relationship that is maintained between the principal and teachers through neutrality in significant contract events when she iterated that, “He [Principal Lynn] certainly was very neutral in any statements that he made….He’s not directly involved in those negotiations, and I think he’s tried pretty hard to remain neutral.”

The exclusion of contract negotiation responsibilities for Principal Lynn allowed him to continue to engage in leadership behaviors of communication, honesty, mutual respect, student focus, and separation of building level improvement planning from district efforts listed in the previous section. All of these behaviors enhanced the implementation of school improvement activities. Mr. Lynn made it clear that being excluded from district level contract issues helps him maintain open communication and relationships with all teaching staff during significant labor events. This open relation was clarified by his reference to his relationship with the union president. He stated, “The president of the union is in this building and I have the best working relationship with her. I am able to say, ‘we’ve got to figure a way to make school improvement work even
when I can see you are frustrated.’ So teachers have a pretty good chance of me hearing what they are saying.” In making this statement, Principal Lynn provided evidence that he was able to acknowledge contact strife while working with union members to initiate improvement efforts.

**Prairie School Teacher Engagement**

As evidenced in the qualitative data collection, significant labor events do influence the willingness of teachers to engage in school improvement processes in Prairie School. However, this influence appears to be mitigated by both principal leadership and staff professional focus. Teachers in Prairie School acknowledged that Principal Lynn was effective because he remained neutral during contract negotiations. Teachers also acknowledged that Lynn worked to keep the focus of the teacher time and energy on the welfare of the students. “Our principal was very good about acknowledging the issue was there but was trying to keep the staff professional and focused on kids,” according to teacher Rowe who summarized the context of the principal’s effort to keep staff engaged during a significant contract event.

Teacher engagement questions, however, revealed a mixed attitude among the staff in Prairie School. Principal Lynn commented that teacher engagement in school improvement work during a significant labor event continues but that “It becomes a piece of what [the teachers] have enough energy to work on.” The event detracts from the time and energy teachers have available to work on school improvement. Lynn went on to contend that teachers are willing to do the work but “A [significant labor event] affects
the energy level and the ability to have reserve to do that [school improvement].” He attributes this willingness to continue to work toward improvement to “Professionalism; teachers see the benefit in our building and kids. They are able to separate.” This separation is further clarified by Principal Lynn when he explained building level teacher engagement. Principal Lynn stated that during contract events the engagement of teachers at the school level are not affected, but district level initiatives are impacted due to a sentiment that there is a “separation from the district and how much [teachers] want to support the district compared to their own school…I think there is a loyalty among the high school staff and our building to separate the two [school and district].”

This optimistic view of teacher engagement is both supported and qualified in teaching staff interviews. Several acknowledged that willingness to devote time to school improvement might be affected, but five of six teachers agreed that the work associated with school improvement would continue. The one dissenting teacher qualified her response by stating that only a decrease in salary or benefits would preclude her work on school improvement. However, this teacher was not concerned with a significant contract event as defined for this study. Instead, she referenced contractual changes that would interrupt her willingness to participate in school improvement work. The willingness to work was also tempered by the severity of the contract event and the perceived threat to employment. This threat was confirmed by Teacher Charles when she qualified her statement of full commitment to improvement work despite contract events. She qualified, “If there was a threat of a strike…I’d be more worried about my job.”
The researcher found evidence to further confirm that a strike or major event would bring notable change in focus for certain staff when it was pointed out by Teacher Wendt that younger and non-tenured staff have “some lessening in the desire to rock the boat or put out too many comments.” Wendt further clarified her own positionality when she discussed a strike stating, “I might not focus on school improvement planning. I’d be more worried about my job. I know that eventually we will get a contract signed, so that is not as big of a thing as if we were going to go on strike or I was going to lose my job.” These comments bring rise to personal wellbeing and security issues that could arise around significant contract events that create potential job loss.

Another identified detractor from school improvement work during significant contract events and personal engagement was time. Teachers confirmed that they would not be able to devote the amount of time they may have prior to the event. Teacher Charles confirmed, “We would not progress strongly in any area of school improvement because of all our other time demands in other things.” At the same time, Charles did place the commitment of time in the perspective that “If you have some dissatisfaction with the current climate of the negotiations, many people will be resistant to putting 100% into something they’re not excited about…an internal generated improvement goal is not going to meet the resistance of an external mandate…if it’s all about kids, most teachers are all over it.” The relationship of time commitment, engagement, and severity of the contract event appear to be mitigating factors in teacher engagement.

Contrasting this finding was the finding that teachers are generally willing to complete school improvement work for the good of students during significant contract
events. This finding was prevalent in all teacher comments regarding engagement. These comments focused on school improvement for the benefit of students and personal professionalism. Every teacher interviewed supported this finding as evidenced in the following statements: Shipps, “Anytime you have an opportunity to be directly involved at the grass-root level and be direction specific or impact a direction, we have voice;” Craig, “You’ve got a job to do. Let’s do it and make it better for the kids;” Russell, “People have gotten to the point where you have a dichotomy between our personal negotiations, pay, that kind of thing, and, this is what we do [at this school] for the kids;” Wendt, “We’re trying to do what’s best for our students, and if doing the school improvement plan is helping the students, we’re going to keep doing that even though we haven’t got our contract signed.”

All of the above quotes support that teachers are willing to engage in school improvement despite significant contract events. However, this is tempered by the caveat that school improvement in this case study is carried out at the building level. This exception is supported by three teachers who specifically stated that district level improvement would not receive the same support in the event of a significant contract event.

Prairie School Relational Trust

Prairie School interviews suggest that labor events do not affect the relational trust between the principal and teachers. The teachers and principal interviews are in agreement that principal neutrality is important to the trust relationship between the
principal and teachers. Factors that were identified as impacting relational trust between the principal and teachers suggested that neutrality, transparency and honesty in communication, and loyalty to student education have impact on the relational trust between the principal and teachers.

The reference to neutrality was developed extensively in teacher comments and is outlined above under the section “Principal Responsibilities.” This neutrality is outlined in the following comments: Teacher Rowe, “He [Principal Lynn] certainly was very neutral in any statements that he made….He’s not directly involved in those negotiations, and I think he’s tried pretty hard to remain neutral;” Teacher Hitz, “He knows what it’s like, but he’s not a part of the negotiation process;” Teacher Rowe, “Neutrality and talking about business as usual and not weighing in on either side is very important.” Principal Lynn also supports the importance of principal neutrality with his statement’s contention that he is “kind of insulated or isolated from the negotiations piece….The [teachers] are not seeing it as I’m the one who’s pushing against [demands]. I’m neutral in it so they’re able to separate that I’m not the enemy.” Lynn further supported his assertion that his involvement would negatively affect his working relationship with his staff with the comment, “If I were involved more in the negotiations, it would be tough to disconnect those two. If you hurt feelings at 7:00 tonight, it’s pretty tough to work together at 8:00 tomorrow morning.

Teachers further supported the concept of principal neutrality in negotiations when discussing how trust is lost. Teacher Rowe specifically mentioned criticism of teacher and union motives when discussing neutrality,
If there were any [comment from the principal] that could be taken as critical of the way they [the union] were handling it [negotiations], that would really affect the staff in general. Especially directed at the teacher side of it, because that is who is in the building. Any kind of comment that seemed to implicate that teachers were out for more money, or something that hinted that they were being selfish, would bother people.

Rowe was also clear that neutrality of the principal should apply to both the district and union perspective of a contract issue. This neutral stance allows the daily work of the school and school improvement to move forward without suspicion.

Teacher Wendt further contended that any perceived principal pressure on one side or the other in negotiations would hinder the relational trust between the principal and teachers. When asked to specify what would damage trust, she indicated that the perception of an adversarial stance from the principal would affect trust. She felt that, “[neutrality] depends on the perception of the moment. Putting pressure on us to settle prematurely without the best interests of the staff. Going around department to department or person to person giving his opinion. Going to the public and saying teachers are taking resources away from children.”

Other staff listed providing incorrect information, leaking confidential information from negotiations, and withholding information as other principal behaviors that would affect trust. This list provides a glimmer of the precarious line that the principal maintained in Prairie School. While neutrality was important, correct information provided to all staff in honest and transparent communication, appears to hold value with the teachers as well.

Several teachers as well as Principal Lynn also referenced honest and transparent communication as highly important to maintaining relational trust during significant
contract events. There was agreement that neutrality did not mean that information was not shared or discussed. Instead, the principal worked to acknowledge both the view of the board of trustees and the teachers during negotiation processes. However, this type of communication was systemic and did not just occur during contract strife. Instead, Principal Lynn contended that he worked to be transparent and honest in all aspects of communication with teachers. He stated, “I will be honest with you. I will give you an answer of why I’ve made that decision, but I will not guarantee that we’re always going to agree on it. I’ve stuck with that. I would say we’ve come to times when we’ve completely disagreed, but teachers are given the opportunity to tell me why they’ve disagreed.” Principal Lynn credits much of his ability to maintain transparent and honest communications with his philosophy of giving information, listening to feedback, and agreeing to disagree when necessary.

Teachers confirm transparency and honesty. Three teachers specifically referenced honesty and transparency in communications, regarding relational trust with the principal during significant contract events. Teacher Wendt clarified how communication fosters trust. She stated,

He keeps us, as a staff, informed about what’s going on, whether it’s reduction of force. I don’t know if they’ve done much of that, but toward the end of the year when things are changing with staff, he keeps us informed as best he can. That helps me; if he’s putting it all out there, that makes me think he’s really looking out for us. He makes sure he talks about things that are going on; he doesn’t try to hide it. He lets us know about all the issues as best he can.
Teacher Rowe also supported the relationship of communication and trust with her comments regarding the principal. She broadly described his transparent communications as being important to trust.

I would say he’s very transparent and shares with people what is going on. He’s not hiding issues so that they come out to surprise you. He’s very good about redirecting any kind of parent concerns back to the teacher rather than all of the sudden you get blindsided by something coming down the pike because the parents had a problem and you didn’t know anything about it. In staff meetings, he will give information that we certainly haven’t had from previous administrators, where he’s trying to tell us, ‘This is the situation and this is how we’re going to have to deal with it.’ Whether it’s the budget or our school district has faced some lawsuits, as much as possible, he’s tried to give us the information as much as he can. That transparency does inspire trust.

Rowe further referenced her personal interactions with the principal. She acknowledged that honesty is a key component of her personal trust of Principal Lynn when she said,

I’ve known him for a very long time, and I know that what he’s telling me is what I need to hear and what is really happening, because he doesn’t always tell me what I want to hear. I don’t mean that to say he would ever put me down or anything, but I may go into a situation with certain concerns and questions and ideas about how things should turn out. I’ve worked for other administrators who would tell you one thing, and then you find out later that’s not exactly the way that it is or that they weren’t truly supporting you. I have a lot of trust with Mr. Lynn because he’s been very up front with me, whatever the situation may be.

Teacher Charles discussed that transparency, while important, may not be appreciated by the entire staff. At the same time, she identified the importance of transparency as her personal preference even when the principal needed to convey possible employee reductions. She said,

He’s always been very honest about what’s going on and where the budget is. Some people might not appreciate it, but he also let us know who and what area might have to be cut; who might come up on the short end of the stick with negotiations. He tries to put all the cards on the table; anything
that he knows, he’ll tell us. That’s pretty important…He always listens and tries to tell the truth even if someone doesn’t want to hear the truth.

The contention that not all staff appreciate transparent, honest communication did not appear to be represented in the other staff interviews. All six teachers and the principal referenced honest communication as a component of relational trust and that communication containing negative information is not necessarily perceived as damaging to relational trust.

Principal Lynn also cited teacher “loyalty to the educational cause” as important to fostering his relational trust of teachers. He acknowledged teacher loyalty to the teaching group and to the educational process were important to trust. He also emphasized that it is important that teachers do not let significant contract events interfere with instruction and student educational programs when maintaining his trust. Lynn described this as,

Loyalty to their cause, loyalty to the whole cause, but ultimately not letting any of that get in the way of teaching our kids. I would say it has to include honesty, not just what the other party wants to hear. It has to do with trust and honesty coming from the other side, whether it be from the administration or another unit or the board superintendent. I guess integrity is synonymous with trustable. We may not always agree, but we’ve got to be able to have some core trust.

The core of relational trust referenced by Principal Lynn was confirmed with teacher interviews. Teachers referenced what Principal Lynn cited as “loyalty to the cause” and willingness to complete building level work. All six teachers interviewed stated that they were willing to work at the building level during significant contact events for professional growth and for the educational good of students.
Teacher Hitz also noted the trust of the principal is earned and lost based on professional actions and behaviors when completing the duties assigned within the school. He stated, “If we’re not doing what we’re contracted to do, he is not going to trust us. If he gives us an assignment, and some do it and some don’t, he’s going to lose trust in those who don’t do what they’re contracted to do.”

Teacher Neal described that personal fulfillment had much to do with her engagement in the work and actions of school improvement during significant labor events. She remained committed to the cause of educating students and did not believe that she changed her behavior toward school improvement because of the professional fulfillment. Neal felt her engagement, “did not change. I do what I do because that is who I am. I say if I could afford to teach for free, I would. I think there is a work ethic. I have a lot of extra things I do and none of them have stipends. I sometimes feel like if a stipend is involved, they are not as valuable to me. Sometimes it is more valuable to me if I can volunteer my time.”

Teacher Craig added value to the finding that commitment is important to relational trust. She too listed advancement of student education as a reason for engagement when she supported the finding that school improvement work continues during labor events. Her commitment was specific to the cause of the students. She stated, “School improvement is something that needs to be done so we do it. I am just old school. I walk in the door, it’s time to work: let’s work. That other stuff is on the outside and let’s get that dealt with, but I’m here to teach the kids and that’s what I do.” Craig continued by contending that it is the job of teachers to be engaged in teaching work as
well as complete school improvement initiatives. She described her attitude as “old school” when supporting why she engaged in school improvement for both professional and students’ welfare reasons. She supported engagement,

> Because that’s our job. It’s what we were hired to do. We didn’t have a contract per se, but we still had a contract; we still signed a contract to work. When you go to work, you’re supposed to do what you’re supposed to do, aren’t you? This is the age of entitlement and all this other stuff, and we don’t feel that way; we’re kind of old school.

While it is apparent that many factors influence the relational trust between the principal and teaching staff, these interviews supported the key elements of neutrality, transparency and honesty in communication, and loyalty to the cause of student education. Principal Lynn listed his communication style as being honest and transparent and his staff confirmed that these were key aspects to earning and maintaining their trust. At the same time, Principal Lynn and the teachers referenced that staff meetings were very open and frank events. This appeared to establish an environment where transparent and honest discourse occurred but did not always lead to agreement.

The role of commitment to the organizational cause of education also held significant importance in the researcher interview findings. All teachers and the principal cited that to maintain relational trust, it is important to place the education of students before the cause of significant contract events. Teachers did acknowledge that some events such as a strike would prevent their engagement in school improvement planning. But they also stated that a strike was highly unlikely in their school as the contract contains a no-strike clause. Teachers fully understood this and were resolved in all
interviews that the work of school improvement does indeed continue with commitment from staff even during significant labor events.

**Prairie School Principal Influence**

The researcher examined evidence to determine the principal influence on teacher engagement during significant labor events in Prairie School. The seven leadership responsibilities and supporting actions for second-order change by Marzano et al. (2005) were again used as a lens to examine principal actions. This research question focused on the actions of the principal of the case study school.

The responsibility of knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment were referenced in both teacher and principal interviews. Principal Lynn clearly identified the school writing improvement goal and the goal to improve graduation rates as keys to student success. He identified the training and implementation of the writing program as a success based on the adoption of the program throughout the entire staff. His work to train staff and work with small teacher groups and individual staff leaders was apparent, as was his trust in staff leaders. Lynn recognized the need for staff expertise and supported staff efforts to lead implementation of curriculum and assessment goals. Lynn supported this with the statement,

I have to expect the fact that some of my staff has no idea what I’m talking about all the way to knowing more than I know. When you interview that one teacher I talked about, you’ll see where she is the writing goal leader and I’m the second or third in command. I’m completely fine with that. She needs to be able to use me to say, ‘Here’s what I need from you, I need to make sure committee reports are done.’ I’ve got her to tell me what to do to look good. That goes back to the trust and the loyalty and the integrity to be able to say she knows I don’t know. She could throw me
under the bus, but she doesn’t and so I’m going to back her up. I think on that part is to be able to say, ‘I don’t know what I’m doing, Mary, you have to help me with this,’ and she’ll say, ‘No, we’ll look good. Here’s what you need to tell them and what we need to ask for.’ That’s taken ten years of trust to build.

With this statement, Principal Lynn was very clear that his view of leadership responsibility in curriculum, instruction, and assessment is that the responsibility is shared with local experts. He clearly relied on his teacher leaders, and they relied on him to support school improvement implementation.

Principal Lynn was clear about his leadership responsibility of ideals and beliefs. He clearly communicated his vision to his staff, and there was unanimity in agreement that actions taken to improve the school must first center on the best interest of all students. When asked how he balanced the interests of the teachers and students, Lynn was very clear that students come first, which makes him predictable.

I will balance that by making the decision that is best for the kids, and what’s best for the whole. So if I make all the decisions based on that, they come easily and become predictable, too. They know which way I’m going to go, because I’ll say, ‘Yes, I know that’s better for this class, but for all of our kids, that’s not a good decision.’ I’ve been predictable.

Principal Lynn stressed student-centered decisions several times in his interview, and all staff member interviews referenced Principal Lynn’s student-centered vision of school improvement initiatives.

As a change agent, Principal Lynn was highly tolerant of ambiguity regarding innovation. He clearly made the case that change can be amorphous at times and direction may change. At the same time, he recognized his role to manage flexibility in the change environment and adjust plans based on progress and tension. Lynn stated,
The only predictable part of that is that it’s going to be disorganized, and that you will have a third that will say, ‘Where are we going?’ a third that say, ‘Let me know’ and a third that say, ‘I don’t want to go there.’ No, I don’t know, but I can predict. But also, maybe I’m smart enough and can set my ego aside enough to go ask those people in that middle third, ‘How do you perceive this is going?’ So I can massage it and tweak it, but I can go into some as Mr. Magoo and say, ‘I have no idea if this is going to work, but let me tell you why I think it will. Will you try it with me?’ So I go in not thinking I’m the expert and saying, ‘This is what I’m changing and this is why.’ It’s hard to argue if they think it’s better for the kids. But then I might come back and say, ‘I missed. That change created way too much chaos.’

This behavior best aligns with the action of situational leadership in that it is apparent that Principal Lynn adjusts to the adoption level of each staff member. At the same time, he is executing the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating each school improvement innovation. Based on his monitoring actions, Lynn further engaged teachers through his own flexibility. He communicates the expectation of teacher buy-in to improvement initiatives but acknowledges that failure can result. “I have to let them know I at least expect them to have some buy-in. If I have a great degree of misunderstanding or [am] misinformed of what we’re shooting for, I need to step back and say, ‘I didn’t prepare enough.’” His flexibility is also based on the current climate of significant contract events. Principal Lynn recognized that negotiation provides added stress to the work environment, which can affect his push to achieve school improvement goals. He stated, “I might have to switch gears, but it can’t ever stop. It might stop my fluffy goals that I’ve written, but it wouldn’t stop. We can’t let this destroy us; we’ve got to put more energy into this.”

Summarizing the influence Principal Lynn exerts on teaching staff is focused in three main areas of leadership responsibility. It was apparent that the role of change agent
was achieved through his actions to raise educational improvement issues with a seasoned staff and tolerance of ambiguity during change. Principal Lynn related the role as a change agent to his ideals and belief in student-focused innovation. Lynn made it clear to all staff that second-order change must achieve the best interest of all students, and staff was clear in their understanding of this expectation. Finally, Principal Lynn demonstrated the leadership responsibility of flexibility through a willingness to adjust plans based on current contract events and tensions, as well as his monitoring of implementation. He also understood the need for situational leadership to adjust for the uneven adoption of change efforts by his varied staff.

Cross Case Analysis

The cross case analysis of Summit School and Prairie School found strong similarities in themes that fostered the fidelity to Advanc-ED school improvement implementation. Differences between Summit School and Prairie School were also apparent and will be discussed in this section. The analysis of the supporting research sub-questions was used as the basis for cross analysis of Summit School and Prairie School.

Union Relationships

An informative comparison between the two case schools that is important to acknowledge is the strength of the local union. The researcher found evidence that the union was more adversarial with administration as well as teachers in Summit School. Grievances were noted to be common practice, and teachers indicated that grievances
were filed on their behalf without their knowledge. Teachers also indicated that they were not willing to speak their personal opinions with senior union members present because they felt that this would jeopardize employment or create professional hardship. This school had a wide range of tenure among staff, and newer teachers acknowledged the union strength as evidenced in the statements collected in the qualitative interviews.

Teacher Kidd summarized the union strength.

In our town, if you stray away from anything that is union, it’s not looked upon favorably, and it’s because of our strong union roots. I get it, but I don’t necessarily agree with it all the time. I oftentimes have been that black sheep if I’ve contradicted something I probably shouldn’t have contradicted. Especially if you’re a non-tenured teacher, too. If you’re non-tenured, you just smile and nod and do what you’re told because you know the union is the one who’s going to have your back at the end of the day. You don’t want to cause any waves. Once you’re a tenured teacher, I think you tend to be a bit more vocal. It’s tough in a union town to have a strong opinion, especially in a strike situation or a contract negotiation situation.

Kidd continued her assessment of the union and her acknowledgement of the union strength several times in her interview. She added to the union strength discussion with her comment, “I know that we are a very strong union town. Things have to be by the book. It can be very challenging at times because the contract language can definitely be misinterpreted.” The union strength was also noted by Teacher Nube in her interview. She stated, “The union keeps a close eye on what I do to make sure I’m not in violation of our contract or I’m not doing work outside of my contract or doing someone else’s job.”

Teacher Horn’s assessment of the teacher union and some teachers was a strongly entrenched union protocol. She contended, “They go right in for the kill and file a
grievance or go to the school board. They don’t approach that situation correctly. There are a number of teachers who feel that’s what they have to do when they’re threatened; they go right to the union.”

This strong unionism is also reflected throughout the community and, as noted in the above quotes, is a reflection of the community at large. Teachers very clearly noted that the community norms and expectations contributed to a strong union presence and mindset in the teaching staff.

Principal Miner also acknowledges the relationship between the union’s leadership and the union membership. He finds that the union prevents teachers from engaging in communication school improvement work they find valuable and necessary. He stated,

I think honestly what hinders my staff from giving their opinions is the union themselves. Within our union, there’s an executive council and then you have the whole union. The executive council does not represent the entire union; it’s a minority of the hard union people. I think that’s where teachers are really afraid to talk about the good things and what we need to do for kids, because they know they will get hammered by the executive council.

The apparent control the local union exerts in Summit School appears to have a strong influence on teacher participation in school improvement work. It is also worthy to note that Principal Miner has been able to work around this control by providing substitute teachers and payment for extra work associated with school improvement initiatives.

The researcher found that Prairie School was more flexible in the approach of the union. The staff at this school had a majority of long tenure teachers with 15 or more
years of experience. In contrast to Summit School, the issue of union control over teachers was not raised during interviews, and grievances were not raised as an ongoing concern. Significant contract events were identified in qualitative interviews as conflict with the board of trustees. Teachers also acknowledged that the rural agricultural nature of the community and a no-strike clause in the teacher contract tempered union strength.

In contrast to Summit School, teachers in Prairie School acknowledged the union as the negotiating unit, but interviews did not reveal union membership to be a norm in the school community. Teacher interviews also revealed a more congenial environment of communication. Grievances were not mentioned in teacher interviews. Instead, ongoing lines of communication in staff meetings and personal meetings between teachers and Principal Lynn were commonly referenced.

Evidence of an adversarial environment in Prairie School was noted by the researcher. However, the adversarial relationship was not with building level administration, and most recognized that several members of the board of trustees and the union negotiation team were where most contract conflicts occurred. As a result, teachers were not focused on contractual issues. Instead, teacher interviews referenced teacher to teacher communication that lacked input and flow of information between union and non-union members as a key adversarial relationship in the school. Principal Lynn noted that only half of the teachers in his school were members. Teacher Neal noted that she is a member of the union but is not concerned with the contract as much as non-union members not paying for the benefit of union representation. She shared,

I don’t think the contract has been on anyone’s mind except for those individuals who have had to deal with negotiations. I know that non-
members may complain to the members, but they have a choice. My philosophy is that non-members are getting the negotiations for free. I’m not a strong union person, but I’m also a believer in paying my share and doing my share of what needs to be done.

Non-union teachers counter that the union does not communicate well. Teacher Craig asserted that there is miscommunication at all levels regarding the union. She shared,

I’m a non-union member, and I just think there’s a lot of miscommunication with the union, the non-union members, the board, and the administration. Everybody wants to think it’s black and white and there’s not a lot of gray matter. Even if you’re not a member of the union, I believe you should be able to give suggestions and try to make it so it all works together so teachers will be more unified.

Teacher Craig went on to relate that he made a suggestion to the union which he felt was rejected due to his lack of membership. Craig stated his idea was rejected, “because I made the suggestion and I’m non-union. And I think, ‘Well, no wonder people don’t want to deal with you people [the union].”’

The relationship of the teacher union to both the administration and teaching staff clarified the environment of each school in relation to teacher engagement and school improvement work. Summit School had a strong union presence that had a direct effect on school improvement work. The principal paid for excess time devoted to improvement meetings and managed by exception to accomplish needed work. Teachers felt pressure to conform to union ideals, and grievances were a normal part of the environment even when teachers did not know grievances were filed on their behalf. In school 2, teachers engaged in school improvement processes without intervention by the union. The union functioned without grievances at the building level and appeared to focus more at the district contract level. At the same time, teachers in Prairie School were more critical of
their peer’s choices to belong or not belong to the union. Communication was referenced by teachers as the area of teacher engagement that suffered due to this conflict. Teachers who were members stated that others were represented without paying their fair share, and non-members countered that the union was not willing to listen and represent the entire teacher pool in the district.

Teacher Engagement

Qualitative interviews at both case schools indicated that teachers continued to engage in school improvement processes during significant labor events to some degree. Teachers and the principal indicated that the engagement did vary based on individualized teacher perspectives as well as control exerted by the local union. Teachers were likely to engage in school improvement process for educational welfare of students.

While teachers supported the contention of allegiance to their school in both case schools, the researcher found that most teachers cited students as the reason that school improvement would continue during a significant contract event. Professional duty was also cited frequently, but in each instance citing professional duty or allegiance to school, the teacher also finished the statement with a comment regarding improving the educational environment for students. Teacher Charles in Summit School gave an example.

Whether you agree or disagree with something that occurs, it’s your job. If you want to keep your job, you’re going to have to put some participation into it. Above and beyond that, it depends on the person, whether it’s their moral upbringing or their sense of responsibility, or their desire to do their best for the kids. Even though you still don’t know about your pay, you
want to do your best. If it’s all about the kids, most teachers are all over it. Even though they’re not excited about another thing piling on their back, if we can make it about the kids, people do it because that’s why we’re here.

In supporting this contention in Summit School, Teacher Kurl cited a higher calling for teachers. He contended that true teachers do indeed have a mindset that places students first and remuneration second. He commented, “We think of the students first and utmost. I truly think there are born teachers and the ones who are born to be teachers are going to think of students first. If it’s going to affect students’ livelihood and get them out being productive citizens, I don’t think it would matter to them what happened in the contract. They’ll do what’s best for the students.” At the same time, Kurl did note that not all teachers in the profession share this higher calling mindset which results in disengagement during significant contract events.

Teacher Rowe in Prairie School was another interviewee who supported the student educational welfare mindset. Rowe acknowledged that teacher contract desires are often trumped by student educational welfare when she commented, “We like the money, we want our benefits, we want everything else, but when it comes right down to it, we’re going to do our jobs because that’s what we’re here for. We love it; we’re not going to quit because we can’t get the raise we want. Most of the people here love what they do and their number one priority is to help the kids.” Teacher Craig in Prairie School went a step further and noted that teacher entitlements would not interfere with school improvement efforts. She supported this contention with, “This is the age of entitlement and all this other stuff, and we don’t feel that way; we’re kind of old school. You’ve got a
job to do: let’s do it, and make it better for the kids. That’s what the educational process is, isn’t it? To help the kids get better?”

Teacher Hitz further affirmed that teachers were still engaged in improvement processes despite contract difficulties. She contended that no one is at the point of stopping school improvement. “[I] don’t know of anyone who’s at that point yet. I think we do love our jobs and we are invested. Negotiations may kick us in the guts, but I think we still want to see that the students do the best they can.” Teacher Neal from Prairie School supported this assertion regarding this school and went further to include personal experience from her youth into her assertion that teachers continue school improvement during contract events. She asserted that past contract events did not have a negative effect on the school.

[We] are teachers and we’re hardwired a certain way. I have never seen any negative impact in our school or any school. My dad was on the school board when I was in high school and they had to close the elementary school because they couldn’t pass a mill levy. I remember that stress. I have never ever seen any impact on the process whether we have a contract or we don’t have a contract. There’s professionalism, there’s teamwork, there’s cooperation. It’s about educating kids, and I don’t think we even remember a contract.

The theme of improving the educational environment for students was common in both case schools. Teachers acknowledged both professionalism and a higher calling to help students that was exclusive of contract events. One teacher in the more rigid union environment stated the union could not stop her work. “If somebody within my union said I was not allowed, for whatever reason, I don’t think I personally would stop, at that point even.”
The principals from both case studies also cited student educational welfare as the reason teachers continue to engage in school improvement processes during significant contract events. Both principals cited their vision of acting in the best interest of students during contract events.

The interview finding that teachers and principals found the common cause of student educational welfare as a unifying reason to continue school improvement work should be tempered by the findings of what would prevent school improvement work. When pressed for a situation or event that would stop the school improvement process, teachers identified a strike as the event that would end their participation. Even teachers in Prairie School identified a strike as an event that would stop their work. This was interesting from the standpoint that the Prairie School contract has a no-strike clause. Even with this finding, teachers indicated that the reason for not completing school improvement was based in their unwillingness to work in a strike situation. Similarly, if a strike ended or was averted, the researcher found teachers to be willing to continue school improvement processes.

Relational Trust

Cross case analysis of the case schools regarding relational trust indicates that the occurrence of significant contract events did not affect the trust relationship between the principals and teachers. In both cases, principal and teachers interviews identified principal neutrality in negotiations and transparent and honest communications as factors that contributed to high relational trust. However, the major point principals and teachers emphasized was the need for principal neutrality during significant contract.
Principal neutrality was identified by the researcher as the key component that fostered trust with the teachers. Significant labor events were consistently identified as district level or board level occurrences that did not involve building level administration such as the principal. Isolation from these events provided principals the opportunity to maintain a daily working relationship with their building level staff that was positive and productive. Teacher respondents from Summit School consistently listed principal neutrality in their interviews as important to maintaining the relational trust. Several teachers in Summit School referenced neutrality as summarized by the two comments below.

Teacher Kurl summarized the importance of the neutrality of Principal Miner with his statement,

He never tried to get behind the scenes or know ‘Why are you going here? What are you doing?’ He left that up to the union to settle our issues instead of him giving us input or him asking us what’s going on. He had a very professional way of, ‘This is where I am. This is what you guys need to do on your own,’ without him interceding.

Prairie School statements were more subtle regarding neutrality. However, the importance of neutrality as important to maintaining staff focus and direction for school improvement work were noted by teacher Kidd.

If an administrator can stay out of [contract events], he will retain a lot more of their [teacher] trust to come back once things have been settled and refocus everybody to keep moving forward. There’s always going to be that vision at the end and we can’t let something like a contract negotiation or a strike derail us from that end result. It’s always going to be there; we just need someone to help get us back on track.
While she acknowledged the distractions that significant contract events bring to the school, she noted that neutrality fosters trust which contributes to school improvement efforts moving forward during and after contractual issues.

Teacher Rowe in Prairie School made a similar argument for neutrality when she addressed the importance of principal neutrality during contract events. She said,

> I’ve felt that he [the principal] hasn’t assigned any blame to anyone. He’s not directly involved in those negotiations, and I think he’s tried pretty hard to remain neutral, if not tacitly supportive, with the understanding that, it’s not that we’re saying we don’t like our jobs or that we’re unhappy here. He knows how it goes; he was a teacher here. What we do over there isn’t necessarily any reflection on him or the school or our happiness.

Ultimately principal neutrality and subsequent relational trust helped foster the professional school environment that led to teacher engagement in school improvement work even during contract impasses. Both principals recognized the importance of their neutrality and noted that their exclusion from contract talks insulated them from the union, board, and district level disagreements. In turn, the principals were able to engage the staff in ongoing development efforts within their school buildings.

One contrasting point to principal neutrality building teacher trust was in Summit School. Principal Miner acknowledged that his hard-line union members were difficult to engage in trusting relations that fostered school improvement. Miner notes that he tries to show support for both the board and teachers by attending negotiations and controlling his actions. However, when a contract event does occur, willingness to institute school improvement change degenerates. He described his difficulty in working with the small group of union leadership during significant contract events when he commented, “The
strong union people, they wouldn’t budge on anything. They did not want to hear about anybody telling them they need to do anything differently. But again, that’s the minority, but that minority is going back to that executive council and they kind of run the show during negotiations.”

Miner further described that when a significant labor event occurs, a minority of hard line union members disengage from the process and the issues become driven by state level negotiators. He stated that, “By that time, the union isn’t going to listen to anybody and that’s when the union in Helena starts driving the negotiations here and it’s not much of a local issue.”

The cross case analysis also revealed that communication plays an integral role in the relational trust of building principals and teachers during significant contract events. Teachers and principals in both case studies noted that honest and transparent communication was important to maintaining trust. In contrast, both case study schools also reported negative relational trust between teachers due to lack of communication between union leadership and non-member teachers.

Principals noted that they regularly communicate with all staff and are open and honest regarding decisions and expectations. Both principals in the study are noted by their teachers for having open and honest communication. Principal Miner contends that individual teachers regularly communicate with him regarding school improvement goals. While he may work with a small group initially, the entire staff is involved in vetting goals and assessing progress. He stated,

There’s not too many that should say they don’t know what the school improvement goals are. Take reading, for example. I’m in constant
communication with that reading school improvement group... I work with those three almost daily and ask them how the data is going. As soon as we do testing, we’re sitting down and talking about it; who’s going up and who’s going down, and then we report that out to the whole staff. So we develop the goal, it goes in front of the whole staff, and then all the communication kind of deals with those people who are inside that goal. After we get some testing data, usually after a year, then we come back. Last week, we reported on our reading scores and growth for the year. I would say that’s pretty much the same way we do any goals in our school improvement [process].

Principal Lynn is similar in his communication style with his teaching staff. He admits that as the school leader sometimes he has to make an unpopular decision but still allows his staff to ask questions regarding why he made his decision. However, with school improvement, Lynn recognized the need for teacher support and buy-in to school improvement change initiatives. At this level Lynn works to fully inform the staff.

I think they need to be informed of what we’re trying to do, the whole process. They’ll have different levels of buy-in, but I have to let them know I at least expect them to have some buy-in. If I have a great degree of misunderstanding or [am] misinformed of what we’re shooting for, I need to step back and say, ‘I didn’t prepare enough. I need to be prepared to be able to say what I want and think it through.’

While working to inform staff, Lynn acknowledges in the above statement that some failure during change processes does occur but not because of a failure to communicate. His willingness to acknowledge these failures points to the uneven pace of school improvement. In fact, Lynn notes that change is never a clear path. He stated, “The only predictable part of that is that it’s going to be disorganized.” But, he also contended that the staff knows they can speak frankly with him regarding their concerns. Lynn described that, “It’s not always politically correct with the staff, but we can trust each other.”
The researcher also found that teachers valued the role of communication in building relational trust and cited communication as important to building relational trust. This theme was pervasive in the interviews from both case studies. Teacher responses to questions regarding the impact of honest communication summarize the linkage to relational trust and teacher support of school improvement initiatives. Teacher Neal in Prairie School stated, “Our team leaders in SIP have done an excellent job of getting feedback from the staff and trying to empower and develop ownership of whatever our goal is.” Teacher Hunter in Prairie School added, “So for trust, what comes out of his mouth has to happen instead of going some other direction.”

In Summit School Teacher Kidd added, “If the principal gives good, clear instructions to his staff about what is expected through the school improvement process, then we don’t feel quite so lost going through the forest; he’s helping us find our way through.” And Teacher Nube stated the need for communication during change. She explained, “Any time you bring change into a school, you have to increase the amount of communication you have between you and your teachers because you don’t want to throw that change in there and not tell [teachers] why you’re doing it.”

Communication was found throughout all interviews to be key to fostering and maintaining relational trust. Principals understand the value of clarifying the need for change and using ongoing dialog to foster teacher support for school improvement efforts. Teachers also recognized the importance of communication for this purpose. However, both principals and teachers acknowledged that communication will not convince all staff to adopt change efforts. Several interviewees stated that no amount of
communication will create full staff buy-in to change efforts. However, the same communications tend to create a dialog that fosters trust.

**Principal Responsibilities and Behaviors**

The responsibilities of knowledge of curriculum and assessment, optimizer, intellectual stimulation, change agent, monitoring/evaluating, flexibility, and ideals/beliefs (Marzano et al. 2005) were common in the leadership of both case schools. Through execution of these identified responsibilities, principals in both case schools worked to influence teacher adoption of school improvement initiatives. However, findings indicate that each principal employed a personal focus regarding the responsibilities and supporting behaviors identified by the researcher. The commonalities and differences are shared in this segment of the cross case analysis.

Research findings indicate the principals in the case schools clearly share their ideals and beliefs in regard to their personal vision of their school. Each principal also held and demonstrated expertise in curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the school community. The common theme of student focused decisions and goals was identified by the researcher in both principal interviews and multiple teacher interviews in each case school. This clear vision provided a basis for principal leadership of second-order change affecting curriculum, instruction, and assessment that was consistently aligned with principal expectations in both case schools. Teachers, in turn, were able to identify the clear ideals and belief systems as well as second-order change expectations. This provided a consistent school improvement environment based on common school goals. To implement their ideals and beliefs, both principals worked extensively with
individuals and groups of teachers to identify potential innovations to improve their school.

The researcher concluded that the case school principals identified strongly with the responsibility of being change agents. Issues of achievement were examined through the use of data with staff members in both case schools. This data provided evidence to inform staff as they developed improvement goals. Within this role, the principals noted that change is never accomplished in a straight line with consistent success. Principal Lynn noted that, “The only predictable part of [change] is that it’s going to be disorganized,” and Miner noted his tolerance for failure during efforts to improve when he stated, “I don’t care if we fail. You can’t fail unless you try.”

The case school principals also practiced flexibility as they adjusted to staff input as well as the effects of significant contract events. In highly stressful times, the principals indicated that they did not push teachers in school improvement efforts and allowed the improvement process efforts to slow in order to avoid alienating teachers.

The researcher also found that the case school principals diverged in their implementation of Marzano’s listed responsibilities. Principal Miner and his staff reported him to be more hands on in his responsibility to lead curriculum, instruction and assessment. He indicated that he met regularly with small groups to examine implementation and innovation. In contrast, Principal Lynn tended to rely on leadership within his school improvement team to implement this responsibility. Lynn freely recognized that he was not an expert in every area and individual work with staff often was led by his teacher experts in small groups.
A second area of contrast was in the leadership role of being an optimizer. The researcher was able to identify in Summit School the principal behaviors of providing exemplar school examples, communication of belief that innovation will improve student learning, and identifying challenges and roadblocks to innovation. In contrast, this leadership responsibility was not identified in any of the interviews from Prairie School.

The responsibility of intellectual stimulation also was identified for Summit School through practices such as inclusion of research in innovation and leading discussions around current practice. Principal Miner gave examples of research and how he incorporated research into his staff discussions and meetings. Again, this leadership responsibility was not identified in any of the interviews from Prairie School.

Unintentional Findings

Unique findings that were shared in both case schools indicated two unintentional findings during the study. The first was the perceived interests of outside negotiating organizations hired by both the school board and teacher union.

Administrators saw outside negotiators and their agencies as the only beneficiaries during significant labor events and viewed these individuals as having no interest in the community. Principals viewed the conflictual relationship caused by outside mediators as unwelcome influence. Miner felt that if mediators were “removed from [negotiations] there would not be much strife.” Lynn had a similar opinion of the outside influence of negotiators. “The mediation comes in, stirs a lot of staff relationships up, and then leaves town.”
Teachers also voiced this finding when they named themselves as “pawns, as far as the union at the state level” and confirmed both case school principals’ views of outside negotiators. Teachers in both cases viewed the outside negotiators as a detriment to the school community, “who don’t live and work here and they’re not engaged with our students….They almost like when we have these strikes because it empowers them.” Both teachers and administrators agreed that when the state unions and board associations, “start driving the negotiations…it’s not much of a local issue.”

The second unintentional finding was a communication breakdown between teacher union and non-union members. The union leadership was seen as a group that kept negotiation information from the membership and non-members. One union leader stated that information was not shared to prevent misunderstandings and rumors. While union members appeared to be accepting of this practice, there was contention from non-union members that information was intentionally withheld. The contention was supported in several interviews. “They only share information with other members, they don’t share with everyone” and “[Union members] are very careful and don’t discuss some of the things that are going on with negotiations because there are people who aren’t members…and are very resentful” are representative comments. This lack of communication was supported by teachers who felt, “[non-members] are along for the ride.” However, non-union members iterated that some teachers in the union did not negotiate in the best interest of the group as supported by the comment, “I suggested it to the union and they said no because I made the suggestion and I’m non-union.”
The implications of these unintentional finding are interesting as they are indicators of relational trust and communication within the case schools. However, these findings did not have bearing on the relational trust and communication and responsibilities of the principal during a significant contract event.

**Summary**

Chapter four has presented the results of the analysis of the qualitative interview themes discovered by the researcher in the embedded multiple-case study. Quantitative surveys measuring the relational trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2003) and principal responsibilities (Marzano et al., 2005) were administered to inform the qualitative question protocol. Additionally, questions assessing engagement in school improvement processes were developed from Gallagher (2007). Interviews were analyzed to determine themes within each case study, and themes were reported within each of the four research questions. The themes within each research question were presented individually for each case school with qualitative data supplied to reinforce the findings of each research question. A cross case analysis of the two embedded case schools was completed. The cross case analysis supplied evidence that the embedded cases share similar profiles or are replications (Yin, 2014) of a general case.

Chapter five will present an overview of the qualitative, embedded multiple-case study methodology, a summary of the literature review, as well as an overview of the results of the research questions. The findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research will also be presented in the chapter.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Chapter five presents a summary and intent of the study, qualitative embedded multiple-case study methodology, and the findings. The findings for each research question will be examined in light of the qualitative evidence collected, and rival interpretations will be presented. The significance of the research to the field of educational leadership will be presented through the lens of the evidence collected in the qualitative interviews and the prior expertise of the researcher. The importance of further research regarding plausible rival theories will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with an overall summary of the research.

Summary of the Problem and Intent of the Study

Significant attention has been given to school improvement models and the role of principal leadership in leading second-order change to improve schools. Montana and other states such as Idaho and Wyoming now require schools to engage in self-evaluation and a continuous improvement model that identifies educational strengths and weakness. This model requires schools to develop plans and goals to improve weaknesses that address the educational environment for students. Regional and state agencies prescribe these improvement models. In the Northwest states, the regional accreditation agency is Advanc-ED.
The complexities of principal leadership and the impact of that leadership on student achievement has also received much attention through multiple school leadership studies (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). While building principals are called upon to institute second-order change to improve the educational environment of their schools, research suggests the contract restrictions and union relations serve as obstacles to change in schools (Price, 2009). In addition, teachers cite required school reform efforts as a reason for dissatisfaction with their profession (Day & Sethhem, 2009; Ewald, 2013).

The complexities of second-order change in schools, teacher dissatisfaction with educational reform, and the obstacles presented by collective bargaining agreements and union relations is the environment in which principals lead change. This environment can lead to significant contract events defined as, no contract in effect, mediation, arbitration, and work slowdown or stoppage.

Little research exists that examines how principal leadership responsibilities during significant labor events foster or inhibit collaborative school reform. The overarching purpose of this embedded multiple-case study was to examine, describe, and compare the leadership responsibilities and behaviors of school principals that have enabled the case study schools to successfully implement required Advanc-ED strategies of school reform in the environment of a significant labor event.
Methodology

The embedded multiple-case study methodology was chosen as the qualitative design because data from the case schools informed a larger unit of analysis. This overarching analysis unit was the successful implementation of Advanc-Ed school improvement strategies during significant contract events. Yin (2014) advocates this methodology when the embedded case studies extend to a higher level. The analytic strategy used to examine the case studies employed a “ground up” inductive approach. Yin (2014) also suggests that inductive analysis strategies are complemented by quantitative data that “may be related to an embedded unit of analysis within your broader case study” (p. 138).

This embedded multiple-case study methodology used quantitative surveys to inform the collection of qualitative data through interview processes. The Marzano et al. (2005) survey of 21 Leadership Responsibilities, and the Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2003) Principal and Teacher Trust Surveys were selected as the quantitative means to initially survey principals and teaching staff at each case school regarding leadership and trust. Items in the 21 Leadership Responsibilities Survey that were not correlated to second-order change were deselected from the survey prior to administration. The Principal Trust Survey and Teacher Trust Surveys were administered as written.

The surveys did not serve as a means of analysis to inform the study. Instead, surveys were used to develop the qualitative interview protocol used for analysis of each embedded case school. Survey responses from teachers and principals were compared on like items to determine commonalities and differences. Survey questions from the
Principal Responsibility Survey and the Principal Trust and Teacher Trust Surveys showing wide differences or high uniformity in ratings were considered for inclusion. Questions were also developed from the Gallagher Engagement Model to ascertain the level of engagement and type of reform that existed in case schools. The researcher developed a 20-question principal interview protocol and a 21-question teacher interview protocol. Questions developed in the interview protocol were tested at a sample school and revised to align with the research questions. The qualitative protocol sought to examine the main research question and supporting research questions included below.

1. How do principal responsibilities and behaviors during a significant labor event influence school improvement processes?
   a. How do labor events influence teacher engagement in the school improvement process?
   b. How do labor events influence relational trust between the principal and teachers?
   c. How do principals influence teacher engagement during significant labor events?

The revised interview protocol was administered at two case study schools. The researcher sought to examine the behavioral traits of the principal at each case study school that resulted in successful implementing of Advanc-ED school improvement strategies during significant labor events. This examination was conducted through the lens of Marzano’s et al. (2005) 21 Leadership Responsibilities. Supporting the study of
principal behavior was the inclusion of teacher engagement using Gallagher’s (2007) reform model and relational trust as measured by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2003).

After 15 interviews, saturation was reached and comments and themes began to repeat, indicating that no new information was gained. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed to determine common themes; four common themes emerged from analysis data from interviewees. Those themes were principal neutrality, variability in execution of the 21 Leadership Responsibilities, teacher willingness to continue school improvement efforts during significant labor events, and principal availability/communication.

Findings

Introduction

The findings of this embedded multiple-case study are presented below. It is important to note that the three supporting sub-questions are presented prior to the primary research question. This order of presentation extends support from each sub-question to the primary research question.

The literature reviewed for this study focused on the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of school reform. Price (2009) contends that despite the perceptions that unions and collective bargaining agreements are obstacles to reform, more flexibility exists in bargained agreements. Additionally, Kerchner & Mitchell (1986) advocate for the union to become a responsible party to school reform.

Findings in this chapter support the contention that professional unionism results in teachers engaging in school reform efforts. Teacher and principal interviews indicate
that engagement in school reform work continues during significant contract events. This finding is contrary to traditional premise that school improvement work ceases during a contract event.

Conditions of relational trust impact engagement in reform during significant labor events. The relational trust in a school community supports transformational leadership models (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk et al., 2010; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). The study confirms that transformational leadership does support school reform through the conditions of input, communication, and principal neutrality. The importance of these conditions found in the study contrasts the findings of Marzano et al. (2005) which contend that input and communication suffer while implementing second order change (negative correlation). However, teachers and principals in this study indicated that the leadership responsibilities of input and communication were improved when a labor event occurred during school reform efforts. The findings reported below summarize data regarding engagement, trust, and principal responsibilities during significant labor events.

Labor Event Influence on Teacher Engagement

The findings for the research question suggest that labor events do not prevent teacher engagement in school improvement processes. Education administrators tend to view contractual language as barriers to school reform. Price (2009) suggests that perceived contract restrictions and union relations are obstacles to change in schools due to paralysis caused by dealing with contract provisions. However, Price found that collective bargaining agreements are more flexible than perceived. The difficulty with
reform arises in the complex provisions of the agreements and the time required to comply with elaborate procedures.

Supporting the findings of Price (2009), teachers interviewed for this study did acknowledge that significant labor events detract and distract their efforts to engage in the Advanc-ED school improvement processes at their school. While this suggests that the findings for this research question are mixed, the preponderance of teachers interviewed verbalized the need to improve their professional abilities and meet the needs of their students despite significant contract events. Indeed, most teachers interviewed in conjunction with this study indicated a compelling interest in the educational welfare of their students as well as a willingness to continue the work of school improvement processes.

The only event that findings indicate would halt teacher engagement in school improvement processes was a strike. In this instance, teachers agreed that they would not work and generally recognized that all school improvement work would cease for them personally. Mitigating this finding was the fact that most teachers did not acknowledge the possibility of a strike. In fact, several acknowledged that this would not occur in their school due to a no strike clause in the collective bargaining agreement for their district.

Findings from the principal interviews also indicated that teachers continued to engage in the school improvement processes despite contract events. However, the engagement was gauged to be varied among staff members. Staff members who were more reluctant to complete additional duties associated with school improvement were identified as union leadership in one case school. It was noted these union leaders were
unwilling to complete Advanc-ED work without compensatory time or additional pay. The principal acknowledged the practice of paying these staff members for work associated with the school improvement process. This is a practice of management by exception and the practice was generally acknowledged to exist by all teachers. Interestingly, teachers did not appear to see this unequal treatment (management by exception) as an obstacle. It was viewed as a means to complete necessary work by those who did not receive compensation as well as the principal.

Contrasting this unique practice was the union leadership in the other case school. The principal noted that union officers were leading many improvement efforts and were highly engaged despite contract events. This group appeared to be able to compartmentalize the difficult contract negotiations that resulted in starting the school year without a contract. The principal and the teachers in this school viewed the event as something to be handled outside the walls of the school.

These findings give indication that teachers do engage in continuous school improvement efforts required by Advanc-ED accreditation during significant labor events. This willingness is tempered by the finding that some teachers are willing to engage only if compensated in some way during such events.

Labor Event Influence on Principal/Teacher Relational Trust

The researcher found that relational trust continued to exist in case schools during significant contract events. Principal neutrality and communication were the two key
factors identified in both teacher and principal interviews in both schools that fostered relational trust.

Principal neutrality was a universal finding in interviews in both case schools. For operational purposes of this study, principal neutrality was defined as the principal having no involvement in regard to district and union negotiations, as well as holding an objective view of both the management and teacher union perspectives of significant labor events. In the objective stance, the principal does not side with management or the union. Instead the principal holds these conflicts as an event beyond the needs and work of building level improvement.

The teachers and principals recognized that involvement or partiality in negotiations or disputes leading to a significant contract event would damage the relational trust between the building level administrators and their teaching staff. Teachers noted that trust was fostered by the principal remaining an “outsider” in the negotiation process. This outsider neutrality allowed principals to move forward with school improvement. Both union and non-union teachers were adamant that any perception of undue influence or partiality by a principal damaging to trust. Principals also voiced that their involvement in labor events would damage trust with both the board of trustees as well as the teaching staff at the building level.

This finding is supported by statements that negotiations are, at a minimum, district administration versus union leadership conflicts and usually board versus union level. Teachers and principals both identified these conflicts as being “outside the day to day operations” of school building level functioning. If building principals were to be
included in the negotiations process, this involvement was identified as an adversarial relationship which would, in turn, compromise the working relationship required within the building to engage in self-evaluation and goal setting activities for school improvement.

Honest and open communication between principals and teachers was also identified by the researcher as a key component of relational trust. Findings indicate that regular vetting of progress toward goals and an opportunity for teachers to provide input regarding progress and building level decisions are key aspects of relational trust. Teachers and principals in both case schools acknowledged that principals focused on communication efforts during significant contract events. However, the Summit School principal focused more on written communication, while the Prairie School principal focused on face-to-face communications.

Teachers recognized that they would not always agree with the principal. Interviews indicated that teachers needed to be heard and receive honest input from their principal even when they did not like the information the principal conveyed. Transparency and the importance of teacher ownership of improvement goals relies heavily on the allowance for teacher input. While full agreement is not common, principals and teachers indicate the need for voice during change. Similarly, lack of consensus regarding decisions and goal setting was frequently identified. However, most teachers were willing to proceed with goals and acquiesce to school improvement as well as principal decisions when they were able to access the principal to ask questions as well as voice disagreement.
The principals and teachers agreed that communication builds relational trust and fosters support for school improvement efforts, but communication does not insure that teachers will embrace change. Interviews indicate that adoption of change follows well documented models. Interviews in both case schools support this contention, and one principal iterated that “about one-third of teachers will embrace the adoption of a goal at inception, another one-third will take a ‘wait and see’ stance adopting change at a slower pace, and the final one-third will fully resist change.”

This gives indication that relational trust is a precursor to school improvement processes. Without relational trust, change in the name of school improvement would be compromised and difficult at best. However, relational trust does not guarantee that teaching staff will fully embrace school improvement goals and initiatives. Relational trust is then best described as a catalyst to the process of school improvement work.

A contrasting finding from the research did indicate that the union leadership and principal of the more unionized case school community did not share high relational trust. These mixed results were accounted for in the principal interview when he attributed the lack of trust to an older style of adversarial relations that existed in senior staff members leading the union. This group was identified as a small minority in the school that controlled the union leadership positions. The lack of relational trust was also attributed to the highly unionized personality of the community at large. This adversarial relationship did not appear to exist in both case schools, and the principal in Prairie School noted a strong working relationship with the union leadership in his building, and in fact, noted that the union president served as a staff leader for school improvement
initiatives. The mixed findings appear to apply to a small segment of union leadership. However, the lack of relational trust with this group is a mitigating factor influencing relational trust between building principals and their teaching staff.

This research question also led the researcher to identify negative relational trust between union leadership and non-union members. Failed communication was commonly identified as the main contributing factor in this relationship. While interesting, this was a finding determined by the researcher to be beyond the bounds of this research question and will be discussed in the unintentional findings portion of this chapter.

Principals’ Influence on Teacher Engagement During Significant Labor Events

Principal influence of teacher engagement in the school improvement during significant labor events was unique to each principal interviewed. These mixed findings indicate that the personality of each principal, teaching staff, and school community affected efforts to influence teacher engagement. This theme was starkly contrasted in the principal interviews at the case study schools as well as the pilot school. The principal in the pilot school reported a great deal of caution and personal reflections in his actions. He worked to view any school improvement initiative from the perspective of his teaching staff before full vetting of goals. This principal also tried to allow teachers to review data and information to identify results that he knew existed. In this manner, he effectively “led from behind” which allowed his teaching staff to arrive at similar or the same goals without the perception of administrative mandates.
A contrasting style from a different principal was to move forward without change. This principal identified that he had strong push and expected his vision to be implemented. Teacher interviews and the principal interview gave strong indication that meetings, goal setting, data collection/assessment and planning sessions continued. However, all interviews confirmed that some teachers were compensated as a means to influence their engagement, while others were willing to complete the work without compensation.

A third contrasting style of principal influence gave indication that the principal push was less forceful, and difficult goals were delayed as these required higher levels of staff commitment and work beyond classroom assignments.

All principals identified that the pacing of their school improvement processes slowed during labor events to varying degrees. Principals exercised caution in the volume of work assigned and actively delayed minor school improvement work based on their perception of staff attitudes and stress levels. Each principal recognized that teachers struggle to focus on school-wide improvement goals when they believe their employment is at risk. This finding appears to be a function of the severity of the contract event. Findings indicated that when the contract event is perceived to threaten job security, such as a reduction in force, school improvement is secondary to professional survival. However, when the contract event is based more on monetary impasse without the threat of job loss, all principals and teachers gave indication that the school improvement engagement did occur.
All principals also influenced teacher engagement through work distribution and staff development opportunities. Principals were clear that they worked to make sure that work associated with school improvement processes was spread across all teaching groups. Each case school identified goals, created local expertise, and implemented strategies across all staff to accomplish goals. While principals as well as teachers acknowledged the importance of work load, teachers identified the influence of equal access to training and positive recognition as highly important. Teachers were especially concerned that principals allow equal access to special events, training, and conferences. One teacher summarized this input when she stated the importance of the principal, “making good things available to all of us.”

A final common factor identified in the case schools was principal efforts to maintain positive morale. Teachers identified the efforts by both principals to acknowledge the fact that a significant contract event was occurring. At the same time, findings indicate that principals worked to keep an environment of normalcy. Teachers were able to approach their principal and seek opinions, advice, and encouragement. The key aspect of this finding is that the principals conveyed that the event was beyond the control of the school level and worked to insulate the building environment through the expectation of business as usual regarding instruction and professionalism.

Principal Responsibilities and Behavior Influence on School Improvement During Significant Labor Events

Findings for the primary research question indicate that the principal plays a key role in the implementation of school improvement processes. During significant labor
events, the principal responsibilities in the school district and their ability to act as a
catalyst as well as demonstrate the Leadership Responsibilities for second-order change
was the key finding of this research.

Principals serve as the catalyst that enables the leadership team in their school to
act on school improvement processes. To enable teacher leaders to act, research found
that during significant labor events principals must continue to exercise the
responsibilities associated with second-order change as identified by Marzano et al.
(2005). These responsibilities were not evenly deployed by principals involved in this
study. The responsibilities of ideals/beliefs, change agent, and knowledge of curriculum,
assessment and instruction were enacted by all principals in the study. However, the areas
of optimizer, intellectual stimulation, monitoring/evaluation, and flexibility were
deployed in situations that were dependent on staff and building level needs. This
variability appeared to be situational according to the severity of the significant contract
event and were evidenced when principals provided more flexibility to work on school
improvement, slowed required work, and spoke regarding the value of school
improvement initiatives.

Findings also indicated that during significant contract events it is vital to staff
that they have access to their principal. The researcher found that teachers sought the
principal for a variety of reasons during contract strife. Senior teachers were comfortable
in asking questions of contract perspective with building principals. This group of
teachers and the principal indicated that the principal in this setting frequently was asked
to theorize board and union perspective to assist with understanding of the significant contract event.

The principals and teachers that were non-tenured or newer to the profession indicate that this group of newer staff members accessed the principal for a different reason. This group sought audience with the principal to garner input on the probability of their continued employment with the district as well as seek advice.

Another grouping of teachers addressing access were the senior teachers who did not feel a compelling reason to discuss the emergence of significant contract events with the principal. This group tended to be senior teachers who had high probability of continued employment if a contract event resulted in a reduction in force. This group was diverse in their expectation of access to the principal. Several sought little access to the principal unless they had a professional question or needed routine assistance. Still others in this group had regular communication with the principal and served as school improvement leaders within their buildings and departments. This required ongoing communication with the principal as well as his active role in second order change responsibilities.

Accessibility of the principal was a component of the relational trust discussed above. As such, a clear finding was that all teachers expected open, honest communication from the principal when they sought access and input. While discussed above, the ability of the principal to maintain open lines of communication throughout a significant labor event were found to be essential to maintaining trust which enables the continuation of school improvement planning and implementation at the building level.
This finding runs contrary to the Marzano et al. (2005) correlation that communication suffers during second-order change. However, Marzano et al. (2005) list leadership actions which include discussion of disagreement and contentions with staff, and consensus building with staff. All principals in the study emphasized increased communication actions during significant contract events.

Principal behaviors that influenced the continued teacher engagement in school improvement during significant labor events were also found to exist. These behaviors were associated with the responsibilities of intellectual stimulation, flexibility, and optimizers. Principals in the case schools identified obstacles resulting from contract events and worked to innovate around the obstacle through flexibility. Principals acknowledged that adjustment of goals and work based on their assessment of tension and stress in the staff. Additionally, this flexibility allowed principals to practice management by exception with staff. This allowed for differentiated treatment and expectations of staff engagement during significant labor events.

The above findings were identified as important themes throughout the qualitative data collection. However, the theme of principal neutrality was identified as foundational for principals to execute leadership responsibility during significant contract events. Principals clearly identified the importance of their neutrality during significant contract events. Their isolation enabled the continuation of school improvement planning and work by maintaining relational trust. While the principals acknowledged that they did not share a trusting relationship with all staff, the neutrality afforded their position by negotiations being executed at the district level did insulate them from labor events. This
allowed principals and their teaching staff the opportunity to maintain relational trust which fostered continuous engagement in school improvement.

Teachers also identified the importance of principal neutrality. This finding complemented that finding from principal interviews. Teachers were unified in their conclusion that engagement in school improvement was significantly related to the ability of the principal to maintain a neutral position during significant contract events. The researcher found that principal neutrality fostered relational trust and a willingness to compartmentalize contract strife separately from the efforts to improve professional practice.

The overarching conclusion of this study is that when conditions of principal neutrality toward labor events, communication, input, and relational trust are fostered, school improvement and reform are possible during significant labor events. This finding is a departure from common thought and practice in the educational field that assumes school reform and second-order change cease during significant contract events.

Personal experience of the researcher supports these findings as a negative example. The researcher served as a principal in a school that engaged in Advanc-ED school improvement requirements. Unique to this school district, the principals were assigned the task of being the lead contract negotiators representing the school board. At the same time, the superintendent and local union president were excluded from the negotiating group. The duty of negotiating for the board and engaging in the leadership responsibilities required to implement the Advanc-ED school improvement model created a direct conflict for the researcher. The duties assigned as a negotiator damaged
relational trust, made communication with building level staff difficult, and occupied professional time with district level duties. This in turn affected teacher engagement and resulted in inattention to school improvement initiatives. In contrast, the case schools in this study were able to continue school improvement initiative due to the principal neutrality, communication, availability, and relational trust maintained during the significant contract event.

This lens, along with the qualitative findings for this research question give indication that principal neutrality is foundational to the responsibilities of second-order change required for school improvement initiatives in schools.

Unintentional Findings

The researcher interviews gave rise to two interesting influences at play in schools during significant labor events. The first was influence by outside agencies with perceived interests not associated with the local school community. These outside interests were associated with business profiteering and were identified as the state teacher union negotiators and board hired negotiators from the state school board association. The second was negative relational trust influenced by the perception of poor communication between union leadership and non-union members.

The influence of outside negotiating agencies (school board association and state teacher union) were identified during interviews in both case schools. In both instances, teachers and principals noted that their district had reached a contractual impasse which resulted in the hiring of professional negotiators from each of these agencies. Interviewees at both case schools noted that these agencies had no vested interest in the
local school community. Instead, these agencies held a professional business interest in negotiating “wins” for the board or union without regard for the school community. In turn, this strong representation fostered membership and business at the state level but left a damaged trust environment at the local level. One poignant quote summarized this common theme among teachers and principals, “I feel like we are their pawns, as far as the union up at the state level…but they don’t live and work here and they’re not engaged with our students….They almost like when we have these strikes because it empowers them.” Principals and teachers recognized that this damage had a significant impact on community perception of the school and created trust obstacles that were difficult to overcome when implementing school improvement processes which required high levels of relational trust and engagement.

The environment of negative trust between teacher union leadership and non-members was also an unintentional finding identified by teacher interviews. While exploring how communication affected relational trust, the researcher noted that non-union teachers indicated strong feelings of exclusion from information and input regarding contract negotiations and significant contract events. These non-member teachers indicated that union leadership held a common practice of withholding information. Some non-union teachers accused the union of failing to negotiate in their best interest. This was summarized in a teacher quote when he stated, “Particular people in the union are focused on things that may not be a universal goal of everyone. They only share information with the other members, they don’t share with everyone, so a lot of us are in the dark.” One administrator supported this lack of representation within the
union as well as non-members and indicated the union leadership was feared. He stated, “The executive council does not represent the entire union; it’s a minority of the hard union people. I think that is where teachers are really afraid to talk about the good things and what we need to do for kids, because they know they will get hammered by the executive council.”

A contrasting view of this negative trust was offered by several teachers holding union membership and leadership positions. This group communicated a theme that they were paying dues to the union for representation. This group felt that non-member teachers were receiving a benefit of representation without paying for the service. Therefore, non-members should not have a voice in the process. This theme was well summarized in Prairie School with a union member’s statement, “I’m also a believer in paying my share and doing my share of what needs to be done. There are some people who are along for the ride and they’re the ones who will call the local and ask for negotiations for the coaching stipend.”

Principals and teachers recognized this unintentional finding and the negative communications and perceptions. While important to relational trust among staff members, it did not appear to influence the actions and behaviors of the principals. However, it is evident that interpersonal conflicts in teacher to teacher relations could have a bearing on school improvement efforts if these conflicts cannot be set aside.
Implications

Implications for Organizational Theory

The operational basis of schools is a social-systems model with formal and informal as well as planned and unplanned aspects of organizational life (Hoy and Miskel, 2013). This system is affected by both internal and external elements that form a complex open system with layers of connected inputs, internal environmental elements, and necessary outputs. Hoy and Miskel (2013) further contend that schools are not only social-system model, they are learning organizations as identified by Senge (1990). Hoy and Miskel (2013) explain the social-system learning thought when they examine understanding of school events. They state, “The full meaning of any event can only be understood in the context of the system; that is, by contemplating the whole rather than isolated parts of the system” (p. 34).

Using the lens of social-system theory, it is important to note the implications affecting the role of building principals during significant contract events. The connectedness of interdependent parts, jobs, structures and politics of the learning organization create an environment during significant labor events that impacts principal behavior. Learning organizations must be cognizant of the interplay between assigned responsibilities, structure, politics, and cultural aspects of school as they relate to the social-systems model.

Learning organizations should use the social-systems model to examine the responsibilities, duties, politics and assignments within their school system to understand and plan for the best possible educational outputs. Mismatched responsibilities,
leadership behaviors, and duties in times of contract strife will only serve to affect quality output of the social-system.

Conversely, the study of social-systems theory can also be informed when examining the interaction of principal responsibilities and behaviors during significant contract events. Significant labor events have influence on the organizational elements that make up the system. Examination of the reactivity of each element during contract strife will inform the social-system model approach.

Implications for Research

Research in the change theory has identified key responsibilities for school leaders when implementing second order change (Blankstein, 2013; Marzano, 2005; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; NASSP, 2011). However, change does not occur in a vacuum, and current research does not examine environmental implications such as significant labor events. Marzano et al. (2005) clearly identify eleven practices correlated with second order change. While four of these correlates are negatively impacted during second-order change, this study gave indication that building principals focused on two of the negatively correlated responsibilities during contract strife. The findings give indication that principal action to implement the responsibilities of input and communication allowed for continued second-order change during significant contract events.

These findings further inform the research of Marzano et al. (2005) and Leithwood and Sun (2012) when examining leadership responsibilities for change. The study informs educational research and practice by examining the responsibilities through
the lens of significant labor events. These leadership responsibilities are deployed by principals at varying levels of emphasis. However, responsibilities that have identified as being negatively affected during second-order change, were clearly important to second-order change during a significant contract event.

Understanding how significant contract events affect principal behaviors such as communication and input will be important to understand how schools can maintain an environment of continuous improvement during events that can lead to lower levels of trust between building level principals and teachers enacting second order change.

Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2003) examine the role of relational trust in schools and have quantified the role of relational trust between principals and teachers. The findings of this study have implications for continued analysis of trust relationships and the role these relationships play in school improvement. This extends the current research of relational trust (Bryk et al., 2010; Leithwood & Sun 2012) as this study establishes how trust is maintained during contract events leading to continuation of school improvement processes.

The findings also further expand the theory of professional unionism in that teachers felt obligation to the well-being of the educational system (Cooper & Sureau, 2008; Kerchner & Caufman, 1995; Kerchner & Koppich 2007) The findings indicate that teachers feel professional obligation to their principals, students, and professional growth to continue school improvement in the face of significant contract events. The relational trust fostered through principal availability, communication, and neutrality further inform the current research on relational trust in the field of education reform. As further
research examines the concept of relational trust during significant contract events, principals will undoubtedly benefit from information to inform their daily interactions and leadership responsibilities in their school buildings.

By better understanding the principal responsibilities and behaviors deployed in the face of significant labor events, this study and future studies may build a body of knowledge that assists principals to enact transformational leadership skills.

**Implications for Practice**

As school level leaders and members of district administrative teams, principals can be included in planning and decisions affecting negotiations. In small schools, the necessary combination of job titles and duties can also create combinations of job titles and duties that bridge from the school level to district level work. The researcher experienced this in his job as a principal when he was assigned contract negotiation duties on behalf of the district. When this occurs, the principal may have information regarding contract negotiations, personnel, benefits and personnel information that cannot be shared with the teaching staff. This prevents the principal from maintaining relational trust with school staff, and involvement in responsibilities as a negotiator for the district can lead to internal learning organization conflicts (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Involvement in district-level contract conflict damages relational trust at the building level which, in turn can inhibit transformational leadership practices leading to school improvement through second order change.

The implications for district level leadership indicate that schools need to insulate building level principals from negotiations and district level union conflict. Neutrality in
the face of significant labor events allows building level principals the freedom to maintain open and honest communications that build trust and staff support for education reform initiatives. Neutrality appears to be the lynch pin that drives trust, and as one principal stated, “If I were involved more in the negotiations, it would be tough to disconnect those two. If you hurt feelings at 7:00 tonight, it’s pretty tough to work together at 8:00 tomorrow morning.”

For principals the implication in the face of district level reform is that neutrality is of paramount importance to maintaining the engagement model of transformational leadership called for in current school reform (Dufour, 2005; Gallagher, 2007). Enactment of transformational leadership engages human potential and results in teacher efficacy (Anderson, 2008; Bryk, 2010; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Leithwood & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Additionally, there is a strong implication that principals must devote attention to communication, input, and availability during contract events (Marzano et al., 2005) While these responsibilities are known to suffer during second order change, attending to these responsibilities appears to encourage teacher engagement in school improvement during significant contract events.

Research data indicates a clear need for open and honest communication with staff. Principals should make themselves visible and available to school staff to foster teacher communication and input. Staff meetings, common preparation times, and consistent office hours contribute to principal availability and interpersonal communication. Principals who make themselves available communicate through a variety of means both personally and electronically. However, caution should be
exercised with non-expressive communication such as email as much of our communication is conveyed through non-verbal cues.

It is also important that information communicated is available and consistent to all staff. Data indicate that when staff perceive that information is withheld from or shared with selected staff, relational trust is damaged. Well planned, scripted, or written communication to all staff will foster an inclusive school environment that enhances engagement. While personal preferences, staff size, school environment, and other factors dictate style of communication, availability implies that teachers have access to their principal at a personal level to convey input as well as receive information.

Finally, principal practice during labor events should be informed by staff traits and building level information. Responsibilities and strategies outlined by Marzano et al., (2005) and Liethwood & Sun (2012) will be highly dependent on internal attitudes and tensions.

Leadership training programs and professional organizations should be charged with providing training and guidance to district level leadership, superintendent candidates, and principal candidates. Agencies such as educational leadership preparation programs, state and national professional associations representing school boards, and education leadership should provide sound guidance to avoid using building level administration in contract processes. Through avoidance of this practice, building level administrators can build the relational trust necessary to execute leadership responsibilities leading to second order change.
This implication is especially important in rural schools such as those identified for this case study. The benefit these schools held over many Montana schools is that district level administrative offices and work were not assigned or associated with building level principals. As district size decreases and leadership assignments and responsibilities blur between district and building level, this implication becomes even more important for school boards. Combination positions requiring one person to fulfill superintendent and principal duties will foster a lack of relational trust because neutrality cannot be maintained. These districts need to explore innovative processes to remove building level administration from contract strife through direct board negotiations, third-party negotiators, or with the hiring of building level leadership.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This qualitative study confirmed a theory that principal behaviors and responsibilities do affect the implementation of school improvement initiatives during significant contract events. The confirmation of this theory is critical to the body of knowledge informing principal practice. However, the study examined only two case study schools identified by recent significant contract events and fidelity to the Advanc-ED school improvement processes. This narrow scope made it impossible to generalize this qualitative finding beyond the cases embedded in this study.

A wider examination of varied school sizes in more diverse districts is needed to determine the level of involvement, frequency, and reasoning behind principal involvement in contract negotiation processes. In addition, a quantitative measurement
tool needs to be developed to measure the implementation of principal responsibilities during significant contract events. With a quantitative method approach, the deployment of principal responsibilities and behaviors associated with school reform during contract strife can be measured to determine effectiveness.

Specifically, qualitative measurements of neutrality, availability, increased communication, and engagement strategies during significant contract events will clarify which strategies are employed in negative contract environments. The findings gained through further research will continue to inform the practice of principals, school boards, superintendents, professional organizations, and education leadership programs. This research will especially help small school districts with ill-defined or single administrator roles that by nature of conflict, damage the administrator’s ability to lead significant change.

Conclusion

Principals are charged with fostering and developing school reform efforts to improve the outcomes of the learning organizations they lead. True reform is not simple, single-loop learning used to solve the ongoing issues faced in the complex social-systems models of schools. To enact true change, principals must engage in leadership that encourages double-loop learning which re-examines the way we view educational problems and solutions. Change from this process is identified as second-order change, which requires principals to actively engage in responsibilities and behaviors that support teachers to redefine the traditional mental models of educational practice.
While perceptions that contract restrictions, unionism, and lack of perceived benefit from teaching staff have been cited as obstacles to school reform, this study found that school reform can be enacted during significant labor events. Teachers agree that school reform and improvement is worthwhile and can be professionally fulfilling. Principals, through key responsibilities and actions such as neutrality, communication, and relational trust, can continue school improvement work in the face of difficult labor events.

However, principals are also called upon in some districts to engage in responsibilities such as district contract negotiations. This responsibility can damage relational trust, disengage teachers, and isolate the principal as teachers view contractual work as beyond the scope of building level educational leadership.

This study attempts to fill a gap that exists in literature about the responsibilities and behaviors enacted by principals during significant contract events that allow continuation of school improvement efforts. The study examined the practices and perceptions of principals and teachers from two Montana schools that experienced significant contract events but were still able to maintain fidelity to a recognized accreditation process that requires documented school improvement.

Findings of this study have identified behaviors and responsibilities that enable principals to enact second-order change in times of significant labor events. The most significant finding was that school improvement can and should continue during a significant labor event with principal neutrality supporting this concept. The theme of neutrality emerged early in the qualitative study and was universal in both principal and
teacher interviews. Without neutrality, the relational trust required to lead second-order change is compromised.

Supporting the finding of neutrality was the ongoing attention to relational trust through principal availability and communication with teaching staff. Research indicates that the responsibility of communication can suffer during second-order change. However, a theme of increased communication and input through staff meetings, emails, and personal communication emerged. In both case schools, the principals knowingly identified the need to communicate as a means to overcome disengagement by staff during significant labor events.

The implications of this research need to serve notice to professional training programs, school district superintendents and boards, professional organizations, and practicing principals that neutrality in labor events is crucial to maintaining an environment conducive to reform and improvement. The study suggests that principals should be insulated from contract strife to enable relational trust at the building level, which in turn can allow for implementation of school improvement work.

While this work is focused on a narrow case study, the research did confirm the importance of principal behaviors and responsibilities of neutrality and relational trust. Professional associations, educational leadership programs, and district level leadership should use this study to inform practice and insure principals are afforded the opportunity to lead without being assigned duties that damage instructional improvement.
REFERENCES CITED


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES QUESTIONNAIRE
Please rate the following items in relation to your position as a building principal using the following Likert scale (4,3,2,1). Circle only one number per statement. A rating of “4” indicates that the statement characterizes you or your school to a great extent and a rating of “1” indicates that the statement does not characterize you or your school.

Participation is voluntary, and you can choose to not answer any question that you do not want to answer, and you can stop at any time.

2. Teachers in my school regularly share ideas. 4 3 2

4. There are well-established procedures in my school regarding how to bring up problems and concerns. 4 3 2

9. I am very knowledgeable about effective instructional practices. 4 3 2

12. Teachers in my school have ready and easy access to me. 4 3 2

14. In my school, teachers have direct input into all important decisions. 4 3 2

17. I consciously try to challenge the status quo to get people thinking. 4 3 2

18. I try to inspire my teacher to accomplish things that might seem beyond their grasp. 4 3 2

19. The teachers in my school are aware of my beliefs regarding
184

schools, teaching, and learning.  
1

20. I continually monitor the effectiveness of our curriculum.  
4 3 2
1

21. I am comfortable making major changes in how things are done.  
4 3 2
1

23. I stay informed about the current research and theory regarding effective schools.  
4 3 2
1

24. In my school, we systematically consider new and better ways of doing things.  
4 3 2
1

26. I have successfully developed a sense of cooperation in my school.  
4 3 2
1

27. I have successfully created a strong sense of order among teachers about the efficient running of the school.  
4 3 2
1

32. I am very knowledgeable about classroom curricular issues.  
4 3 2
1

35. Effective ways for teacher to communicate with one another have been established in my school.  
4 3 2
1

37. Teachers are directly involved in developing policy in my school.  
4 3 2
1

40. I am comfortable initiating change without being sure where it might lead us.  
4 3 2
1

41. I always portray a positive attitude about our ability to accomplish substantive things.  
4 3 2
1
42. I continually monitor the effectiveness of the instructional practices used in our school.  
1

43. I encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to my own.  
1

45. I continually expose teachers in my school to cutting-edge ideas about how to be effective.  
1

47. I can be highly directive or non-directive as the situation warrants.  
1

48. There is a strong team spirit in my school.  
1

49. There are well-established routines regarding the running of the school that staff understand and follow.  
1

54. I am very knowledgeable about effective classroom assessment practices.  
1

56. In my school, we have common language that is used by administrators and teachers.  
1

57. Lines of communication are strong between teachers and myself.  
1

59. In my school, decisions are made using a team approach.  
1

63. I try to be the driving force behind major initiatives.  
1
64. I have well-defined beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning. 4 3 2

65. I continually monitor the effectiveness of the assessment practices used in my school. 4 3 2

66. I adapt my leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation. 4 3 2

67. In my school, we have a shared understanding of our purpose. 4 3 2

68. In my school, we systematically have discussions about current research and theory. 4 3 2

73. I provide conceptual guidance for the teachers in my school regarding effective classroom practice. 4 3 2

77. In my school, we constantly ask ourselves, “Are we operating at the edge versus the center of our competence?” 4 3 2

78. I believe that we can accomplish just about anything if we are willing to work hard enough and if we believe in ourselves. 4 3 2

79. I have explicitly communicated my strong beliefs and ideals to teachers. 4 3 2

80. At any given time, I can accurately determine how effective our school is in terms of enhancing student learning. 4 3 2

83. In my school, we systematically read articles and books
about effective practice.
1

87. My behavior is consistent with my ideals and beliefs regarding schools, teachers, and learning.
1

92. In my school, we share a vision of what we could be like.
1
APPENDIX B

TEACHER LEadership RESPONSIBILITIES QUESTIONNAIRE
### APPENDIX B

#### SCHOOL LEADERSHIP THAT WORKS – SELECTED QUESTIONS TEACHERS

Please rate the following items in relation to your position as a building principal using the following Likert scale (4,3,2,1). Circle only one number per statement. A rating of “4” indicates that the statement characterizes you or your school to a great extent and a rating of “1” indicates that the statement does not characterize you or your school.

Participation is voluntary, and you can choose to not answer any question that you do not want to answer, and you can stop at any time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Teachers in my school regularly share ideas.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There are well-established procedures in my school regarding</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to bring up problems and concerns.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The principal is very knowledgeable about effective</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructional practices.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teachers in my school have ready and easy access to the principal.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. In my school, teachers have direct input into all important decisions.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The principal consciously tries to challenge the status quo to get people thinking.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The principal inspires my teachers to accomplish things</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that might seem beyond their grasp.

19. The teachers in this school are aware of the principal's beliefs regarding schools, teaching, and learning.

20. The principal continually monitors the effectiveness of our curriculum.

21. The principal is comfortable making major changes in how things are done.

23. The principal stays informed about the current research and theory regarding effective schools.

24. In my school, we systematically consider new and better ways of doing things.

26. The principal has successfully developed a sense of cooperation in my school.

27. The principal has successfully created a strong sense of order among teachers about the efficient running of the school.

32. The principal is very knowledgeable about classroom curricular issues.

35. Effective ways for teacher to communicate with one another have been established in my school.
37. Teachers are directly involved in developing policy in my school.
   1

40. The principal is comfortable initiating change without being sure where it might lead us.
   1

41. The principal portrays a positive attitude about our ability to accomplish substantive things.
   1

42. The principal continually monitors the effectiveness of the instructional practices used in our school.
   1

43. The principal encourages people to express opinions that are contrary to their own.
   1

45. The principal continually exposes teachers in my school to cutting-edge ideas about how to be effective.
   1

47. The principal can be highly directive or non-directive as the situation warrants.
   1

48. There is a strong team spirit in my school.
   1

49. There are well-established routines regarding the running of the school that staff understand and follow.
   1

54. The principal is very knowledgeable about effective classroom assessment practices.
   1
56. In my school, we have common language that is used by
administrators and teachers.  

57. Lines of communication are strong between
teachers and the principal.  

59. The principal makes decisions using a team approach.  

63. The principal is the driving force behind major initiatives.  

64. The principal has well-defined beliefs about schools,
teaching, and learning.  

65. The principal continually monitor the effectiveness of the assessment
practices used in my school.  

66. The principal adapts his leadership style to the specific needs of
a given situation.  

67. In my school, we have a shared understanding of our purpose.  

68. In my school, we systematically have discussions about
current research and theory.  

73. The principal provides conceptual guidance for the teachers in my
school regarding effective classroom practice.  

77. In my school, we constantly ask ourselves, “Are we operating
at the edge versus the center of our competence?”

78. The principal believes that we can accomplish just about anything if we are willing to work hard enough and if we believe in ourselves.

79. The principal has explicitly communicated my strong beliefs and ideals to teachers.

80. At any given time, the principal can accurately determine how effective our school is in terms of enhancing student learning.

83. In my school, we systematically read articles and books about effective practice.

87. The principal’s behavior is consistent with my ideals and beliefs regarding schools, teachers, and learning.

92. In my school, we share a vision of what we could be like.
APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM
APPENDIX C

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM
FOR
PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Project Title: Principal Leadership Behaviors During Labor Events and the Impact On School Reform

You are being asked to participate in a research study of principal leadership behaviors in times of negative labor events.

Rationale: This study may help us understand the impact of principal leadership behaviors on relational trust during significant labor events. The study explores the influence of principal behaviors on the implementation of Advanc-ED school improvement work during significant labor events. From this work, administration and school districts can understand behaviors that lead to continuous improvement models during these events.

Participation Selection: Subjects were identified for this study through employment with a school that is a member of the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools/Advanc-ED and a school that has experienced a recent labor event in the current or prior two years as identified by beginning a school year without a current labor contract, or experiencing arbitration, mediation or a strike,

Procedures: Participation is voluntary and you can choose to not answer any questions you do not want to answer and/or you can stop at any time. Each teacher participant will be asked to complete the Tschannen-Moran Comprehensive Teacher Trust survey during initial data collection. The data gained from these surveys will be used to shape interview questions used in follow-up interviews with each teacher participant. Each building principal participant will be asked to complete that Tschannen-Moran Principal Trust Survey and the adapted questionnaire for 21 Practices of the School Leader identifying second order change. These surveys will be used to shape interview questions used in follow-up interviews with each principal participant.

The teacher survey should require approximately 15 minutes to complete. In addition to a survey, teachers will be asked to complete an individual interview with the primary
researcher. Each interview will be conducted in private at the school site or via telephone. The interview will require 45 minutes to 1 hour. In addition, you may be contacted by phone for a follow-up interview requiring less than 30 minutes. The principal surveys should take 30 minutes to complete. In addition, principals will be asked to complete an individual interview with the primary researcher. Each interview will be conducted in private at the school site or via telephone. The interview will require approximately 1 hour.

Risks: There are no known risks. However, the researcher will follow research protocols and practices to protect the privacy and identity of each individual participant.

Benefits: The administrator of each participant school will receive a copy of the completed research as a courtesy for their participation. The administrator is welcome to use the research to inform school improvement practices required for school accreditation through the Northwest Association of Accredited School a division of Advanc-ED.

Alternatives: If a subject chooses to not participate, no other alternatives will be offered.

Source Funding: N/A

Cost to Subject: None

Confidentiality: Survey protocols and interview recordings and transcripts will be maintained by the researcher. Subject identity will remain confidential and will be protected using coding which identifies the school and interviewee to the primary investigator. Individuals and schools will be identified using pseudonyms.

Should the participant have questions about the research, they can contact Bob Moore, (406) 284-3341 [bmoore@manhattan.k12.mt.us]. If you, as a participant, have additional questions about the rights of human subjects, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Mark Quinn, (406) 994-4707 [mquinn@montana.edu].

__________________________________________

AUTHORIZED: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I, ___________________________ (name of subject), agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Signed: _________________________________
Witness: _________________________________________________ (optional)

Investigator: ______________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________________
APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This study is seeking to determine the influence of principal leadership behaviors to implement school improvement processes of Advanc-ED during contract events such as beginning a work year without a contract, strike, or threatened strike. The study is seeking to understand themes across several school and the employees and you will not be individually identified.

General

1. Can you describe how you have been involved or your knowledge of with the school improvement process at this school?
2. What is your knowledge of the contract processes and issues this district has faced?

Trust

1. How do teachers demonstrate integrity in your view? (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy Principal Survey 4)
2. How has this staff earned your trust during significant labor events? ((Tschannen-Moran & Hoy Principal Survey 13)
3. Why do you believe teachers trust you as their principal? ((Tschannen-Moran & Hoy Faculty Survey 10)
4. How do you balance teacher interest and actions you must take for the good of the school? ((Tschannen-Moran & Hoy Principal Survey 5)

Leadership Responsibilities

1. Do you always know where the organization is headed when you initiate change? (21 Responsibilities positive correlates 40, 17, 24, 77)
2. What happens to communication between teachers and between teachers and you during a major change such as implementation of a school improvement plan? (21 Responsibilities negative correlates 12, 35, 57)
3. Do contract events limit teachers’ willingness to express their opinions and ideas? (21 Responsibilities positive correlates 23, 47, 21)

Engagement – Questions from literature review.

1. How do significant contract events affect collaboration on school improvement planning? (Gallagher – Collaboration)
2. Do significant contract events impede school reform efforts? specifically process that are required for advance-ED (Gallagher – Teachers as impediments)

3. Why do teachers engage in school improvement work despite significant contract events? (Gallagher – Multiple)

4. What happened to required SIP work in the last contract event?

5. In a contract event, what would make you stop working on school improvement?

6. What builds a shared responsibility ethic in regard to school reform? (Gallagher – Responsibility ethic)

General

1. Do teacher attitudes toward school improvement change during contract strife (strike, threatened strike, no contract in place)?

2. Please describe your personal actions and attitudes changes toward school improvement efforts, meetings, and initiatives when there is not a labor contract or if a strike may be eminent or in recent history.

3. How did your behavior change?

4. What would you do different with the SIP process once a contract event begins to make the process continue?

5. Looking forward, how would you change your behaviors in regard to school improvement work (Advanc-ED) when a contract event occurs?
APPENDIX E

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
APPENDIX E

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This study is seeking to determine the influence of principal leadership behaviors to implement school improvement processes of Advanc-ED during contract events such as beginning a work year without a contract, mediation, strike, or threatened strike. The study is seeking to understand themes across several schools and the employees and you will not be individually identified.

General

1. Can you describe how you have been involved or your knowledge of with the school improvement process at this school?
2. What is your knowledge of the contract processes and issues this district has faced?

Trust

1. How does your principal demonstrate integrity in your view? (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Faculty Survey 3)
2. How has the principal acted in your best interest during significant labor events? (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Faculty Survey 5)
3. How does the principal maintain your trust even during difficult labor events? (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Faculty Survey 10)
4. How does the principal maintain a high level of trust in the faculty? (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Principal Survey 18)
5. Is principal competency important to maintaining your trust? (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy Faculty Survey 25)
6. How is trust lost during contract strife?

Leadership Responsibilities

1. What happens to communication between teachers and between teachers and the principal during a major change such as implementation of a school improvement plan? (21 Responsibilities negative correlates 12, 35, 57))
2. Is the principal available and accessible to you during significant contract events? (21 Responsibilities – negative correlates (12, 35, 57))
3. Do contract events limit teachers’ willingness to express their opinions and ideas? (21 Responsibilities – positive correlates (23, 47, 21))

Teacher Engagement
1. How do significant contract events affect collaboration on school improvement planning? (Gallagher – Collaboration)
2. Do significant contract events impede school reform efforts? (Gallagher – Teachers as impediments)
3. Why do teachers engage in school improvement work despite significant contract events? (Gallagher – Multiple)
4. In a contract event, what would make you stop working on school improvement?
5. What happened to the required school improvement process during the contract event(s) in this school?
6. What builds a shared responsibility ethic in regard to school reform? (Gallagher – Responsibility ethic)

General teacher questions for responsibilities, behavior, and attitude.

1. Does/Did the principal’s professional attitude toward school improvement change during contract strife (strike, threatened strike, no contract in place)?
2. Do the principal’s actions to implement the school improvement process change during contract strife?
3. Please describe any personal actions and attitude changes toward school improvement meetings and initiatives when there is not a labor contract or if a strike may have been eminent in recent history.
4. Looking forward, how would your behaviors change in the Advanc-ED required school improvement processes if a contract event occurred?