

**The Soft Side of Leadership: Principals' Enactment of the  
Love Languages and Leadership Frames in Influencing School Culture**

by

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## DEDICATION

This work is  
dedicated to  
my precious husband,  
Marc,  
who next to my salvation,  
is the best gift I have ever received.

ITMG

## Abstract

The culture of a school defines how the school works in regards to rules, relationships, and attitudes. The current research focuses primarily on the principal's academic intelligence and how it impacts school culture. However, there is little research on the soft skills of principal leadership. The central question for this study was, "What are the ways in which school administrators exhibit their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and what are their perceptions in regards to how that impacts school culture?"

After taking a Love Language and Leadership Frame inventory, the researcher utilized a multiple case study approach with five principals in a southeastern state, each representing one of the five love languages. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and the principal took the researcher on a tour of his/her school.

At each site the researcher discovered the similarities and differences of the principals and how their love language and leadership frame were evident throughout their school culture. The researcher identified four themes throughout the five cases. Each principal impacted school culture through the enactment of their Love Language and Leadership Frame by nurturing positive relationships with teachers, fostering positive relationships with students, cultivating positive attitudes and beliefs, and developing a safe and welcoming physical environment. This study's findings have expanded our knowledge of the soft skills of leadership that principals are utilizing as tools to naturally influence their schools to accomplish their vision and mission. The varied ways in which the study principals enacted their Love Language and Leadership Frames

re-emphasizes that there are multiple ways to enhance relationships with teachers, students, and the community, and that there is not a one-size-fits-all formula for an effective leader to follow.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

A school principal is expected to set high expectations for the faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders in a school (Blankstein, 2004, p. 6). These expectations are essential elements of the school's culture. "It goes without saying that principals play pivotal roles in the production and maintenance of school cultures" (Rhodes, Stevens, & Hemmings, 2011, p.84). A positive school culture is the environment in which all faculty and staff perform every vital function of the school and keep the school on the improvement trajectory. "School culture defines what is of worth for teachers, specifies acceptable limits of behavior and beliefs, and acts as a powerful factor in promoting or resisting school improvement efforts" (Norman, 2004, p. 2). Because of the pressure to continually improve schools, it is pertinent that principals have knowledge of and reflect on their own leadership styles, the organizational frames they typically work from, and their personal emotional intelligence. Self-knowledge of this nature may be referred to as the "soft side of leadership" (Nicolaidis, 2002). As Nicolaidis states:

I have never seen a course entitled, "The Effective Art of Listening to Your Customer." We live in a society that measures intelligence through quantifiable metrics. A professor will give you a good grade once you know XYZ, but he or she will not increase your grade for being able to deal with a difficult situation, showing compassion, or solving an unexpected problem. Yet most compliments that you or your employees receive deal more with the use of soft skills than with your actual knowledge about a particular situation. (p. 1)

This research study was designed to investigate principals' perceptions of how their innate leadership tendencies impacted the culture of improvement in their schools. These leadership tendencies were assessed through the use of inventories based on two concepts: the Frames of Leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1984), and Love Languages (Chapman, 1992).

In 1984, Bolman and Deal described the Four Frames of leadership through which organizations can be viewed. Through their research, they discovered that all leaders primarily work through one of the frames, and the organization will reflect its leader's strongest frame. The four frames set forth are the political frame, human resources frames, structural frame, and symbolic frame. The political frame pertains to how outsiders view the organization and how power, conflict, and alliances are manifested within an organization. In schools, the political frame may be evident in grade levels, departments, and committees and their competition with one another as well as how stakeholders have supported or not supported the mission and vision of the school. The human resources frame may be reflected in how emotionally supported and encouraged the faculty and staff of the school feel. An atmosphere of collaboration and camaraderie of the school employees would be a manifestation of this frame. The structural frame encompasses not only the policies and hierarchical divisions of labor in the school, but also the physical school environment. In this frame, policies and procedures are scrutinized to assure that they reflect the values and vision of the school. The structural frame is also seen in the school environment that logistically works well. Finally, the symbolic frame reflects the traditions and culture of the school. Traditions are rarely reevaluated for their effectiveness, but continue because "it has always been that way" in the past. The symbolic frame is evident not only in traditions or rituals, but is also seen in the environment. Having the athletic trophy case front and center when you enter the schoolhouse doors sends a different message to stakeholders



than an inspirational quote about academic achievement from a successful alumnus. All organizations can be described through the use of one of these frames. In addition, the leader of an organization will likely also demonstrate dominance in one of the frames. Effective leaders work not only through their dominant frame, but also will utilize their sub-dominant frames to enhance the school's mission and vision (Bolman & Deal, 1984). A principal may discover his/her leadership frame by taking an inventory designed by Bolman and Deal (1984).

Knowing the principal's dominant leadership frame is important, but knowledge of the leader's emotional intelligence is also informative. Emotional intelligence (EI) can be defined as an "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). George (2000) indicated that emotional intelligence is important to the process of leading and should be considered an essential component of effective leadership.

Closely related to emotional intelligence is the concept of Love Languages (Chapman, 1992). Chapman asserts that there are five love languages through which everyone receives and demonstrates love. The love language dictates how leaders tend to interact with others. The five love languages are Quality Time, Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Physical Touch, and Gifts. The love language of Quality Time is demonstrated in a person who is affirmed by spending time with others. This time can be spent intentionally doing meaningful tasks, or can be spent in the simple daily routines. What matters most to a person who speaks the love language of Quality Time is that time is spent together with another. Individuals who speak the love language of Words of Affirmation are not worried about time spent together. Instead they thrive on verbal affirmations from those they care about the most. Harsh words or words spoken in anger are detrimental to people whose love language is Words of Affirmation, because they

only want to hear encouraging and confirmatory words. Those who speak the love language of Acts of Service receive love when someone helps them with a task or serves them in some way. The size of the task is not important; just the fact that someone would go out of the way to help them, means the world to people who speak the language of Acts of Service. The love language of Physical Touch is evident in those people who relish being patted on the back, high-fived, or hugged from someone who means a lot to them. Finally, there are those people who speak the love language of Gifts. These gifts need not be extraordinary or lavish, but small gifts that just reiterate to the person that he/she is loved. Having knowledge of one's love language allows for reflection on how one best receives and gives love to others. This knowledge can be obtained by an individual who utilizes an inventory created by Chapman (1992).

If a principal takes self-inventories on the Four Frames and Love Languages, he/she may gain a more comprehensive understanding of the soft side of leadership (Nicolaidis, 2002), which may in turn, impact how that leader approaches the creation of school culture. With emphasis continuously being placed upon school improvement, it is imperative that principals understand their own leadership tendencies and how those behaviors can contribute to creating the most effective learning environment for students. A recent review of educational leadership research revealed no studies on the principals' knowledge of their dominant Frame of Leadership and the dominant love language coupled with the principal's perception of the impact that the utilization of those constructs had on the school culture.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to identify the ways in which school administrators exhibit their dominant Leadership Frames and primary Love Languages, and to obtain their perceptions on how that impacts a school's culture of improvement.

## **Research Questions**

The central research question of this study was, What are the ways in which school administrators exhibit their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and what are their perceptions in regards to how that impacts school culture? There are 3 sub questions.

### **Sub Questions**

1. What are the primary Love Languages of principals who lead schools?
2. What are the predominant Leadership Frames of principals who lead schools?
3. What are these principals' perceptions of how their primary Love Language and dominant Leadership Frame affect their school culture?

## **Significance of the Study**

In an era where the pressures on principals to improve schools are becoming increasingly demanding, it is important to understand how leadership impacts a school culture of improvement (Leithwood, Seashore, Lewis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). This study identified not only the primary love languages of principals, but also the leadership frames from which they most often work. Researchers have studied the leadership frames of school administrators, and even sought to identify their impact on student achievement. But researchers have not yet investigated the coupling of the leadership frames with the soft skills of leadership, such as the love languages of principals, and how principals perceive the utilization of those soft skills on their school's improvement. Research on Chapman's Five Love Languages (1992) has been applied to single adults, marriages, and children, yet, it has not been applied in the school setting, nor has it been applied to how a school leader's demonstration of a love language might affect the school culture. There is a need to identify a principal's primary love language and

dominant leadership frame to see how the manifestation of those might influence the development of a positive school culture that leads to school improvement.

The results of this research could influence the way in which future school leaders are prepared. While educational leadership professors are always seeking to provide their students with the best background of academic knowledge, it may also be important to add the development of soft skills into the leadership preparation curriculum. As Owens and Valesky (2007) pointed out, “courses in educational administration tend to focus on practical ‘how-to-do-it’ problems, drawing on the past experience of practicing administrations” (p. 103) rather than on the self-knowledge the leader must possess. Palestini (2005) suggested that educational leadership programs should ensure that their graduates are “critical humanists” (p. 288). These critical humanists seek to create a more positive environment for students and educators to work and learn. They challenge the normalcy of typical schools and aspire to resolve the moral dilemmas that effect schools each day. Therefore, the results of this research may be used to strengthen the premise that there are some important “soft skills” and competencies of self-leadership that can not necessarily be taught from a textbook (Nicolaidis (2002). Perhaps these results will also extend our knowledge about these soft skills of leadership and foster further research as principals expand their knowledge of self-awareness.

### **Delimitations**

The study was conducted in the spring of 2015 in a southeastern state. The sample purposefully consisted of principals of schools within the state.

Other delimitations that may apply to this study:

1. Only those principals who completed both inventories (Four Frames of Leadership and Love Languages Inventory) were included in this study.

2. Only principals from a southeastern state were included.
3. Because only five principals are represented in this multiple case study, generalizations to all principals cannot be made since the number of principals in this study was limited only to those who met the above criteria.

### **Assumptions**

1. Responses received from the inventories and interviews were honest reflections of the principals.
2. The researcher accurately portrayed the information shared by the participants to the best of her ability.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Acts of Service.** Those people who speak the primary love language of acts of service yearn for tasks that are completed on their behalf and for their benefit. These are actions that require thought, planning, time, and energy (Massey & Gardner, 2013).

**Five Love Languages.** Gary Chapman's theory that people express and receive love through five different models or "Love Languages." The five love languages are Quality Time, Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Physical Touch, and Gifts.

**Four Frames.** Bolman and Deal (1991) suggest that leaders display leadership behaviors in one of four types of frameworks: Structural, Human Resource, Political, or Symbolic.

**Gifts.** Those people who speak the primary love language of gifts feel most loved when they are given tokens of affection by loved ones. These gifts need not be large or extravagant, but merely can be a physical token of appreciate.

**Human Resources Frame.** The human resources frame deals with the necessities, abilities, and relationships of the school

**Organizational Culture.** The behavior of humans within an organization and the meaning that people attach to those behaviors. Culture includes the organization's vision values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, beliefs, and habits (Owens & Valesky, 2007).

**Physical Touch.** Persons who speak the primary love language of physical touch need the physical presence of those around them. This love language may be demonstrated through high fives, pats on the back, holding hands, hugs, or even sitting in close proximity to others.

**Political Frame.** The political frame deals with power, conflict, competition, and organizational politics (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

**Quality Time.** People who primarily speak the love language of quality time are those who want undivided attention and frequent conversation (Massey & Gardner, 2013).

**School Culture.** Generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity (Schutz, 2010).

**Structural Frame.** The rules, roles, policies, technology, and the environment exemplify the structural frame of an organization.

**Symbolic Frame.** The symbolic frame deals with the culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, and heroes of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

**Words of Affirmation.** Persons who speaks the primary love language of words of affirmation feels the most loved when they hear the genuinely encouraging words from those people who are closest to them.

## **Organization of the Remaining Chapters**

Chapter 1 provides the research problem, conceptual framework, purpose statement, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 offers the review of literature on the topics of organizational culture, school culture, leadership behaviors, emotional intelligence, soft skills of leadership, and the conceptual framework of the Four Frames of Leadership and the Five Love Languages. Chapter 3 provides the methodology that was used in the study. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Chapter 5 interprets the results and considers future implications.

## CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to identify the ways in which school administrators exhibited their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and to obtain their perceptions on how that impacts their school's culture of improvement. The central research question for the study was: What are the ways in which school administrators exhibit their dominant leadership frame and primary love language, and what are their perceptions on how that impacts their school culture?

To provide background for this research study, relevant and related literature was reviewed. In this chapter the researcher presents the literature of the importance of culture in an organization and a school, leadership styles and principals' behaviors, the soft skills of leadership, and leading with love. The chapter concludes with the conceptual framework, which will outline Chapman's (1992) Five Love Languages and Bolman and Deal's (2008) Four Frames of Leadership.

### **The Importance of Culture in an Organization and School**

#### **Organizational Culture in General**

While culture is a term that is frequently used to describe the customs, beliefs, and norms of a society, the culture of an organization appears more complex. The Business Dictionary (2014) defines organizational culture as

an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world,



and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid.

This definition indicates that the people who are most closely associated with the organization establish the organization's culture. Owens and Valesky (2007) used Tagiuri's description of an organization's climate as consisting of four dimensions: ecology, milieu, social systems, and culture. They later defined culture as "the values, belief systems, norms, and ways of thinking that are characteristic of the people in the organization. It is "the way we do things around here" (p. 187–188). This definition suggests that the participants of the organization set the standards in which the culture of the organization is cultivated. Schein (1992) stated that culture is defined as

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 13)

This definition demonstrates that the perception of the members of the organization even indoctrinates the newest members into the culture. LaGuardia (2008) further described organizational culture in a more emotional way, stating that "organizational cultures are interpretive. Remember when you first took a position in a new company. Remember how strange things seemed, but soon that strangeness seemed to disappear. At that point, you knew the organization's culture so well it didn't seem to exist at all" (p. 57). Similarly, Masland (2000) referred to organizational culture as:

The implicit values, beliefs, and ideologies of those within an organization. To these views of organizational culture we add the day-to-day practices of organizations—

practices that embody the values of the different groups making up particular organizations. We also consider organizational culture as the glue that holds an organization together. (p. 24)

Researchers have noted that the leadership of the organization has a significant impact on the culture of the organization. Karaköse (2008) stated that “organizational culture includes norms, beliefs, values, traditions, and habits which have directed employee’s behaviors towards organizational aims. There is a strong relationship between leadership and culture” (p. 570). To discover what is happening in the organization, leaders scrutinize the cultural components to determine which elements need to be modified. Senge (1990) revealed that “it is about helping everyone in the organization, oneself included, to gain more insightful views of current reality” (p. 11). This examination necessitates that the leader has knowledge of the people. “The person who figures out how to harness the collective genius of the people in his or her organization,” according to former Citibank CEO Walter Wriston, “is going to blow the competition away” (Senge, 1990, pp. 7–8). Having a clear vision of what is currently happening in an organization, coupled with the buy-in of all employees, can allow the leader of an organization to impact the company in significant ways.

Effective educational leaders should look not only at data such as student achievement data, class sizes, attendance violations, and teacher capacity, but they should also reflect upon the behaviors of their faculty and staff. This is confirmed by Owens and Valesky (2007), who stated that “because educational leaders work with and through other people to achieve organizational goals, understanding the behavior of people at work is fundamental to the success of their efforts” (p. 80). This position encourages school leaders to reflect on how the attitudes of the staff impact the way in which the vision and mission of the school are carried out. The authors

also stated that organizational behavior should be studied because it “provides the indispensable foundation of knowledge that is absolutely essential if one hopes to achieve success in educational leadership” (p. 82).

There are a variety of ways that leaders impact organizational culture. By establishing a shared vision and mission, the leader will guide the organization in a positive direction. Senge (1990) asserts that one of the key components to leadership is having a clear purpose and vision for the organization. “Leaders are designers, teachers, and stewards. These roles require new skills: the ability to build shared vision, to bring to the surface and challenge prevailing mental models, and to foster more systemic patterns of thinking” (Senge, 1990, p. 9). This points to the need for the leader to examine different areas of the organization before working to enhance effective areas or distinguish areas that are in need of change.

Effective leaders ensure that the people are working to positively impact the organization. In short, “leaders in learning organizations are responsible for building organizations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future - that is, leaders are responsible for learning” (Senge, 1990, p. 9). While it is established that a leader is responsible for building the organization, it is hypothesized that leaders who take a servant leadership role will also focus on the people in the organization. When referring to servant leadership, Senge (1990) states that the “leader’s sense of stewardship operates on two levels: stewardship for the people they lead and stewardship for the larger purpose or mission that underlies the enterprise” (p. 12). Serving the people and the organization, then, are characteristics of a successful leader who is impacting organizational culture.

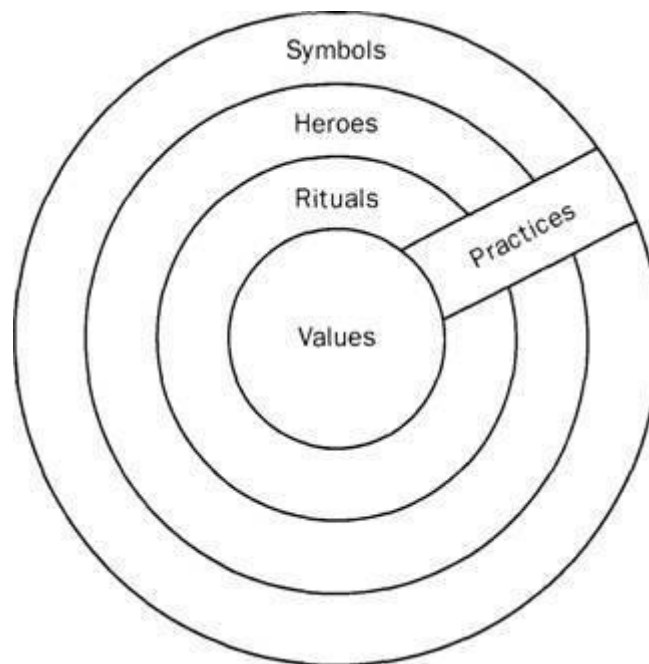
## **School Culture**

While all organizations have an organizational culture, each school has a culture that is uniquely its own. “School culture influences how teachers, school administrators, students, and other school actors render schooling into meaningful and actionable practices” (Rhodes, Stevens, & Hemmings, 2011, p. 83). Palestini (2005) explained that there are five main components to school culture: beliefs, expectations, and shared values; heroes and heroines; myths and stories; rituals and ceremonies; and the physical arrangement of the school (pp. 23–24). The composite beliefs, expectations, and shared values should exemplify the philosophy of the leader, but the leader is not the only one who influences the school culture. Heroes and heroines are the members of the faculty who fulfill the most respected roles in the organization. They are the individuals who set an example for others to aspire to. These heroes or heroines are not necessarily the people with positional leadership. The myths and stories that create the school culture are of the heroes and heroines who overcame obstacles to achieve great feats that are still discussed. The components of rituals and ceremonies lend stature to the organization. These rituals could be awards for student achievement or years of service. These are the accomplishments that are celebrated and can inspire similar actions among the faculty and staff of a school. The final component of school culture is the physical arrangement of the school. How the offices, classrooms, and workrooms are arranged often translates to what is most valued in a school culture. For example, a school built around a robust library full of students actively engaged might have a culture that values reading, exploration, and research. These five components provide a look into the culture of a school.

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) explain culture similarly to Palestini (2005), yet liken it to an onion, where the outer edges are the most superficial, and the inside of the onion

represents the values which truly demonstrate the deepest part of the culture. Figure 1 represents the ideas of culture with Palestini's view, but also includes the components of practices.

Practices in this figure show that symbols, heroes, and rituals are all observable to an outsider, while values cannot be directly observed because often they are not discussed and are sometimes even difficult to articulate because they may vary with the individuals in the school (Palestini, 2005, p. 7–11).



*Figure 1.* The “Onion”: Manifestations of Culture at Different Levels of Depth (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 8).

### **School Culture in an Era of Accountability**

Since the onset of No Child Left Behind (2001) researchers began to critically investigate how school leadership contributes to student success. Student achievement, personnel, curriculum, instruction, attendance, and student/teacher relationships are now areas of concern where school leaders must focus (Leithwood, Seashore, Lewis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

The education researchers have recognized the importance of school culture in establishing effective schools (Pritchard, Morrow, & Marshall, 2005). School culture is a key factor in determining whether improvement is possible (Deal & Peterson, 1999). There are differing definitions for the term school culture by researchers. As Gruenert (2000) noted:

Many writers have attempted to define culture. The following excerpts are examples of some of these definitions:

- it [culture] is the glue that holds together potentially diverse people
- the way we do things around here
- what's really going on
- patterns of behavior
- invisible force field
- the social footprint
- behaviors that seem strange to new employees.
- collective memories of the members
- deeply embedded beliefs that are shared unwritten rules that permeate everything

The literature does not support a universal definition of culture. The culture of an organization is a major factor in the school improvement process. (p. 14)

While the previous list is not exhaustive, it does provide the differing descriptions of school culture. Broadly defined, school climate is a “set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another and influences the behavior of its members” (Hoy & Hannum, 1997, p. 291).

Research has shown the importance of schools having a culture with high expectations for all (Chenoweth, 2007). Expectations begin with the values that the leader sets forth.

Rhodes, Stevens, and Hemmings (2011) discuss that “values are the foundation of school organizational cultures because they have a profound influence on whether school administrators and teachers emphasize individual autonomy over teamwork, entrenched tradition over innovation, or fierce competition over constructive collaboration. They are the moorings for how everyday life in offices, classrooms and corridors is actually lived” (p. 84). These values, whether positive or negative, determine the culture which all participants in the school will experience. “School culture defines what is of worth for teachers, specifies acceptable limits of behavior and beliefs, and acts as a powerful factor in promoting or resisting school improvement efforts” (Hall & Loucks, 1978, as cited in Norman, 2004, p.2). These researchers stated that there are rarely successful schools that do not have a positive school culture.

Schools that effectively push their students towards educational excellence have positive school cultures. Saphier, King, and D’Auria (2006) learned that “researchers have taken three different approaches to understand these successful cultures. The approaches look, depending on the author’s preferences, at shared beliefs, academic focus, or productive professional relationships” (p. 52). By aligning these three factors it is proposed that a leader can create a positive school culture. However, a leader has to cultivate teachers who embrace the school’s values to move the school in the desired direction. Strong cultures work because they produce teachers who constantly improve teaching and learning throughout the school (Saphier, King, & D’Auria, 2006). This constant improvement not only fosters continued student academic growth, but also shows that the leaders and teachers are embracing the school’s values.

### **School Environment**

An additional important area to consider when looking at a school organization is how the physical building effects school culture. “The manner in which a school building is

designed, managed, and maintained cues its occupants and the community beyond about the value placed on educational activities which occur within its walls” (Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Woelsey, 2009, p. 401). In a different study on school facilities, Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) concluded, “Our results revealed that when learning is taking place in inadequate facilities, there tends not to be as clear a focus on academics, and the learning environment is less likely to be perceived as orderly and serious” (p. 66). Contrasting the lack of clear focus, they also went on to conclude that students and teachers feel a “sense of belonging” and cooperation to achieve learning goals when a space has a personality that fosters collaboration and happiness.

### **Leadership Styles and Principal Behaviors**

The previous section outlined the description of organizational and school culture and literature cited there pointed to the role of the leader in creating a positive culture. The next section of the literature review will focus on explaining the ways in which a principal’s leadership style and specific behaviors can have an impact on school improvement and culture.

#### **Principal Leadership makes a Difference**

The importance of effective leadership cannot be denied. Kelly (1988) stated that “we are convinced that corporations succeed or fail, compete or crumble, on the basis of how well they are led” (p. 142). Next to leadership, a critical eye should perhaps be turned to how schools are operating under the watchful direction of the effective leader. According to Owens and Valesky (2007):

Effective schools, or high-achieving schools, tend to be organized and operated on the basis of five basic assumptions:



1. Whatever else a school can and should do, its central purpose is to teach; success is measured by students' progress in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
2. The school is responsible for providing the overall environment in which teaching and learning occur.
3. Schools must be treated holistically: partial efforts to make improvements that deal with the needs of only some of the students and break up the unity of the instructional program are likely to fail.
4. The most crucial characteristic of a school are the attitudes and behaviors of the teachers and other staff, not material things such as the size of its library or the age of the physical plant.
5. Perhaps most important, the school accepts responsibility for the success or failure of the academic performance of the students. Students are firmly regarded as capable of learning regardless of their ethnicity, sex, home or cultural background, or family income. (pp. 172–173)

The principal of a school has an influence on school improvement. This statement was supported as early as 1998, by Deal and Peterson (1998), who asserted that even though principals have not been the main focus of recent reform efforts, they are needed to lead instructional progress, foster effective change, lead the implementation of new standards, and are central to shaping strong school cultures. School leadership should be considered when reflecting on what components contribute to a high performing school. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) reported that leadership is vital to school effectiveness. Peterson and Kelly (2001) state that “one seldom finds an effective school that does not have an effective principal” (p. 9). Leithwood, Seashore, Lewis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) concluded that

“leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors for improving student learning” (p. 7).

Even before No Child Left Behind legislation was enacted in 2001, and school improvement was so closely linked to student achievement, researchers were confirming that principals played an important role in a school’s success (Barker, 1997; Edmonds, 1979, 1982; Goodlad, 1955; Murphy, 2001). As it has been established that leadership impacts the culture of a school or organization (Karaköse, 2008; Senge, 1990), a definition of leadership should be brought forth:

Leadership is defined as an interactive process that provides needed guidance and direction. Leadership involves three interacting dynamic elements: a leader, a follower(s) and a situation. The leader’s role is to influence and provide direction to his/her followers and provide them needed support for theirs and the organization’s success. (Goodnight, 2011, p. 820)

### **Three Styles of Leadership**

There are three common types of leaders in an organization: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire (Goodnight, 2011, p. 820). Autocratic leaders have a strict, hierarchical mindset when it comes to leading organizations. They assume absolute power in the company and do not seek to receive any input from workers. Information is placed at a premium and not shared freely, even with those who would have insight into how this information could be used more effectively. Autocratic leaders make all of the rules and policies for the organization (Goodnight, 2011).

Democratic leaders seek to value all employees and place importance on teamwork. They seek input from employees when making decisions regarding policies, as they believe buy-

in is needed for all employees to feel supported and cared for. The democratic leader seeks to empower all employees, so information is shared freely and feedback is encouraged (Goodnight, 2011).

Laissez-faire leaders believe that all employees know their jobs, so they should be left alone to complete the task. Minimal information is shared because of this hands-off approach, so employees seek to gain commitment to the organization through one another. The laissez-faire leader will often not exert power because he/she does not want to upset anyone. Though there are some policies and procedures, they are made with little input from others and are often up for debate or not enforced. Laissez-faire leadership leads to chaos, little productivity, and is often viewed as worse than having no leadership at all (Goodnight, 2011). Leaders exhibiting any of these three types of leadership will influence the schools which they lead.

### **Leadership Behaviors that Foster Positive School Culture**

The leadership styles of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leaders stand in contrast with one another. The leadership behaviors of the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leaders inherently guide school cultures. “It goes without saying that principals play pivotal roles in the production and maintenance of school cultures” (Rhodes, Stevens, & Hemmings, 2011, p. 82). Having a positive school culture is seemingly important to the every day functions of the school environment. According to Seashore and Wahlstrom (2011),

...school culture matters. It’s a critical element of effective leadership, and there is increasing evidence from both private and public organizations that organizations with stronger cultures are more adaptable, have higher member motivation and commitment, are more cooperative and better able to resolve conflicts, have greater capacity for innovation, and are more effective in achieving their goals. (p. 56)

Because of the importance of culture in a school, leaders learn which standards to inspect in order to be consistent with the school's vision and mission. Likewise, Karaköse (2008) stated that

The principal is a representative for the school culture and cultural values improve and become rooted through the mediation of principals. The principal must constitute values, norms, and rules, which connect to the social culture and are not in contradiction with the vision of the school. This is a very important strategy for improving the culture. (p. 273)

It appears that the school's values and norms should be given explicit attention by principals as important components for impacting the overall culture of a school, because "in short, school culture is affected by principals' attitudes and behaviors" (Karakose, 2008, p. 571).

Because school principals may struggle with creating a positive school culture, patience is necessary as they cultivate their desired changes. A toxic school culture cannot be reversed in a day, so making sure that small steps are consistently being taken, can be a way for leaders to turn around a school's culture, as emphasized by Rooney (2013):

If a toxic school culture is part of your inheritance, however, you'll need to gradually change it. Such a culture is poison. Teachers may come to dislike one another, gossip may substitute for communication, and discipline can become a power game in which both kids and teachers lose. It will be your job to restore the school to health. Changing the culture of a school is a long, hard process. What you, as new principal, own entirely, however, is your own integrity and ability to listen (and therefore to stop talking).

Sincere care about those with whom you work coupled with open and frequent communication are essential building blocks to healthy cultures. Be patient. Neither Rome nor a healthy school culture was built in a day. (p. 74)

In practicing patience, principals lead conversations about where the school needs to move in the future to have a positive school culture, which may ultimately lead toward accomplishment of academic goals. The importance of these conversations can not be underestimated, as noted by Seashore and Wahlstrom (2011), who stated, “Our study found, in school after school, that principals were the critical link in stimulating the conversations that led to the classroom practices that are associated with improved student learning” (p. 56). While these conversations may seem trivial because they are “just conversations” they could become an important element when applied to teacher instruction and student achievement. “Self-knowledge, emotional intelligence, and the skills for having courageous conversations in one’s own daily life enable leaders to develop those same capabilities in teams of teachers. Powerful communication is directly connected with a team’s ability to improve instruction” (Saphier, King, & D’Auria, 2006, p. 55). Leaders who take the time to listen and have conversations about where the school should be headed could lead the faculty in moving more toward the school’s mission, vision, and increased student achievement.

The principal’s behavior can influence whether a school is stuck or moving. Moving or improving schools are characterized as schools that are yearly meeting the benchmarks given to them by their state department of education. Student achievement scores or high school graduation rates are typical benchmarks. Schools that are stuck are those that have not met their minimal requirements and are considered “stuck” in their current situations. Searby (1999) established that there are specific characteristics of principals of stuck and moving schools. A portion of the complete listing of those characteristics (see Appendix A) is displayed here, to depict the ways in which a principal influences school culture and climate by his/ her behaviors.

## Characteristics of Principals of Stuck and Moving Schools

Principals of Stuck Schools	Principals of Moving Schools
School Climate and Culture	
Principal is a “scolding” presence which threatens teachers	Principal is a “helping model” and teachers feel free to disclose teaching weaknesses
Principal fosters isolation of teachers	Principal establishes collaborative norms
Principal like to have control of everything	Principal shares decision making
Principal has infrequent communication with teachers; hides in office	Principal is accessible and visible to students and teachers
Principal protects his turf	Principal encourages collegial dependence

In summary, positive school culture is a critical component of schools that are improving and thriving, and the principal’s leadership style and behaviors have an influence on the school culture. In addition, however, the principal must consider how others can and should contribute to building that positive culture.

### **Sharing Leadership**

Instead of working in isolation, principals might consider taking advantage of the teachers they have in their own building. “We found that changing a school’s culture requires shared or distributed leadership, which engages many stakeholders in major improvement roles, and instructional leadership, in which administrators take responsibility for shaping improvements at the classroom level” (Seashore & Wahlstrom, 2011, p. 56). This idea of shared leadership is further confirmed by Patterson and Patterson (2004) who pointed out that “because the teacher culture is relatively more stable over time, long-term teachers have more

opportunities than short-term principals do to shape what people in the school community believe, say, and do” (p. 75). Patterson and Patterson (2004) revealed that principals should consider the capacity of teacher leaders who can help contribute to changes in school because their informal leadership positions allow them to have an important place as culture leaders. They later conclude that “in our research on resilience in schools, we repeatedly find that in tough times, teachers turn to teacher leaders for help – and teacher leaders rise to the occasion” (Patterson & Patterson, 2004, p. 77). When administrators embrace these teacher leaders, they provide them the opportunity to shape school culture without making principal edicts that could elicit negative reactions.

### **Conceptual Framework of the Research Study**

This research study is framed by three major concepts: Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 2003), the Four Frames of Leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1985), and leading with love, which can be captured in the concept of the Five Love Languages (Chapman, 1992). Elements of each of these concepts inform the “soft side of leadership” (Ngang, Prachak, & Saowanee, 2012) which is being explored in this study. Each of these concepts will be explained in this section.

#### **Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence (EI) can be defined as an “ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). According to Goleman (2003), research “clearly shows that emotional intelligence is the sine qua non of leadership. Without it, a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won’t make a great leader” (p. 229). Goleman (2003) asserts that IQ tests should not be the sole criterion for measuring intelligence, because IQ along

with emotional intelligence gives a more encompassing picture of the total intelligence of a person.

George (2000) indicated that emotional intelligence is important to the process of leading and should be considered an essential component of effective leadership. In one of the largest studies on emotional intelligence and school leadership, Stone, Parker, and Wood (2005) studied 464 principals or vice-principals (187 men and 277 women) from nine different public school boards in Ontario. The researchers discovered that principals and vice principals in the above average leadership group scored higher than the below average leadership group on overall emotional intelligence and EI subscales. The authors concluded by suggesting that professional development programs should promote the development of empathy, emotional self-awareness and flexibility. The authors also suggested the use of emotional intelligence assessments in the process of recruiting new school administrators (Moore, 2009).

In a large research study conducted by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), effective leadership behaviors were identified that related to emotional intelligence. The study is described below:

Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 successful school leadership studies involving over 2,800 schools, 14,000 teachers and one million students. The authors identified 21 categories of leadership behaviors and practices that have had a statistically significant relationship with student achievement. Many of these behaviors and practices could be very easily integrated into programs designed to improve one's emotional intelligence (affirmation, communication, fostering shared beliefs, comfortable with dissent, ability to self-disclose beliefs, ability to demonstrate



awareness of the personal aspect of staff, increasing the high quality interactions with students and staff, and ability to inspire staff). (Moore, 2009, pp. 20–21)

There is also research that indicates leaders who are successful in dealing with their emotions and the emotions of others are successful in creating a positive culture (Moore, 2009). David Wechsler, the creator of one of the most widely utilized IQ tests, thought that the emotional intelligence and social intelligence of a person were so important that he implemented strategies in the instrument to ensure that just a general knowledge of information was not the only intelligence measured (Owens & Valesky, 2007). By combining emotional, social, and general intelligence measures, he felt that a clearer intelligence profile of an individual was presented. Leaders in the business community have identified the importance of honing and developing emotional intelligence competencies in leaders and the education field is encouraged to do the same (Moore, 2009).

#### **Four Frames of Leadership**

Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal changed the school leadership landscape with their book *Reframing Organizations* (1991). The authors introduced a concept that all leaders operate from one of four different frames. A frame is a lens, or filter, which allows an individual to gain a perspective on a given situation (Phillips & Baron, 2013). The four frames provide a tool for leaders to see the realities of the organization by utilizing the different perspectives that the frames provide. The term ‘frame’ is meant to symbolize different vantage points, perceptions, filters, or worldviews that leaders predominantly use to gather information, make judgments, make decisions and get things accomplished (Bolman & Deal, 1984). Each of the four frames provides a different perspective on how the organization is led.

The four frames available to leaders are the political frame, human resources frames, structural frame, and symbolic frame. Hellsten, Noonan, Preston, and Prytula (2013) summarize the four frames of leadership as follows:

Bolman and Deal (1984, 2008) explain how frames encompass a set of ideas and assumptions that an individual uses to maneuver in a particular territory. First, the structural frame is associated with an organization's hierarchical divisions. This frame emphasizes the formal roles and relationships of students, teachers, administrators, parents, superintendents and directors. When using this frame, leaders rationally attend to issues surrounding rules, policies, management and divisions of labor. Second, the human resource frame embodies the needs, feelings, capacities, prejudices, imperfections and subjective realities of people. When maneuvering within this relationship frame, the key to effective leadership is enabling people to "get the job done" while simultaneously feeling good about their accomplishments. Third, the political frame is dominated with conflicting issues pertaining to finance, and how educational realities of power and other political influences affect the allocation of resources among individuals and groups. Within this frame, negotiation, coercion and compromise are dominant aspects of a leader's life. Last, the symbolic frame addresses the culture, spirit and mission of an organization, and, from this perspective, effective schools are those where students, teachers, principals, parents and community members are led by a core set of values and beliefs, rather than by formal rules and policies. According to Bolman and Deal (1984), successful principal assessment leaders should understand and use all four frames in both a practical and a theoretical sense. (p. 60)

## **The Four Frames and School Leadership**

The four-frame model proposed by Bolman and Deal (2010) provides a way for educators to critically view their learning organization. Bolman and Deal's four leadership frames provide a type of quadrilateral view of the leadership practices of principals (Hellsten, Noonan, Preston, & Prytula, 2013). Using a multi-faceted approach assists observers in creating an accurate assessment of how the school is functioning. Complex human organizations, such as educational institutions and programs, require multiple perspectives or views to understand and operate efficiently. "By breaking down challenges and issues into the four frames of the model, leaders can understand the problems they face in a broader context" (Thompson, et al., 2008, p. 2). The four frames each have different leadership styles associated with them, which will be discussed in each frame's section, which follows.

**Political frame.** The political frame deals with power, conflict, competition, and organizational politics (Bolman & Deal, 2008). These attributes are displayed in schools when teachers are able to explain who has the power. Outsiders will often think that the person with positional leadership will hold the power, but often power lies with one or two teachers who have collective buy-in and support from their colleagues. Conflict is prevalent in schools and can occur in a variety of ways; between colleagues, departments, grade levels, academics/resource teachers, advanced education/general education/special education, athletics, parents, student, and stakeholders. While conflict is unavoidable, *how* conflict is handled in a school gives observers insight into the leadership of the school. Healthy competition can also be an asset or detriment to a school culture depending on the extent to which it is used. A principal with an accurate view of the political frame will sometimes point to the people in the school who have the most support and power.

There are five propositions that characterize the political frame. They are:

1. Organizations are coalitions of various individuals and interest groups.
2. There are enduring differences among coalition members in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality.
3. Most important decisions involve the allocation of scarce resources—who gets what.
4. Scarce resources and enduring differences give conflict a central role in organizational dynamics and make power the most important resource.
5. Goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among different stakeholders (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p.195).

The political frame is revealed when a leader advocates for what is best for the organization. The leader will develop an agenda and use the power base that he/she has to advance the items on the agenda. Political frame leaders ensure that they have the support of key faculty members so a proposed change will be successful, rather than defeated before it is even implemented. Leaders who effectively traverse the political jungle will build coalitions, alliances, listen with an open mind, and negotiate to enhance the school environment. Often political leaders thrive on conflict and instead of viewing it as a negative aspect of the organization; they appreciate conflict that pushes progress and productivity (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

There are both positive and negative aspects of the political frame. A leader who operates in a strong political frame can create coalitions and groups that will benefit students and student achievement in the school. Different departments or grade levels can have healthy competition, which can also create a sense of school wide camaraderie, when the leadership has a strong political frame. However, the opposite can result and produce a culture of turmoil if the

leader is weak in the political frame. Group might be fighting for scarce resources, teachers could feel isolated or in unhealthy competition against one another. A school whose environment is tense and revolves around conflict could have a variety of problems that could negatively impact school culture and student achievement.

**Human resources frame.** The human resources frame deals with the needs, skills, and relationships of the school (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In this frame, the needs of the teachers are what typically become paramount. Teachers need to feel supported and encouraged in the school, and if they are not, they in turn, can create a toxic environment where students are negatively impacted. Feelings of defeat, loneliness, isolation, not feeling supported, or uneasiness can result. The leader's human resource skills can be effectively utilized when learning communities are created, where ideas and strategies are openly shared. Conversely, there can be divisiveness when the leader is not supportive of all teachers. Relationships are also an integral part of the human resources frame. Relationships with colleagues, administrators, students, parents, and stakeholders need to be positively cultivated so that everyone feels important. These relationships often reflect the human resources strength of the administrator in the building.

The human resources frame is built on four core assumptions that reveal how needs and relationships are developed and maintained in an organization. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), these four assumptions are:

1. Organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the reverse.
2. People and organizations need each other: organizations need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries, and opportunities.

3. When the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer: individuals will be exploited or will exploit the organization-or both will become victims.
4. A good fit benefits both: individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed. (p.122)

The leadership style of a person strong in the human resources frame is evidenced by someone who always empowers others. Distributed leadership is embraced, so that all members feel that they are important to the sustainability of the organization. Open communication is important to an effective human resources leader because he/she works to ensure that everyone has a voice and is listened to. The leader who is strong in the human resources frame is not afraid of telling the truth and asking for feedback as he/she leads an effective organization. Spending time with one another and building personal relationships can be an important component to leaders who want to enhance their success in the human resources frame. An effective leader ensures that the workers feel good about what they are doing while they work. Motivational strategies are important to utilize at appropriate times. The metaphor of a family works well when considering the human resources frame because like a family, everyone plays a vital role, and the family needs all of its' members to function well.

There are both positive and negative aspects of the human resources frame and the impact it has on a school. A leader who works from a strong human resources frame creates a culture where all members feel valued, listened to, and like they are an important part of the school as a whole. Teachers who feel that they are insignificant and not needed in their role could come from working for a leader who struggles with the human resources frame. These teachers could feel that they are not cared for or even thought about by their school leaders. An effective leader

in the human resources frame should consider how teachers feel about the importance of their jobs and how they impact the school as a whole.

**Structural frame.** A leader who is strong in the structural frame has constructs in place that make the organization successful. Rules, roles, policies, technology, and the environment characterize the structural frame in an organization. How the rules, roles, and policies are implemented in an organization will lead to order or chaos. These structures are usually clear and known to all personnel when a leader who is strong in the structural frame leads them. The structural frame is evident in charts, graphs, and the organizational hierarchy of the faculty and staff. A school environment with organization, boundaries, and rules is vital for student safety. Logistical problems with the physical environment are one of the easiest visual cues that indicate that there is difficulty with the structural frame.

There are six assumptions that define the structural frame. These assumptions are:

1. Organizations exist to achieve established goals and objectives.
2. Organizations work best when rationality prevails over personal preferences and external pressures.
3. Structures must be designed to fit an organization's circumstances (including its goals, technology, and environment).
4. Organizations increase efficiency and enhance performance through specialization and division of labor.
5. Appropriate forms of coordination and control are essential to ensuring that individuals and units work together in the service of organizational goals.
6. Problems and performance gaps arise from structural deficiencies and can be remedied through restructuring. (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 47)

An effective structural frame leader takes on the image of structural architect (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Leaders must ensure that everyone knows his/her role in the organization and ensure that the roles are filled effectively. They must be strategic with changes and make certain that the right people are completing the tasks to make the organization thrive. The creation of committees takes on more importance when you consider the structural frame and how all participants must be working together. An effective leader in the structural frame, especially in a school setting, must have discernment on what is truly important and make sure that resources are used to drive those agenda items. The metaphor for the structural frame is that of a factory or a machine. The job needs to be accomplished, so all resources should be used to make certain that the mission is accomplished.

There are both positive and negative aspects of the structural frame. An effective structural frame leader ensures that there is efficiency and tasks are being accomplished. Students feel security in an atmosphere of organization and expectations known, so the coordination can be helpful in the school setting. Evidence of an ineffective structural frame leader is an atmosphere of confusion and chaos. A leader must make certain that all the smaller parts and the organization as a whole are working effectively to maximize accomplishments.

**Symbolic frame.** The symbolic frame deals with the “culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, and heroes of the organization” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 18). These are typically the elements that make the organization unique. These are elements that are often done without question because it is how the organization has always done things. A leader who is strong in the structural frame can create an atmosphere where a legacy of successes or failures can inspire or humor current workers. When thinking about the symbolic frame, there are six core assumptions to consider:



1. What is most important about any event is not what happened but what it means.
2. Activity and meaning are loosely coupled: events have multiple meanings because people interpret experience differently.
3. Most of life is ambiguous or uncertain-what happened, why it happened, or what will happen next are all puzzles.
4. High levels of ambiguity and uncertainty undercut rational analysis, problem solving, and decision making.
5. In the face of uncertainty and ambiguity, people create symbols to resolve confusion, increase predictability, provide direction, and anchor hope and faith.
6. Many events and processes are more important for what is expressed than what is produced. They form a cultural tapestry of secular myths, rituals, ceremonies, and stories that help people find meaning, purpose, and passion. (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 253)

An effective leader in the symbolic frame is characterized as inspirational (Bolman & Deal, 2008). These leaders create an environment where the participants can draw meaning and have the notion that they are working for a goal that is bigger than them. This leader shares in the rituals and traditions of the organization because these events are what add meaning to the community as a whole. A leader would thrive when he/she embraces the history of the organization and seeks to celebrate that history with colleagues.

There are both positive and negative aspects of the symbolic frame. An effective symbolic frame can be evidence by a leader who not only embraces the traditions and history of the school, but also works to keep the spirit of the institution alive by reflecting on its history and looking forward to keeping up a tradition of excellence. A leader would struggle in the symbolic

frame when he/she questions how things have always been done and does not pay proper respect for the history of the school. Another indication that a leader is weak in the symbolic frame would be if he/she sought to ignore or do away with traditions that the school has always celebrated. A leader must make certain that the traditions of the school are celebrated, while also moving the organization to where he/she wants it to go.

### **School Leaders and Their Predominant Frames**

After suggesting the model of the four frames of an organization, Bolman and Deal (1991) examined leaders to see if there were common frames that leaders utilized most often. The researchers revealed that leaders most often work from the human resources frame and an additional frame. The frame that is used the least by leaders is the symbolic frame. While Bolman and Deal researched leaders from different work environments, the four frames as utilized in schools has also been examined. Poniatowski (2006) conducted a study to see if a pattern could be uncovered to identify predominant leadership frames among principals. Forty-two principals were surveyed for the study using Bolman and Deal's *Leadership Orientations* instrument. The researcher discovered that elementary and secondary principals utilized the human resources frame most often. The structural frame, symbolic frame, and then the political frame followed the use of the human resources frame. Though the human resources frame was applied most often, the researchers identified that principals also used multiple frames regularly. The analysis revealed that there was not a significant difference between elementary and secondary principals' use of a specific frame. The results of this study imply that a principal being able to work within all frames is important, but particularly the human resources frame.

Ferree (2013) also studied principals' use of the four frames of leadership, using forty elementary school principals chosen from four counties in west central Pennsylvania. School

principals were given Bolman and Deal's Leadership Orientation Survey (Self) to establish what leadership frame they most often worked from. Additionally, the school principals completed the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Revised Elementary to get their perception of their school climate. Ferree established that there was no statistically significant relationship between the frame of the school administrator and the perception of school climate. Furthermore, he concluded that there was not a specific leadership style that significantly impacted school climate. The researcher reasoned that school administrators do not work from just one leadership frame, but rather work from different frames depending on the situation (Ferree, 2013).

In another study, this time focusing on high-performing Catholic school principals, a mixed methods approach was used to determine if there was a relationship between the principal's leadership frame, teacher perception of the principal, and school culture. There were six schools that participated in the study with rural and suburban schools being represented in the sample. Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (2008) was used to collect data about the principal's leadership style. The researchers concluded that there was a relationship between principal leadership and school culture; however, it was inconclusive that any particular frame was more impactful than another (Cardarelli, 2014). While the Cardarelli study (2014) and Ferree study (2014) conclude that there is no particular leadership frame that significantly impacts school culture, both researchers revealed an importance for leaders to be able to work between all of the different frames, depending on the situation at hand. King (2006), also concurred that principals as a whole, regularly switch between frames. However, King (2006) noted that there was a statistically significant difference with schools that were making adequate progress, in that those principals favored the human resources frame.

Another study which confirmed what King (2006) had found was conducted by Penix (2009). Twenty-seven West Virginian schools were identified to participate in his study. Ten of the schools were high performing, with the remaining 14 low-performing, according to a reading/language and math index. All twenty-seven principals completed Bolman and Deal's Leadership Orientation (Other) instrument. Teachers from each school also completed the instrument so that the researcher could assess their perception of which leadership frame their principal most often worked from. Penix had several major findings:

- 1) principals in high performing schools are significantly more likely to use all four frames than principals in low performing schools;
- 2) female principals are significantly more likely to use the human resource frame than male principals;
- 3) rural principals are significantly more likely to use the political frame than urban principals; and
- 4) principals in small size schools are significantly more likely to use the human resource frame than principals in medium size schools. (Penix, 2009, p. 2)

An additional study that was conducted in Louisiana sought to reveal if there was a connection between student achievement scores and principal's leadership styles. Thirty-two schools were selected to participate based upon their socioeconomic status (SES). The 17 most affluent schools and 15 highest poverty schools were selected from north and middle Louisiana parishes. The researchers determined the school performance scores (SPS) by results from the statewide standardized tests. Bolman and Deal's (1984, 2003) four frames of leadership inventory was used to identify leadership styles of the principals. The researchers revealed a significant correlation between the years of experience for principals and SPS for principals

having the Human Resources Frame as their preferred leadership style. In addition, analysis of the data revealed that a significant relationship existed between SPS and SES for principals having the Structural Frame as their leadership style. The results of the Multiple Regression analysis indicated that all predictor variables in combination, free and reduced lunch, years of experience, and enrollment were associated with principals who had the Human Resource Frame as their choice of leadership style (Davis, 2012). This study demonstrates that the human resources frame and structural frame might be important leadership frames associated with student achievement growth.

### **Leading with Love**

An emerging approach to leadership that has been introduced in the last two decades is not how the leader *leads* the organization, but rather how the leader *loves* the people in the organization (Hoyle, 2002). This new concept incorporates characteristics of the soft side of leadership (Ngang, Prachak, & Saowanee, 2012).

Prophets, theologians, philosophers, writers, poets, and great orators have reflected on the importance of love throughout history. College and universities devote classes to the idea, while most bookstores have a section allotted just to the subject of love. According to Hoyle (2002), the most powerful leaders of world history are remembered not for their wealth or position but for their unconditional love for others. Jesus, St. Francis of Assisi, Clara Barton, Albert Schweitzer, Frederick Douglass, Mahatma Gandhi, César Chávez, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, and Nelson Mandela stand out among world leaders who stressed love and nonviolence to bring justice and hope to marginalized people. (p. 7)

Leaders who truly love their organization and those who work in the organization are looked upon more as the servant of the organization, because they seek to empower the people in the organization to work toward their potential, which will in turn allow the organization to reach its' potential (Palestini, 2005). This is noted by his assertion that "leading with the heart requires the leader to think about his or her stewardship in terms of legacy, direction, effectiveness, and values" (Palestini, 2005, p. 280). The attribute of legacy is evident with leaders who are not concerned with just short-term results, but also concerned with the heritage that is left behind with the organization. These leaders look at the future for the organization as a whole. The attribute of direction is evident with leaders who have a clear vision and mission for the organization. For instance, a school principal would ensure that the school is on the path for continuous improvement as he/she leads the school in a positive direction (Palestini, 2005). Value is another attribute of an effective leader. In an organization high in values "we see good manners, respect for people, and an appreciation of the way in which we serve one another" (Palestini, p. 280). The final attribute is that of effectiveness. Leaders develop their employees to be able to make decisions that will enable the organization to be stronger and fulfill its' mission and vision.

It seems that a notion of leading with love would be scrutinized by high-powered executives who would rather rule with an iron fist, but it has been demonstrated that productivity and commitment increase when workers are led with compassion and love. As Hoyle (2002) notes:

Giving out love means leading with the heart over the head. Managers with heart manage to outproduce managers who lead with their heads. Fifty years of research and best practice concludes that through the fat and the lean years, managers who place the

welfare of employees over the bottom line not only will survive but will lead the industry.

Love is more than a word in high-performing schools, corporations, and other organizations. (p. 14)

Hoyle (2002) demonstrated that when managers emotionally invest in their workers, the organization will survive and often thrive.

Investing in the members of an organization is also investing in the organization itself. Siccone (2012) explains this phenomenon by using the analogy that all employees have an “emotional bank account.” Leaders who know and invest in their employees inside and outside of the traditional business day are able to make deposits and withdrawals into these emotional bank accounts. When leaders acknowledge and show appreciation for their employees they are making emotional deposits. These deposits build confidence and rapport with the employee and allow for a positive relationship. Leaders can also make emotional deposits when they listen, show empathy, and build a relationship with employees. These positive deposits are also helpful when the leader has to make a withdrawal from the emotional bank account, such as when they must say something corrective or negative. If a leader has built up positive deposits, the corrective withdrawal will not harm the relationship as severely because there are still credits in the account. These soft skills of knowing when to make deposits and withdrawals assist a leader in making sure that employees still feel valued and acknowledged in a place where they need to feel that the most – their work environment. Gebauer and Lowman (2012) explain that the emotions of leaders, whether positive or negative, are closely tied to the emotions of employees. All effective leaders should consider making positive emotional deposits in all of their employees.

Traditional business strategies tend to focus on personal elevation and knowledge, but these factors may not be the most important when considering the skills needed to lead a progressive organization (Nicolaidis, 2002). Instead, companies should recognize that the technical and procedural “hard skills” and emotional and social “soft skills” work together to complement one other, instead of competing with one another (Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht, & Lee, 2010). Leaders who focus upon the humanness of their employees and customers are demonstrating “soft skills” that sometimes set them apart from their competition. Soft skills are those which are comprised of “collaboration or teamwork, communication skills, initiative, leadership ability, people development or coaching, personal effectiveness or personal mastery, planning and organizing, and presentation skills” (Ngang, Prachak, & Saowanee, 2012, p. 261). These are becoming important components of successful business leadership.

Ngang (2012) applied these soft skills of leadership to educational leaders in higher education institutions. He asserts that while having knowledge of one’s field is important, academic material can be taught to most individuals. It is knowing one’s self and knowing others that sets apart good leaders from great leaders. Ngang (2012) states that “leadership soft skills can be seen as providing a vital contribution for organizations and administrators in the process of developing of quality human resource” (p. 269). He later asserts that these soft skills will be vital in leadership of the next century. Marques (2013) would agree with Ngang’s claim as she found for that “soft leadership skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, are steadily on the rise, and that greater attention should be apportioned to strengthen these skills in future leaders” (p. 161). It is evident from these two researchers that soft skills should perhaps be considered of great value and importance to the future of successful organizations.



Gabauer and Lowman (2012) state that what workers desire most from their jobs is emotional fulfillment. They explain that employees want to feel that they work for an organization that serves a larger purpose than the bottom line of a bank account. They want to feel that their organization cares as much for them as employees, as they care for and yearn for the organization's success.

In summary, leading with love, a soft skill of leadership, can be characterized by the leader's care for those in the organization. The leader who is leading with love is likely to also be leading from a strong human resources frame of leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The last concept in the conceptual framework for this study is the concept of the Love Languages (Chapman, 1992). It is now explained.

### **The Five Love Languages**

After years of collecting notes, receiving letters, and facilitating counseling sessions for married couples, Gary Chapman (1992) proposed that there are five major ways that people prefer to demonstrate and receive love. He coined the term Love Language to describe these five expressions.

The five love languages are quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service, physical touch, and receiving gifts. By uncovering the love language of your spouse, family members, colleagues, and friends, an individual can more effectively demonstrate appreciation for them, and communicate with them using a love language that will ensure they feel emotionally supported. Each of the love languages will now be described.

**Quality time.** People who primarily speak the love language of quality time are those who want undivided attention and frequent conversation (Massey & Gardner, 2013). People who speak the love language of quality time are indifferent to the conversation topic or the

activity that they might be engaged in. They are most concerned that they are doing it with someone who is important to them.

Examples of principals' behaviors that would indicate that quality time is their love language might be eating lunch at the table with their colleagues, asking about another's weekend, or pulling up a chair and listening to the teachers speak to students. These are the principals who are just interested in the time they get to spend with someone. These are also the principals who enjoy small group instruction or after-school tutoring. They thrive on playing an important part of the school culture. They are interested in information beyond what the basic pleasantries of working in the same school building can provide. They want to create personal relationships with all of those around them; these relationships can work for the benefit of the school.

A principal whose primary love language is quality time is able to inspire and push the teachers and students beyond their limits because everyone feels that personal relationship. A warning though, to those principals who have teachers whose primary love language is quality time: withdrawing from them, being in a constant rush or too busy to talk to them, can destroy a relationship. So principals must take extra care to seek those teachers out in the hallway and connect with them, even if only for a few seconds. Those seconds may not be vital to a principal, but can provide the teachers with the positive reinforcement that they crave

**Words of Affirmation.** A person who speaks the primary love language of words of affirmation thrives on the encouraging words from others. These words of affirmation should be unsolicited and be heartfelt in order to have the greatest impact upon the recipient. These words can be shared in private or in the presence of others (Chapman, 1992).

For principals who have teachers whose primary love language is words of affirmation, these teachers are easily inspired with positive words of specific praise. They do not demand great amounts of attention (quality time), monetary means (receiving gifts), acts of service, or physical touch; instead they only need words to sustain their knowledge that they are important to the principal and the school environment. These teachers only need a few words of encouragement to thrive in the academic arena and apply their full effort to their teaching.

There are teachers in most schools who beam from ear to ear when they receive words of affirmation. They delight in hearing positive encouragement from their principals or teaching colleagues. Whether the praise is academic in nature or not, some teachers just desire to hear positive words of affirmation coming from someone they respect. The power of these words can last for days, weeks, or even months. These teachers are the ones years from now who can recount the positive words that were said to them by a principal they admired and loved. But there is a warning to principals who work with teachers' whose primary love language is words of affirmation: words can also cut deep when they are used carelessly or with poor intention. A harsh word or judgment carelessly spoken can damage the self-esteem, self-image, or heart of a person who speaks the language of words of affirmation. A negative tone or voice of disappointment can hurt deeply. Therefore, it is imperative that a principal who has teachers who speak the language of words of affirmation are constantly in control of their tone of voice, and carefully choose their words.

**Acts of service.** The third love language is Acts of Service. Those who speak the primary love language of acts of service yearn for tasks that are completed for their benefit. These are actions that require thought, planning, time, and energy (Massey & Gardner, 2013). These acts could be small in nature, such as helping a teacher complete his/her lesson plans, or

could be grand in nature, such as throwing a surprise party for an important birthday. The teacher just wants to know that the principal was being thoughtful when completing the act of service.

In a school setting the principal will have to be intentional when addressing teachers who speak the love language of acts of service. Acts of service demonstrated in the school building could be making certain that a teacher got to use the restroom or run copies during a planning period that was taken up by a meeting, that they teacher was able to borrow a pen during a faculty meeting when he/she forgot one, or helping her cleanup her classroom after a special science experiment that all of the students enjoyed. The help can be practical in nature.

An administrator who practices servant leadership will likely naturally speak the love language of acts of service to those who are in his/her circle of care. By attending an after-school conference, or placing a note bragging on an observed lesson, the principal will fulfill the acts of service desired by these teachers. Other acts of service could be helping them complete a project, write a grant, or set-up an activity that is taking a lot of time. Any activity that is evidence of care, thought, and time allows teachers who speak the love language of acts of service know that they are important to the principal.

**Physical touch.** A person who speaks the primary love language of physical touch needs the physical presence of those around them. Whether it be a pat on the back, holding hands, hugging, or even the more extreme examples of physical contact (clearly not appropriate in the school or workplace), people who speak the love language of physical touch just desire the accessibility to touch the people who mean the most to them (Chapman, 1992).

A teacher who responds to the love language of physical contact is the one who always wants a hug from her students when they arrive in the morning and when they go home in the

afternoon. They are the teachers who sit close to one another when in a small group. A principal can fulfill the needs of teachers who speak the love language of physical touch by having conversations in close proximity to the teachers, instead of from across a room or office. Often a high-five, pat on the back or head, or gentle squeeze on arm will let the teachers know that the principal values their presence in the school.

Principals can also easily reinforce teachers who speak the love language of physical touch because the touch does not require planning, extra time, or even specific praise. Instead, a principal must ensure that the contact is appropriate and well received by the teacher. There is a warning for those who are in close contact to those people who speak the love language of physical touch: a harsh contact or withdrawal of contact, can be detrimental to the relationship. The teacher may feel his/her importance to the principal has diminished because of the hurtfulness of the contact.

**Receiving gifts.** The last love language is receiving gifts. People who speak the love language of receiving gifts feel the most loved when they receive visual symbols of appreciation (Chapman, 1992). The most important aspect of the gift is not the size or the monetary cost; instead it is the thought behind the gift. Because someone took the time and effort to purchase a gift on their behalf, people whose primary love language of receiving gifts feel valued and loved.

Schools are often filled with teachers whose primary love language is receiving gifts. If a teacher's primary love language is receiving gifts, the size or prestige of the gift is not important, it is the thought behind the gift that matters the most. For instance, a new pen, a ream of copy paper, or a new pack of Post-It notes are appropriate and meaningful for teachers. A pencil or piece of candy from a principal, or even a newspaper clipping about a subject of interest to them would mean the world to teachers whose primary love language is receiving gifts.

## **Conclusion to Chapter 2**

The researcher conducted this research project to answer the following questions:

### **Central Question**

What are the ways in which school administrators in schools exhibit their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and what are their perceptions about how that impacts school culture?

### **Sub Questions**

1. What are the primary Love Languages of principals who lead schools?
2. What are the predominant Leadership Frames of principals who lead schools?
3. What are these principals' perceptions of how their primary Love language and dominant Leadership Frame affects their school culture?

Using the literature at a backdrop for this research, the researcher will be exploring how the soft skills of leadership impact school culture. Principals will complete a love language and leadership frame inventory. Five principals will be selected to participate in an interview. The inventory results and interview perceptions will be triangulated with physical artifacts that demonstrate how the principal communicates school culture and how the principals utilize these soft skills of leadership.

## CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this multiple case study was to identify the leadership frame and primary love language of principals and to explore the degree to which these principals believe that their primary love language and dominant leadership frame impacted school culture. The central research question was: What are the ways in which school administrators in schools exhibit their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and what are their perceptions about how that impacts school culture? There were three sub-questions which were:

1. What are the primary Love Languages of principals who lead schools?
2. What are the predominant Leadership Frames of principals who lead schools?
3. What are these principals' perceptions of how their primary Love language and dominant Leadership Frame affects their school culture?

### **Qualitative Research and the Tradition of Inquiry**

The researcher utilized the qualitative research approach with the intention of capturing how principals perceive their Love Language and Leadership frame affecting school culture. Qualitative methodology was appropriate to use for this study because the researcher needed to “get in touch” with the minds and hearts of the principals who were identified for participation in the study. “There are other aims for qualitative inquiry that are equally important-it is necessary to “get in touch” with the schools and classrooms we care about, to see them, and to use what see as sources for interpretation and appraisal” (Eisner, 1998, p 11). Thus, the practices of qualitative research were employed.

The case study design was chosen from the different methods of qualitative research available. “As a research method, the case study is, used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (Yin, 2008, p. 4). This study was actually a multiple-case study because it looked at five principals and how they perceive that their dominant leadership frame and primary love language impacts school culture. This study examined the individual phenomena with assessing the principal’s love language and leadership frame. It also examined the organizational phenomena in regards to how school culture is affected.

The researcher sought to explore different perspectives of how a principal affects school culture. Two aspects of the principal’s leadership were examined in this study: the primary love language and the dominant leadership frame. The researcher assessed the principals’ love languages and leadership frames from specific inventories, then conducted face-to-face interviews with the principals, asking for their perceptions of how the love language and leadership frame impacted their school culture. In addition, triangulation of data was established by looking for artifacts from the school to identify how they communicated school culture to their faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders, as well as observing the physical environment of each principal’s school.

Creswell (2008) described case study as “an in-depth exploration of a bounded system on extensive data collection” (p. 476). This case study was bounded by location and time which are limitations to the study. The location for the study was purposefully selected schools in the state.

### **Participants**

Emails were sent to school districts around the state that had a reputation for having good leaders in their schools. The central office coordinators then sent the online Qualtrics inventory



to the principals in the school districts. After the completion of each inventory, the principals were asked if they would be willing to possibly be chosen to participate in an interview. The respondents' inventories were hand scored by the researcher when they were received online. Consideration was given to the principals' school level, experience, location, student population, and student socio-economic status when selecting principals to interview. The factors were considered to provide the most diverse population of the applicants. The face-to-face interviews were conducted at the school of the participant. After each interview, the principal lead the researcher on a tour of the school. The school tour was used to triangulate data with the results of the inventory, and the principal's interview. The study was also bound by time. The inventories and interviews all occurred during March and April of 2015.

Yin (2008) suggested that a multiple-case study design is used when "the participants are selected because the researcher believes that they are replications of one another" (p. 59). Each principal in the school was described as a "case," so this study falls under the requirements of a multiple case study according to qualitative research. The researcher not only looked at the themes presented within each case, but also the themes that transcended across cases. Observations of the physical elements of each school's environment and copies of memos, emails, and fliers were given to the researcher as an additional source of school culture data. These tools afforded the opportunity to see how the principal communicated school culture. Yin (2008) states that "physical artifacts are a strength in a multiple-case study because the artifacts provide insight into cultural features of the organization, as well as insight into the technical operations of the organization" (p. 102). This triangulation provides additional components of the participants and their experiences. "Any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several difference sources of information, following a

corroboratory mode” (Yin 2008, p. 116). To protect the identity of the participants, each principal was given a pseudonym designated as Principal A, Principal B, Principal C, Principal D, and Principal E.

The researcher sought to discover the leadership practices of the principals and how their Love Language and Leadership frame impact school culture. By collecting data from the survey on these two elements, examining school documents, and interviewing principals in their natural settings, the researcher was provided authentic data that could be utilized to provide a perspective for investigation in the areas of Love Languages, Leadership frames, and school culture.

### **Components of Research Designs**

Yin (2008) states that there are five components to a research design that are specifically important for a case study:

1. study’s question;
2. its propositions, if any;
3. its unit(s) of analysis;
4. the logic linking the data to the propositions; and
5. the criteria for interpreting the findings (p. 27).

As for the study’s questions, the researcher asked the following questions to the principals during the face-to-face interviews:

1. In what ways do you think your predominant Love Languages impacts school culture?
2. In what ways do you think your Leadership Frame impacts school culture?

These questions were selected because they were based in the literature, which indicated that the Love Languages and Leadership frames would impact a principal's emotional intelligence, and may be the paradigms from which they work.

There were three study propositions in this multiple case study—the love language and leadership frame inventory, the interview, and the physical artifacts that the principal communicates through. A study proposition is ensuring that the researcher is probing exactly what she is looking for in the case study. Here, the researcher reflected on the Love Language and Leadership frame of the participant and triangulated that data with an interview on the principal's perception of school culture, along with physical artifacts in the school environment.

The units of analysis for this study were the principals of the schools. Often cases are individuals, a group, or a specific type of leader. The research questions defined the unit of analysis as the principals.

The researcher logically linked the data to the propositions by addressing that while the five principals were a small sample, there is not conclusive evidence that these outcomes would not be typical if a larger group was sampled. No rival information was provided to skew the criteria for interpreting the studies findings.

### **Instruments and Interviews**

By using Gary Chapman's Love Language Quiz for Singles (1992), the researcher was able to utilize an instrument that was already created by the author. Chapman's study contains 30 questions where the user must choose between two statements, depending on which most closely describes him/her. To make the quiz applicable to the study, all of the 30 two-choice questions were changed to 60 Likert-scale statements where the participant was asked to rank how he/she felt about the statement (with 1 being strongly disagree, and 7 being strongly agree).

By changing the inventory to a Likert scale, the results demonstrated how closely the participants felt about a given statement. The Bolman and Deal (1988) Leadership Orientations inventory was used in order for the principal to self-assess his/her dominant leadership frame. Both inventories were combined into a Qualtrics survey. An email with the Qualtrics link was sent to the central office of school systems that had a reputation for having high quality principals. The emails requested that the central office field coordinator send the email and link to the principals throughout the system. Because the central office field coordinators sent the link to the inventory to principals, the researcher was unable to calculate a response rate. There were 25 respondents to the survey. Respondents were anonymous unless they provided their email address in order to be considered for an interview. The principals who were selected to participate in the interview were purposefully selected as representatives of each of the five love languages, so that the perceptions of individuals from each love language were examined. This purposeful sample provided a variety of perspectives from which to gather data because an individual represented each of the love languages. Inventory responses were secured on a password protected computer of the researcher.

Both of the instruments were hand calculated by the researcher. After collecting the results of the inventory, a purposeful sample was chosen of participants to interview, with the intention of selecting one principal to represent each love language. When the participants were selected they were sent an email by the researcher sharing the results of the survey along with a short summation of what the predominant love language and primary leadership frame implied about their leadership style. This information also gave the principals background information about the love languages and leadership frame, in the event that they were not already familiar

with them. The researcher also included the two sub questions that the principals would be asked during the interview in the results email.

Each face-to-face interview was then conducted at the participant's school, not only because it was convenient for the principals, but also because it allowed the researcher a personal view into the school. "Schools need to be 'known' in the Old Testament biblical sense: by direct, intimate contact" (Eisner, 1998, p. 11). This natural setting not only provided a comfortable environment for the participant, but also provided an opportunity to make observations of how the school culture is manifested in the school. The Interview Protocol for the principals consisted of the following two questions:

1. In what ways do you think your predominant Love Languages impacts school culture?
2. In what ways do you think your Leadership Frame impacts school culture?

These questions are grounded in the literature and are central to the purpose of this study. Prior to the five interviews taking place, the Interview Protocol was field tested with two assistant principals from schools in the local area. These experiences provided an opportunity to practice asking the questions and to consider probing questions that naturally occurred during conversation.

### **Data Analysis**

The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Member checking occurred by emailing the participants the transcribed interviews to ask if they had concerns or questions about the content of the transcript. Member checking was conducted to ensure that all participants believed that they were accurately portrayed. Yin (2003) endorses member checking because it allows the researcher to ensure accurate data collection, while also assuring a structured protocol

for asking questions. Member checking “is often claimed to be an important procedure for corroborating or verifying findings or of assuring they are valid and meet the criterion of *confirmability*” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 187).

The interviews were coded for themes and subthemes. “Coding is a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks them down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 32). Coding provided the researcher with portions of information from interviews that might be able to be collected any other day.

### **Summary**

A group of principals from the researchers state were selected to complete a Love Language and Four Frame inventory. From this group, five principals, representing each of the love languages were interviewed to probe their perceptions on how their love language and leadership frame impacted school culture. The researcher triangulated the inventory data and interview answers with physical examples of how the principal communicated information to major stakeholders, along with the tours of each school.

## CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

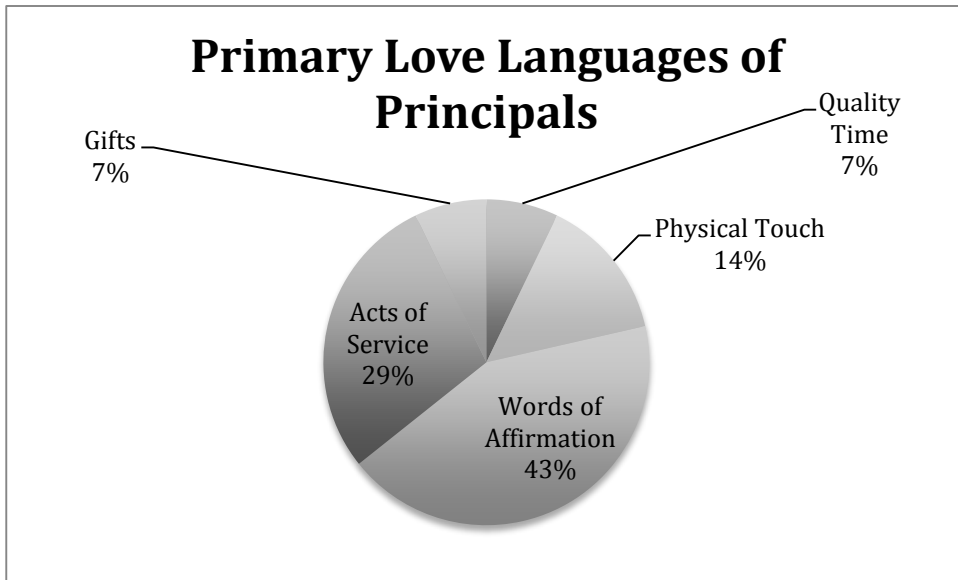
The central research question that guided this study was, “What are the ways in which school administrators exhibit their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and what are their perceptions about how that impacts school culture?” In order to best address this question, the researcher sought to focus on collecting data that would answer three sub questions:

1. What are the primary Love Languages of principals who lead schools?
2. What are the predominant Leadership Frames of principals who lead schools?
3. What are these principals’ perceptions of how their primary Love language and dominant Leadership Frame affects their school culture?

### **Research Data Methods and Response Rates**

The inventory was completed by 25 respondents, with eight of the respondents volunteering for an interview. Out of the 25 respondents, eight of the responses were dismissed because the inventory was not completed. An additional three respondents were dismissed because they had multiple primary love languages or leadership frames. The purpose for their dismissal was so that each respondent calculated had a primary love language and predominant leadership frame. There were 14 respondents whose data was actually analyzed. Nine of the respondents were male (64%), with the remaining five being female (36%). Ten of the respondents were elementary school principals (71%), while three were middle school principals (21%), and the final principal leads a high school (7%).

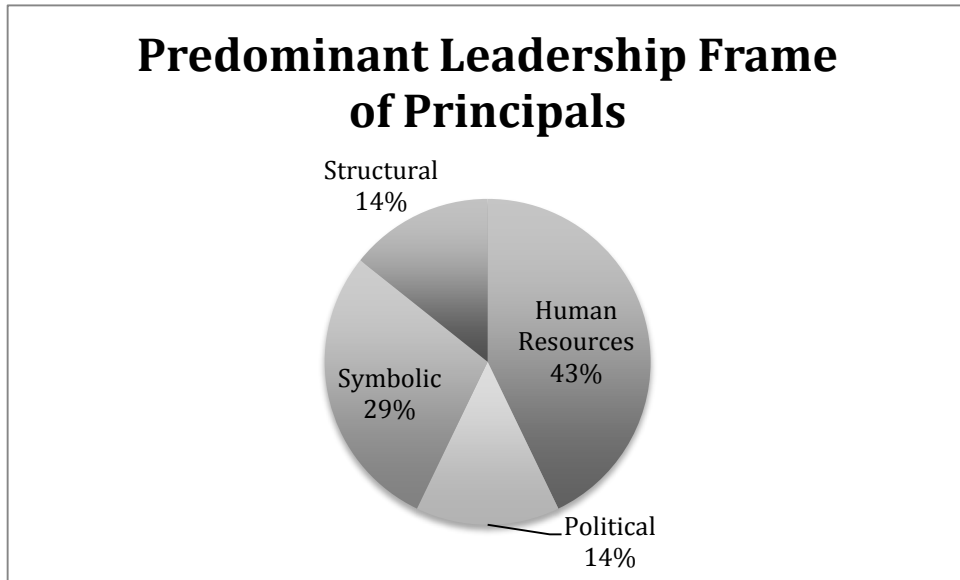
The results of the inventory were hand calculated by the researcher three times to ensure they were correct. The composite scores were checked against the sum and then an average for each love language was calculated. Figure 1 shows the primary Love Languages of the principals who completed the inventory.



*Figure 2.* Primary Love Languages of Principals Completing Inventory

Bolman and Deal’s leadership frame inventory was hand calculated three times and composite scores were used to identify each respondent’s predominant leadership frame. Figure 3 depicts the results of the Leadership Frames of the principals who completed the inventory.





*Figure 3.* Leadership Frames of Principals Completing Inventory

Out of the twenty possible outcomes for combination of love language and leadership frame, only eight emerged:

Words of Affirmation/Structural

Words of Affirmation/Human Resources

Words of Affirmation/Symbolic

Physical Touch/Political

Quality Time/Symbolic

Acts of Service /Human Resources

Acts of Service/Symbolic

Gifts/Political

Table 1 depicts the number of principals in the selected Love Language and Leadership frame who completed the inventory.

Table 1

*Principals in Selected Love Language and Leadership Frames*

	Words of Affirmation	Physical Touch	Quality Time	Acts of Service	Gifts
Structural	2				
Human Resources	3			3	
Political		1			1
Symbolic	2		1	1	

As previously described, the researcher employed a multiple-case study methodology. After completing the inventory, a representative from each love language was selected to interview, taking into account school level, years of experience, location, student population, and student socio-economic status. Once selected the principals were sent an email from the researcher that shared the results of their survey-their primary love language and dominant leadership frame-as well as a background of the love languages and leadership frames, and the two research questions that would be asked during the interview:

1. In what ways do you think your predominant Love Languages impacts school culture?
2. In what ways do you think your Leadership Frame impacts school culture?

Each interview was conducted at the school site so that the researcher could observe possible artifacts that reflected the principals’ love language or leadership frame. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were emailed to the principals for member checking purposes. The researcher coded the data for case context and descriptions.

These codes were used to identify within-case themes. In order to answer the central research question, these codes were used to identify within-case themes, which aligned with the literature on positive school culture (Saldana, 2012). Finally, the researcher performed a cross-case analysis to distinguish similarities and differences in the cases. Through this process, the researcher identified four cross-case themes. In this chapter an examination of each cases' themes will be viewed along with a summary at the end of each case. A cross-case analysis will be given at the end of the chapter.

Table 2 provides vital information about each of the principals who were interviewed to demonstrate that there was a variance of school level, experience by the administrator, location, student population, and free-reduced lunch statistics.

Table 2

*Principal Information*

Principals and their Love Language	Gigi, Gifts	Andy, Acts of Service	Wilma, Words of Affirmation	Quinn, Quality Time	Phyllis, Physical Touch
Leadership Frame	Political	Human Resources	Human Resources	Symbolic	Political
School Level	Elementary	High	Middle	Elementary	Middle
Year of Experience	2	4	14	21	10
Location	Suburban	Rural	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban
Student Population	531	900	572	569	1,204
% of Free-Reduced Lunch	36.72%	45.99%	53.32%	6.5%	27.16%

The following pages provide a description of the interviews that were conducted. The purposeful sample included one principal from each of the five Love Languages who volunteered to be interviewed. The principals were chosen with consideration to school level, experiences, location, and demographics.

### **Gifts Principal**

The researcher conducted the first interview with the principal whose primary love language was Gifts and predominant leadership frame was Political.

### **School Demographics**

Gigi, the Gifts principal, leads an elementary school in a southeastern state. The school currently services 531 children who are in kindergarten through second grade. With district realignment the previous year, the school went from servicing students first- through fifth-grade, to students in kindergarten, first- and second-grade. The school building was built in the 1960s, making it one of the older schools in the school system. The elementary school is situated in a neighborhood and has several students who walk to and from school each day. The school has a diverse racial population with: 55% White, 25% Black, 7% Asian, 5% Hispanic, and 2% Multi-Race students. The previous school year saw 33.15% of students receiving free lunch, while 3.58% of students received reduced lunch, bringing a combined total of 36.72% of students receiving free reduced lunch.

### **Principal**

The Gifts principal, Gigi, is in her early fifties. She has been the principal of the elementary school for the past 2 years. Prior to being the principal, Gigi worked at the school system's Central Office as an English Learners coordinator for several years. She was an English Learners teacher at the elementary school level for the majority of her career. Gigi

shared with the researcher that though her journey to the principal position was unconventional, she greatly valued the years she spent at Central Office because it gave her a different perspective when working as a building administrator. Gigi was warm and gentle, and it was evident that her calmness was greatly valued in a building that bustled with kindergarten, first- and second-graders.

### **Setting of Interview**

Gigi's interview was unique because it actually took place on one of the school system's Weather Days; therefore no one was in the building other than the principal and the researcher. The interview took place across a long narrow table in the principal's office. Hanging on the walls were pretty painting that had promoted a sense of calm. On her desk were pictures of her children and husband. The shelves had different knick-knacks that were typical gifts given to teachers and principals for the holidays. The bookshelves were packed with books and binders on professional development topics. The researcher noted that right next to Gigi's desk was a floor to ceiling bulletin board that was covered with colorful drawings by students who were just learning to write their letters, as they scrawled out notes of love and adoration for their principal. As Gigi and the researchers were seated for the interview, Gigi expressed her nervousness on being recorded for the interview and how she would be perceived with the answers.

### **Interview**

Before the interview started, the researcher provided Gigi with an index card to show her scores from the Love Language and Leadership Frame inventory. Gigi expressed concern that her primary Love Language was Gifts and her predominant leadership frame was Political. She shared that she felt that those results did not show her in a kind light, though she could tell that perhaps they were accurate. The researcher assured Gigi that while everyone gives and receives

love in different ways and works from all frames, there are usually languages and frames that we work from most often. This information seemed to put Gigi more at ease as the interview began.

When asked how she thought her Love Language of Gifts impacted school culture, Gigi replied, “I think whether it’s a sticky note that says ‘Hey, I loved that lesson’, or ‘I know you were out yesterday because your little one was sick’. I think I resonates with people.” “The note might even have a piece of candy taped to it.” She later followed up with the impression of appreciation that she perceives from teachers because of the notes, “What really makes me think people appreciate that is, I see the little notes on their bulletin board and that makes me think that that is something they appreciate or makes them feel good.” Gigi almost seemed more confident about the status of the school culture after she shared how much she appreciated her faculty and showed them by writing notes or bestowing small tokens, such as candy.

Probing further into how Gigi thought her love language might be demonstrated through culture, her face lit up when she shared an obvious example. “While I can’t do big things, I think it’s little things that matter. At least once a month I bring in Panera Bread or just something little. I don’t think of it as gifts, they’re just more encouragement.” It was perceived that maybe Gigi’s attitudes towards her Gift love language was changing when she was thinking of how she truly wanted to give gifts to her faculty because they really meant so much to her.

As Gigi became more reflective with thinking about how the love language of Gifts applied, she realized that perhaps some of her teachers had unknowingly recognized her Love Language.

“I had a friend who knows I love pens. I am obsessive about pens and they’re you know two dollars or 50 cents. Every once in a while she’ll go, ‘I just saw this pen and brought it to you.’ That’s huge. It’s real for me because it shows me that, when you’re not in my

presence, something either I did for you or something I did for somebody else or a way I made you feel, you thought about that. That's big for me.”

It appeared that Gigi began to see results of her love language being displayed by the teachers that she worked with.

When questioned about her Political leadership frame, the researcher noticed that Gigi almost became defensive then let down her guard and she came up with prime examples of how she had worked effectively from the Political Frame.

“Political has such a negative connotation for me. When I hear that, I just kind of cringe, because I am not about being political in terms of doing what I think other people want me to do, in that terms of being political. I think being political in terms of making sure that people who have the gifts of affirmation, are my people that I go to, to have certain tasks.”

Gigi explained,

“My people who tend to be negative, I think in a political framework, you pair them with someone who is strong enough to not be pulled down. They have to be strong enough to pull the negative person up. I think to me that's the political framework that works best in school. You've got to have the right people doing the right things and have their purpose be pure, not political.”

Gigi had definitely caught on to the political frame and how she was making it work to improve school culture.

### **Tour of School**

Because it was a Weather Day, the tour was different because there were no teachers or students present. One of the first things the researcher noticed was the excellent condition of the

school building. Built in the 1960s the building was definitely old, but fresh paint and tasteful decorations made the halls inviting to anyone who entered.

Posted on a bulletin board were the school's upcoming activities. The researcher noted that there were several events happening in the upcoming weeks, especially for a school that served such young children. The kindergarten students were having their annual Market Day. Market Day is a specific activity that is unique to this school in the school system. The principal explained that Market Day is full of booths where students and visitors can purchase gifts that have been made throughout the school year. Each class chooses a theme and makes gifts associated with the theme to sell at Market Day. Students also earn pennies throughout the unit to purchase gifts. Because Market Day is such a big event at the school, it is deeply imbedded in the overall school culture. The researcher noted that Market Day demonstrates the Gifts love language and the Symbolic frame of an organization and was intrigued that they were both displayed in one of the school's biggest events of the year.

Other events on the calendar that were interesting to note was an upcoming blood drive. A blood drive seems like a very practical way to invite parents and community stakeholders in into the school, but also allows them to donate the gift of blood to someone else who is in need.

A Mother's Day Tea was also being planned for the first grade students. During this event the mothers of the first graders come for a visit and are lavished with sweet songs, tasty cookies and juice, and presented with gifts made especially for them. The love language of Gifts perhaps had trickled down from Gigi, right to her first grade students.

Another activity that the students were planning, that the researcher could see evidence of during the tour, was an upcoming trip to the local park. On the classroom bulletin boards there were graphs where it was evident that students were charting different data in anticipation of the



upcoming trip. There was a graph where students had voted on what types of food would be eaten during the picnic: hamburgers, hotdogs, or turkey and cheese sandwiches. The researcher saw what was obviously a brainstorm of games to play: on the playground, tag, kickball, volleyball, or soccer. There were also a list of relay teams that students were signing-up for: track relay, egg toss, sponge toss, and crab race. A school culture that is centered around students and values student buy-in was unmistakable, even though students and teachers were not present.

An additional document that was provided for the researcher was an email sent out to all staff members at the beginning of the week. The entire first page was a list of “Shout Outs” where 21 specific Shout Outs to the teachers for a job well done from the previous week were listed. The Shout Outs were not only from Gigi, but from other teachers as well. The specific Shout Outs ranged from, “THANK YOU to Mrs. Smith (a P.E. teacher) for doing a coin sort, count, & add with a small group,” to “Shout Out to Mrs. Davis for doing such a wonderful job with the ESL homework help and end of the year celebration along with the other ESL teachers. This is an amazing staff.” The researcher noticed that these words of affirmation were evidence of a school culture where everyone openly recognizes the hard work of their peers and took the opportunity to congratulate them in front of the entire staff.


## **Summary**

Gifts principal, Gigi, has lead a suburban elementary school teaching students in kindergarten through second-grade for the past two years. Her utilization of sweet notes, candy bars, morning breakfasts, and the weekly Shout Outs have endeared the teachers to her and to one another. The way that she has paired teachers to one another to minimize negative attitudes has helped Gigi create a perceived positive school culture.

Table 3 depicts evidence of Gigi’s primary Love Language, secondary Love Language, and predominant leadership frame. In addition, the table includes a listing of the ways in which Gigi’s love language and leadership frame are enacted in her school culture. As the table indicates, Gigi’s Gift and Words of Affirmation love languages were noted in positive relationships with teachers, positive relationships with students, and in the safe and welcoming physical environment (all elements of positive school culture, as denoted in research literature).

Table 3

*Gifts Principal’s Observed Elements of Positive School Culture*

<b>Gigi, Gifts</b>			
	Positive Relationships with Teachers (Karakose, 2008; Owens & Valesky, 2007; Leithwood, Seashore, Lewis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Saphier, King, & D’Auria, 2006; Goodnight, 2011; Patterson & Patterson, 2004)	Positive Relationships with Students (Owens & Valesky, 2007)	Safe and Welcoming Physical Environment (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008; Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Wolsey, 2008)
Evidence of Primary Love Language- Gifts	Notes on bulletin board Gifts on shelves Sticky notes Candy bar Monthly treats	Notes on bulletin board Gifts on shelves Market Day Mother’s Day Tea	Upcoming events Market Day Blood Drive Mother’s Day Tea
Evidence of Secondary Love Language –Words of Affirmation	Sticky Notes Shout Outs	Mother’s Day Tea	Family atmosphere
Evidence of Leadership Frame-Political	Teacher pairs Shout Outs	Not observed	Not observed

## **Acts of Service Principal**

The second interview the researcher conducted was with the principal whose primary love language was Acts of Service and predominant frame of leadership was Human Resources.

### **School Demographics**

Andy, the Acts of Service principal, leads a rural freshman academy in a Southeastern state. This 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy was established 5 years ago, with the interviewee being the assistant principal the first year, but then becoming the leading principal, where he has remained the past four years. There are currently an even 900 students enrolled at the freshman academy with 72% White, 22% Black, and 2% Hispanic. The previous school year saw 37.39% of students receiving free lunch, while 8.20% of students received reduced lunch, bringing a combined total of 45.99% of students receiving free reduced lunch.

### **Principal**

The Acts of Service principal, Andy, appeared to be in his later thirties to early forties. He has been the principal of the freshman academy for the past three years. Prior to becoming principal, Andy was the assistant principal at the freshman committee the year it opened. He was also a principal at two other schools, having a total of eight years of principal experience. Andy taught English for five and a half years at the high school level. Andy hold a doctorate from a local state university. Interestingly, education was not Andy's first career; instead he served in the United States Army and was stationed internationally.

### **Setting of Interview**

Andy had a classroom-sized office. Leather seats surrounded a long conference table in his office. A white board hung across a long wall and had notes jotted down from what looked like a meeting that had been held recently. Andy's desk was directly across the room from the

door, so that he would have a view of everything going on in the school office area located immediately outside. The door to his office was open, and remained open for the duration of the interview. The decorations were minimal, perhaps because Andy was a man, or perhaps because of his military background. There was a picture of his wife and children on a high shelf. His desk was organized, but covered with stacks of paper, folders, post-it notes, and lists. The researcher sat directly across the desk from Andy.

### **Interview**

The principal whisked into his office and immediately apologized for his moment delay. He relayed to the researcher that he had been helping teachers get all of the permission forms from the students for an upcoming field trip. He shared this was a way that he could help the teachers out and would give them one less headache in their school day. It was obvious before the interview even started that this principal embodied his primary love language of Acts of Service.

Andy immediately jumped into the interview with his philosophy of school culture.

“What I do it try to create an accepting culture, a supportive culture. First of all, I want the teachers to know that there’s not a job that they’re going to do that I wouldn’t get down and do with them. We’re going to do it together. They know I’m going to try anything I can to make it happen for them.”

Andy began to explain how the freshman academy was created and the input from the faculty. “I immediately boosted our culture here by listening then trying to make their lives easier here at school, because being a teacher is hard enough as it is.” Andy seemed to be addressing his love language of Acts of Service as he described his current school culture.

An example that Andy gave of how he demonstrates Acts of Service is through the hiring process.

“When I do hiring I usually have at least one member of that department sit in with me. They are a part of the hiring process. What we’re looking for is people that fit in with the vision that we have here, of being family. Of working together. Of doing whatever we can to help the kids get where they need to get. They may be exceptionally talented academically, but they just don’t fit what we’re looking for here at the school, because we don’t need disruptions to something that’s going really good.”

Having teachers who were ready to work hard and share in the family atmosphere seemed to be a non-negotiable trait that Andy was looking for as he grew his faculty.

As much as Andy was looking for teachers who were willing to speak the love language of Acts of Service, Andy was also holding himself to an equally high standard. “One of the first things I said to the staff is I’d do anything for them. They’d do anything for me. We do that together. I believe in servant leadership. I’m no better than anybody else that walks these halls.” Andy’s leadership passion, coupled with his servant’s philosophy, made him, what appeared, to be easy for his teachers and students to follow.

Moving from Andy’s love language to his Human Resource’s frame, he immediately gave an example that might have been easily missed by a researcher who was captivated by Andy’s passion for his career.

“The other things that speaks to that (the Human Resources frame), and it gets a little frustrating at times, but my door is always open. Teachers will walk, like the teacher walked in and saw you sitting here, and turned around. I know I’ve got to go see her in a minute, they know my door’s always open. They can walk in. Don’t have to have an

appointment. We just deal with things as they come. Parent, same thing. Kids...it's like a revolving door. They come in...some of it's discipline, some of it's counseling, some of it's academic services that I do for them, but we stay very, very busy because my door stays open for anybody who comes up.”

Andy's open door policy exemplifies someone who primarily works from the Human Resources frame because these leaders seek to always be inclusive of others.

As the interview was drawing to a close, Andy made a closing statement that paired his Love Language of Acts of Service and Human Resources frame perfectly, “We try to foster that positive culture. Treat the kids with respect. I talk to them all the time, person to person.” The researcher experiences no pretentious attitudes anywhere at the freshman academy, most especially in the principal's office.

### **Tour of School**

To completely understand how Andy's Act of Service Love Language has appeared to saturate down to the students, the researcher reflects on the first experiences of the school.

Upon entering the busy office with people bustling about, trying to get all of their morning duties accomplished, the researcher was caught off guard to first be greeted by a student, instead of an adult. The student greeted the researcher and confidently inquired how he could be of service. After hearing of the appointment with the principal the student directed the researcher to an adjacent waiting area. It could be proposed that the service of the principal could be reflected in the attempt to help by the confident student.

The waiting area where the researcher was directed was standing room only. As the researcher stood off the to side of the room, a female student immediately got out of her seat and offered it to the researcher and would not accept no for an answer. It appeared obvious before

ever meeting the principal that there was a positive school culture that transcended the faculty and permeated the students. It is not often that a visitor to a school is impacted so strongly by two students before ever even speaking to an adult. Even through the hustle and bustle of the office, there was a surpassing inviting and calm climate.

The freshman academy was hosting the area track meet the day of the interview. Though there were numerous schools and a multitude of children, the event was well organized. The researchers noticed that there were numerous parent volunteers who were answering questions to lost athletes and confused parents. The researchers speculated that the sheer number of parent volunteers was evidence of a leadership who wanted to ensure that everyone felt welcomed and informed about the event.


### **Summary**

Acts of Service principal, Andy, had lead the rural freshman academy for the past three years. His open door policy, listening ear, and servant leadership philosophy has made a positive impact on the teachers he leads, as well as a popular principal throughout his community. His excitement for his students, and the family atmosphere that he creates for his faculty are easily recognizable as he vividly describes his school

Table 4 depicts evidence of Andy's primary Love Language, secondary Love Language, and predominant leadership frame. In addition, the table includes a listing of the ways in which Andy's love language and leadership frame are enacted in his school culture. As the table indicates, Andy's Acts of Service and Words of Affirmation love languages were noted in positive relationships with teachers, positive relationships with students, and in the safe and welcoming physical environment (all elements of positive school culture, as denoted in research literature).

Table 4

*Acts of Service Principal's Elements of Positive School Culture*

<b>Andy, Acts of Service</b>					
	Positive Relationships with Teachers (Karakose, 2008; Owens & Valesky, 2007; Leithwood, Seashore, Lewis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Saphier, King, & D'Auria, 2006; Goodnight, 2011; Patterson & Patterson, 2004)	Positive Relationships with Students (Owens & Valesky, 2007)	Positive Attitudes and Beliefs of the Principal (Karakose, 2008; Rhodes, Stevens, & Hemmings, 2011; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Rooney, 2013; Saphier, King, & D'Auria, 2006)	High Expectations (Chenoweth, 2007)	Safe and Welcoming Physical Environment (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008; Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Wolsey, 2008)
Evidence of Primary Love Language—Acts of Service	List on board Stack of permission forms Listening Hiring process Open door policy	Open door policy Greeter at the door	Servant leadership Open door policy Student who stood	Hiring process Selfless service expected by all Student greeter at the door Student who stood	Open door policy Student greeter at the door
Evidence of Secondary Love Language – Words of Affirmation	Mutual service to one another	Treat students with respect	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed
Evidence of Leadership Frame—Human Resources	Listening Hiring process Open door policy	Open door policy Treat students with respect	Student greeter at the door Student who stood Family atmosphere	Not observed	Family atmosphere

**Quality Time Principal**

The next interview the researcher conducted was with a principal whose primary Love Language was Quality Time and predominant Leadership Frame was Symbolic.



## **School Demographics**

Quinn, whose predominate love language is Quality times, leads an elementary school situated in a large affluent suburb in a Southeastern state and serves students in kindergarten through fifth-grade. There are currently 569 student enrolled. The racial make-up of the school is 78% White students, with the remaining 22% being Asian, Black, Hispanic, or Multi-Race. Because the remaining percentages were so low, FERPA law prohibits the specific percentages from being published to protect the identity and achievement of the students in these minority groups. The students receiving free lunch are 4.92% of the student population, with 1.58% receiving reduced lunch, with a combined 6.50% of students rounding out the school's free and reduced lunch population.

## **Principal**

The Quality Time principal, Quinn, has led the kindergarten through fifth grade school for the past two years, but previously served for 18 years in the same school system's middle school as principal. Quinn appeared to be in her late fifties to early sixties. Quinn holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership from a local state university. Because of her extensive background at the middle school level, Quinn made many references to her currently school culture, but also her prior experience with school culture in the middle school setting. Quinn was warm and inviting. She was comfortable and seemed to take pleasure in being asked questions about her experience and philosophies. She even noted that because of her doctoral experience, she was persistent at always helping doctoral candidates in achieving their goals. Her kindness and sweet demeanor immediately put the researcher at ease.

## **Setting of Interview**

The interview took place in Quinn's large office. She sat behind her desk, while the researcher sat to her side. The researcher was struck with how evident Quinn's Love Language of Quality Time was displayed in her office decorations. There were numerous pictures around the office, but these were not ones drawn by students, or notes from teachers thanking the principal for her leadership, instead they were all photographs. These photographs were of Quinn and teachers on a professional development trip. The photographs were of Quinn with the teacher's children at an annual End of the Year party that she hosts thanking the children for sharing their mommies and daddies with other children each day. Another photograph showed Quinn with friends on a vacation in the mountains. The researcher noticed how obvious it was that Quinn's primary Love Language was Quality time because these pictures demonstrated that Quinn loved people. Quinn loved relationships.

## **Interview**

Prior to the interview the researcher had mentioned to two colleagues that this particular principal had agreed to an interview. While often people will mention that they know or have heard of that person, the reactions from both individuals was important enough to note. One colleague was all but in awe that the researcher would have the opportunity to interview such an esteemed principal. The second colleague was almost in amazement that Quinn would grant an interview. "Learn everything you can from her. Listen to every word. She is experienced and has more wisdom than any other principal that I have ever known." The anticipation prior to the interview was palpable for the researcher, as there was an expectation of Quinn's experience that was hopefully to be shared.

As with the principals before her, Quinn was given an index card with her Love Language and Leadership Frame inventory results. Quinn was quick to say, “The first thing I’ll tell you is I’m not a particular....My thinking style is not particularly good at black and white. I live in gray.” The researcher smiled and had a great anticipation for the answers to come.

When asked about her perception of school culture, Quinn began, “I think it’s so important because you that to recognize that people have this...They’re walking different walks, and there are different stages in their lives, and you’ve got, to me, to care about that picture.” Quinn continued, “We’ve celebrated, we’ve mourned, we’ve had some really sad happenings, and we’ve had some beautiful, major wonderful things.” The researchers noted that Quinn started the conversation with people. She could have started the conversation with perceptions, curriculum, politics, or resources, but instead she started with people, which substantiated her love language of Quality Time.

Quinn went on to explain that there are a couple of elements to school culture that she has to keep in mind on a day-to-day basis, and she also opened up about areas of she thinks she could improve upon.

“I think if you want to build the right climate, you’ve got to be approachable, you’ve got to be available. I’ve made decisions that are right for me, that aren’t right for other people. I’ve never liked to be out of the building very much. I’ve never been real active in organizations and all that. Part of that is not a good thing, but it’s not my strength. I don’t particularly like being out of the building, and some of that is very deep seated.”

Building upon her mention of visibility, Quinn mentioned,

“You’ve got to see good. You’ve got to be visible. You’ve got to put that smile on. People have got to be able to look to you when something happens. You have got to fight the naysayers, but people have got to know you have their back at some level.”

This visibility could be interpreted as evidence of quality time spent with people, but also of being that symbol of leadership in the school building.

When asked about traditions at school, Quinn told a story about when she served as principal at the middle school. She noted that often traditions happen in the most unlikely of ways.

“Now here’s a real tradition. Every year 1,100-1,200 of my closest friends and I went to the historical theater in the city. We would pick a 7-week reading goal. When we reached it, we would get 26, 27, 28 buses, and off we go to the theater.”

After the students sang along to “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” on the antique organ, Quinn would ask them all to pop the top of their drinks at the same time, in an effort to not hear random pops topping throughout the movie. She continued,

“We did this a couple of years, and I didn’t think anything about it, except it wasn’t nearly as annoying. When one of the teachers came up to me and said, ‘You’re not going to believe what just happened.’ I said, ‘What?’ She said one of my friends wants to know if we are going to do that tradition that we always do. I said, ‘What?’ She said, ‘Popping pop tops.’ What’s your tradition, Quinn? We pop our pop tops.”

The tradition of pop tops was not recognized by Quinn, but her students had found a tradition that they appeared to look forward to and value each year.

Before the interview ended, Quinn caught the researcher glancing around at the photographs on her wall. In particular there was a photograph with what must have been 25

children. Quinn explained that those were all teachers' children. Underneath the pictures, in elementary handwriting, was written, "Aunt Quinn love us, this we know." Quinn explained that the children called her Aunt Quinn because Dr. Quinn gave them the impression "they were going to the doctor and I was going to give them the shots, so we had to get past that." It was evident that Quinn spent quality time not only with her teacher, but also their children.

### **Tour of School**

Quinn was elated to be able to showcase her school to the researcher. Upon leaving the office she stopped at the beginning of the hallway and pointed to words hanging from the ceiling, such as: boundaries, fair use, phishing, privacy. Quinn explained that the school had just completed a week where they showcased digital citizenship to the students and discussed how technology can be of great use to the students when it is utilized responsibly. There was a bulletin board where students practiced writing positive "tweets" about their friends, complete with hashtags. Quinn pointed to several examples and told personal stories about the children and how those positive words probably meant a lot to the students because of a difficult home life, having very few friends, or being the new kid at school. It was evident from her sharing that Quinn knew more than the students' names at her school, she also knew a lot of their stories, which would indicate that she had been utilizing her Quality Time love language.

Quinn guided the researcher into a classroom where students were in groups of three using their iPads to answer questions on the Smart Board. She explained that the students were completing a project with the local zoo and were using maps and graphs that the zoo distributed to learn more about the physical layout of the zoo. Quinn called the students by name and asked them to explain to the researcher exactly what they were doing. The students explained that they wanted the zoo to purchase a new animal and they thought a polar bear was the best option. The

students then explained that they were reconsidering their idea because a polar bear would have to live in a habitat that was very different from any habitat the zoo currently offered. Students were going far past the idea of just choosing a cool animal; they were having a conversation where different opinions were being shared in order to come to a logical conclusion. It was evident that these students had had these mature conversations mirrored for them and had been scaffold to the point that they were able to perform the conversations independently. The students at this elementary school were learning more than climate and zoo animals, they appeared to be learning how to have a sometimes-passionate conversation with someone you respect. These conversations were evidence of a school culture that encouraged individuality, but placed respect for one another at a premium.

Before leaving the classroom, Quinn stopped three young men. She asked them how things were going. The boys explained to their principal that they had been getting along a lot better. Later, she explained that the boys had been having difficulty getting along, so she had talked to them and tried to find some common ground for them to work from. Her approach appeared successful, as the boys were all smiles and eager to get back to their lesson. Right before Quinn exited one of the students ran up to her and told her about his baseball game that had happened the night before. Quinn asked some probing question that demonstrated that this was not their first conversation about his favorite pastime. It was evident from their conversation that they had spent some quality time with one another.

As Quinn has walking up the stairwell she bumped into a custodian sweeping the landing. She bragged on the custodian for being the hardest worker at the school and the custodian beamed from ear to ear. Quinn then requested that the custodian give the baseboard part of the stairs an extra scrub because “the students were bringing in all the outdoors in on their shoes,”

She quickly followed-up with the request with, “Don’t hurry and do it now, I know that you will get to it when you have time.” Quinn later told the researcher that the custodian was such a hard worker that she would stay after hours to complete the task because she took such pride in her work, but Quinn wanted her to go home and finish the job later because the custodian had several children and she knew it was more important for her to be home on time than get the baseboards clean that day. It was apparent that Quinn knew everyone on her staff well and was in tune to what was most important to them, and it appeared that Quinn tried to respect that, and in turn her employees appeared to also want to do a good job for her.

Towards the end of the tour Quinn lead the researcher outside to the garden area. She explained that a former student had selected her school to complete his requirement for Eagle Scout. The young man had contacted a local landscaping company who agreed to donate the supplies, and the young man set to work creating raised beds for each o the grades to tend to throughout the year. There were beds with stakes labeled cucumber, tomato, squash, and watermelon. It seemed that the aspiring Boy Scout felt an attachment and affection for his previous school and that is why he had chosen to come back there to leave a projects for the present students to learn from.

Upon reflection, the researcher noted the interactions between Quinn and the teachers in the school. Quinn asked everyone a personal question peppered amongst the questions that were school related. She asked how a child’s arm was healing after a nasty fall, she was concerned with an ailing parent who was being released from the hospital to a rehabilitation center, and she delighted in hearing that a teacher’s son had played well at a basketball game the previous evening. Quinn was intimately familiar with her faculty and had created an environment that

appeared to feel like family. The positive school culture seemed to have been impacted by Quinn's love language of Quality Time.

### **Summary**


Quality Time principal, Quinn, has lead a suburban elementary school that teaches students in kindergarten through fifth-grade for the past two years. Prior to this placement, Quinn was the principal at the local middle school for 18 years. Her knowledge of her teachers, their families, and the students at the schools are evident that she has spent time getting to know them on a level deeper than just day-to-day interactions in the school building. While the Love Language of Quality Time was observed throughout the school, the Symbolic Leadership Frame was documented in her anecdotes.

Table 5 depicts evidence of Quinn's primary Love Language, secondary Love Language, and predominant leadership frame. In addition, the table includes a listing of the ways in which Quinn's love language and leadership frame are enacted in her school culture. As the table indicates, Quinn's Quality Time and Acts of Service love languages were noted in positive relationships with teachers, positive relationships with students, and in the safe and welcoming physical environment (all elements of positive school culture, as denoted in research literature).



Table 5

*Quality Time Principal's Elements of Positive School Culture*

<b>Quinn, Quality Time</b>					
	Positive Relationships with Teachers (Karakose, 2008; Owens & Valesky, 2007; Leithwood, Seashore, Lewis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Saphier, King, & D'Auria, 2006; Goodnight, 2011; Patterson & Patterson, 2004)	Positive Relationships with Students (Owens & Valesky, 2007)	Positive Attitudes and Beliefs of the Principal (Karakose, 2008; Rhodes, Stevens, & Hemmings, 2011; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Rooney, 2013; Saphier, King, & D'Auria, 2006)	High Expectations (Chenoweth, 2007)	Safe and Welcoming Physical Environment (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008; Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Wolsey, 2008)
Evidence of Primary Love Language- Quality Time	Photographs with teachers Photographs with teacher's children Whole picture of a person Approachable Available Visible Knowing custodian and her family Knowing teachers and their families	Photographs with students Approachable Available Visible Stories of children tweet board Calling students by name Student interactions Former student using school for Eagle Scout project	Started conversation with people Teachers' children call her Aunt Quinn Respectful conversations were mirrored for students	Respectful conversations were mirrored for students	Photographs with teachers and students Approachable Available Family atmosphere
Evidence of Secondary Love Language Acts of Service	Custodian as hardest worker	Digital citizenship	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed
Evidence of Leadership Frame-Symbolic	Annual trip to theater Popping pop top Annual party with teachers' children	Annual trip to theater Popping pop top Eagle Scout project	Not observed	Not observed	Positive tweets bulletin board

## **Words of Affirmation Principal**

The fourth interview the researcher completed was with Wilma, whose primary Love Language was Words of Affirmation and whose predominant leadership frame was Human Resources.

### **School Demographics**

Wilma, the words of affirmation principal leads a middle school in a suburban community in the same Southeastern state as the other interviewees. The school serves students in fourth- through sixth-grade. The school moved to its' new location five years ago. The middle school shares a location with the junior high school and high school on a sprawling campus. The schools' grounds have large wooded areas surrounding them and have wide fields that separate them from one another, but they are still in close enough proximity to share an area for common activities. The middle school has 572 students who are currently enrolled. The racial make-up of the school is: 78% White, 7% Black, and the remaining 15% are made up of Hispanic, Asian, and Multi-Race students. Because the remaining percentages were so low, FERPA law prohibits the specific percentages from being published to protect the identity and achievement of the students in these minority groups. Out of the student population, 45.28% of students receive free lunch, while an additional 8.04% of students receive reduced price lunches, for a combined 53.32% of students receiving free and reduced lunch.

### **Principal**

The Words of Affirmation principal, Wilma, is in her early fifties. She has been the principal of the middle school for the past 14 years. Wilma holds an Educational Specialist degree from a local state university. Prior to being the principal she was the assistant principal and a teacher at the middle school. Before coming to the suburban middle school, Wilma taught

reading in an inner city school. She juxtaposed the school settings with her prior school having fences, barbed wire, concrete, and chains as far as the eye could see, with her current location being nestled among trees and green fields at the base of a high mountain. Wilma was energetic and made the school feel like a home, a place that everyone belonged. Wilma was immediately welcoming and did not mince words on how she was honored, but humbled to be the focus of an interview.

### **Setting of Interview**

Wilma's interview took place in her spacious office around a circular table, away from the large desk that are customary office furniture for school officials. Hanging on the walls were colorful quilts that Wilma's mother had made. The quilts provided a calm to the room, almost a place a solace, in the front of a bustling school. On her desk were bright flowers with a card with a large amount of writing, which the researcher inferred were words of encouragement and edification. Lining her bookshelves were an eclectic mix of collegiate textbooks, middle school chapter books, researcher manuals, inspirational hardbacks, data binders, and autographed copies of picture books by well-known authors like Patricia Polacco and Mike Artell. Much to the researchers delight, there was even a book on the Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman. Sprinkled about the room were pictures that students had drawn for Wilma, a couple of photographs of friends, family, faculty, and students, and there were even a stack of notecards that had just been written by a sixth grade math class, thanking Wilma for being the "brave" and "sweetest" leader of their school. The researcher noted that these drawing, notes, and pictures were evidence not only of the principal's Words of Affirmation love language, but also of her primary Human Resources leadership frame. As Wilma and the researchers got settled in for the

interview, Wilma expressed her excitement, but also anxiety of being the focus of an interview of school culture because the topic had such wide breadth and depth.

### **Interview**

Wilma actually started off the interview providing a background for the school culture when she came into the principal position. She described the environment at “rigid” and said that “I was the fifth principal in five years”. There was constant teacher turnover because the teachers were “scared and didn’t know who to trust”. Even when reflecting how the community accepted the school was of concern to Wilma.

“It was a hard environment to come into and honestly it was a non-welcoming environment to the community. The principal before all of the turnover was here for 11 years and had the philosophy that ‘These kids are at the age now that they don’t need their parents involvement so parents were stopped at the door. You were not allowed anywhere’. The school had a really bad reputation.”

Wilma shared that she wanted parents to feel that their children were taken care of and that the school was a “positive place” for them.

Wilma continued, “I thought that building the relationship with the teachers was the most important task to accomplish immediately after I was hired”. She knew that when she had a positive relationship with the teachers, she could make the school welcoming to students and parents, alike.

When questioned about how she saw her primary Love Language of Words of Affirmation impacting school culture, Wilma was quick to give examples that she was excited and energetic about. She explains a strategy that she implemented as soon as she took the reigns as principal that is still going strong today.

“We started having what we can ‘Yak and Snacks’ where once a month we get together at someone’s home or restaurant. It is completely voluntary and we are just there to get to know one another. The number one rule is you can’t talk about school. I truly believe that when you get to know someone’s heart, and they know that you care about them, they’re going to do what you ask them to do.”

Wilma asserted that she believed these Yak and Snack times provided an opportunity for her to get to know her staff member. She suggested that this connection provided a relationship later on for the teachers to know she cared about them, but will always push them to be more and more successful in the school setting. She admits to liberally “praising my teachers for everything they do”. This sparked the interest of the researcher as being an example of how she demonstrates her love language of Words of Affirmation to affirm the teachers in her building.

As Wilma began to give other examples of how she uses Words of Affirmation to impact school culture, she gave specific examples that she implores as principal. She established a list the first year that she was principal which she renews each year with her faculty. “I have a check-off sheet where I write every teacher in this building at least two thank-you cards throughout the school year. I check it off to make sure I find something positive that they’ve done and I sent it to them because I want them to know that their hard work may go unnoticed by some, but never by me.” She attested that often she will have a teacher remark that her affirming note “showed up at just the right time.”

Wilma shared that it is difficult to distinguish between Words of Affirmation and the Human Resources frame because “they just go so well together, I really can’t tell the difference.” For example, Wilma went on to share that she is very cognizant to use the term “we” instead of “I”. I want my faculty to know that I recognize that they “are the ones that are making this work

for us. You're the ones doing the work". "If we get accolades or pats on the back, it's the teachers. It's not me." She explained that keeping their hard work in perspective and as the focus of all of the positive things going on at school has created a more positive school culture because the teachers feel like they are important and are appreciated.

To combat the negative image that stakeholders had of her school she had a two prong strategy: showcase to the media, and get the parents in the door. She revealed that "the first thing we started doing was probably three or four times a week we would send stuff to the local newspaper." We wanted to showcase that "this is what's going on, this is what we're doing." "We wanted them to have the scoop." When stakeholders know that positive things are going on in a school, it encourages a more positive reflection, especially when everyone could see the positive experiences multiple times a week in black and white.

Her second approach was to implement a program she calls Breakfast with the Principal. Parents were invited to school for donuts and coffee to meet, sit, talk, and just find out what was going on at the school. Wilma especially invited parents of third graders towards the end of the year to attend a Breakfast with the Principal to hear that they are welcome in the school and are encouraged to volunteer. She observed that parents as a result of the Breakfast with the Principal program created more positive relationships. She also revealed that she now regularly hears, "We want our kids at the middle school, we can't wait until our kids get to your school." Proudly Wilma synthesized, "That's how we've changed the culture of the school."

### **Tour of School**

As we entered the school halls, the researcher was struck by the college pennants hung near the ceiling that made a border on each side of the hallway. There must have been 150 pennants. Wilma caught the researcher eyeing the pennants and explained that there are two

large schools in the state and as she talked to students she got the feeling that they were under the impression that you had to go to one of those two colleges. There were no other choices. To combat this perception they ordered these pennants to line the hallways and each year each homeroom chooses a different college to research. They find out the location, mascot, course offerings, and events that make that particular college unique. Throughout the year there are different activities to celebrate the school they have chosen. Students participate in a pep rally, make short presentations on the school news about their college, and even get to watch a sporting event from the particular school. Wilma shared that the feedback has been very positive from students and parents because students are gaining knowledge at an early age to consider all of their secondary school options upon graduation. Wilma looks forward to a couple of years from now when she anticipates a more diversified group of colleges upon the school system's graduating class.

On a prominent bulletin board outside of the office hung copies of teacher's degrees and their pictures. Wilma stopped to draw attention to the board and it was easy to see that she was proud of each teacher and their accomplishments. She said that she was "delighted" she had teachers from a variety of different schools across the country and with different degrees. Certainly the majority of the degrees were in the field of education, but there were also teachers who had chosen a different career path right out of college before their heart's led them to the classroom. Wilma beamed as she pointed out her teachers with advanced degrees, as you could tell she was proud of them and their accomplishments. The researcher noted that Wilma's degrees were not on the bulletin board, but recognized that Wilma held an Educational Specialist degree from a state university. Wilma explained that she wanted the students to not only know

of their teacher's academic accomplishments, but also to inspire the students to make the most of all educational opportunities they are afforded.

As we entered the cafeteria the researchers was introduced to several teachers. The researcher noted that Wilma introduced each teacher and then described them as "one of the best (subject area) teachers at our school." Each teacher beamed as Wilma was utilizing her Words of Affirmation love language and Human Resources leadership frame to build the confidence and instill appreciation in each teacher she encountered.

While the chaos of a school cafeteria was not new to the researcher, the quiet and orderly procedures of dismissal were not lost either. Scattered among twelve round tables were students from three homeroom classes. As a teacher stood to throw away her trash, students who were sprinkled about, having no other cue that the teachers standing, stood up themselves, threw their lunch away, and stood in a line waiting to exit the room. The shock on the researcher's face must have been apparent as Wilma explained that procedures are vitally important at the school and practiced constantly at the onset of the school year. What the researcher witnessed was a product of hard work, practice, and the Structural leadership frame that had trickled down to the student level.

Upon leaving the cafeteria Wilma and the researcher encountered a student who was sweeping the hallway. Quietly the principal explained that the student was on a behavior contract and had selected sweeping the hallway as a reward for earning a set amount of points. She admitted that she was intrigued by the reward selection, but also rationalized that the student liked moving, being alone, and seeing a task completed. Wilma bragged on the behavior of the student and expressed to the researcher how he was "one of the most important students at the



middle school.” Her words of affirmation encouraged the student as he set back to his task with a broad smile on his face.

The remainder of the tour consisted of the researcher identifying the other ways Wilma exhibited different love languages and leadership frames, but Words of Affirmation and Human Resources were both paramount. The happiness of the students and teachers indicated that every positive word Wilma said was true, and it was easy to see how parents couldn’t wait for their children to join these hallowed halls.


### **Summary**

Words of Affirmation principal, Wilma, has lead a suburban middle school teaching students in the fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grades for the past 14 years. Her implementation of Yak and Snack, and Breakfast with the Principal, and thank you cards has endeared her to her teachers and parent stakeholders alike. She is quick to brag on her teachers and students to demonstrate her appreciation for their hard work and dedication to education. Her secondary Love Language of Quality Time was evident in her interactions with teachers. The positive school culture was evident through the excitement of the students and the positive interactions between Wilma and the teachers.

Below is a table that depicts evidence of Wilma’s primary Love Language, secondary Love Language, and predominant leadership frame. In addition, the table includes a listing of the ways in which Wilma’s love language and leadership frame are enacted in her school culture. As the table indicates, Wilma’s Words of Affirmation and Quality Time love languages were noted in positive relationships with teachers, positive relationships with students, and in the safe and welcoming physical environment (all elements of positive school culture, as denoted in research literature).

Table 6

*Words of Affirmation Principal's Elements of Positive School Culture*

<b>Wilma, Words of Affirmation</b>					
	Positive Relationships with Teachers (Karakose, 2008; Owens & Valesky, 2007; Leithwood, Seashore, Lewis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Saphier, King, & D'Auria, 2006; Goodnight, 2011; Patterson & Patterson, 2004)	Positive Relationships with Students (Owens & Valesky, 2007)	Positive Attitudes and Beliefs of the Principal (Karakose, 2008; Rhodes, Stevens, & Hemmings, 2011; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Rooney, 2013; Saphier, King, & D'Auria, 2006)	High Expectations, (Chenoweth, 2007)	Safe and Welcoming Physical Environment (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008; Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Wolsey, 2008)
Evidence of Primary Love Language- Words of Affirmation	Insight gained from Yak and Snack Praise teachers for everything Thank you cards "We" instead of "I"	"One of the most important students at our school" Pictures from student Thank you cards form students Collegiate unit each year	College Pennants Teachers' degrees	Teachers' degrees	College pennants Family atmosphere
Evidence of Secondary Love Language – Quality Time	Yak and Snack	Not observed	Not observed	Cafeteria procedures	Breakfast with the Principal Cafeteria procedures
Evidence of Leadership Frame-Human Resources	"We" instead of "I" "One of the best" Thank you cards	Newspaper articles Pictures from student Thank you cards form students	Not observed	Not observed	Breakfast with the Principal

## **Physical Touch Principal**

The final interview the researcher conducted was with the principal whose primary love language was Physical Touch and predominant frame of leadership was Political.

### **School Demographics**

Phyllis, the physical touch principal, works in a middle school in a suburban community in the same Southeastern state as the other interviewees. The middle school services sixth-through eighth-grade students and currently has 1,204 students enrolled. The middle school was not affected during the school's realignment the previous year. Historically the middle school was the all-Black high school before segregation was implemented and is a source of pride for the African American community in the town, as it is nestled within a predominantly African American neighborhood. Like the school whose principal had the primary love language of Gifts, there are many students who daily walk to and from school. The school has a diverse racial population with: 60% White, 25% Black, 10% Asian, and 4% Hispanic. The previous school year saw 23.92% of students receiving free lunch, while 3.24% of students received reduced lunch, bringing a combined total of 27.16% of students receiving free and reduced lunch. The school currently struggles with an over-crowding issue and is looking to move a portion of its students to a different facility in the upcoming years.

### **Principal**

The Physical Touch principal, Phyllis, is in her later forties. She has been the principal of the middle school for four years, and was previously the assistant principal for six years. She holds a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from a local state university. Prior to being the assistant principal at the middle school she was a Social Studies teacher at a local elementary

school. Phyllis was boisterous and funny, while being inviting and made the researcher feel a part of a school from the moment of walking through the door.

### **Setting of Interview**

Phyllis's interview took place in her spacious office. Her office was colorful and cheerful with picture of the principal's alma mater scattered about the office. There was an oversized yearly calendar propped up against a cabinet where activities were already being planned for the next school year. She mentioned that it is never too early to plan for children, and thinking about activities far in the future gave everyone plenty of time to make them purposeful and memorable. The interview took place on a late evening. The middle school choir was having one last practice before their end-of-the-year recital, and the band performance took place at the conclusion of the interview. While Phyllis could have sat at the end of the long conference table or behind her desk, she instead came around and sat right next to the researcher, and indication that she truly liked being in close proximity to whomever she was talking to.

### **Interview**

Phyllis immediately started the interview by declaring that her love language was definitely Physical Touch.

“I am touchy-feely. I do feel like my students know I love them. Even though they're middle grade kids, they still need to know somebody cares enough about them, regardless of their shape, size, what they've got on, that I am willing to touch them.”

Phyllis went immediately from addressing her touching the students to touching her staff. “My faculty and staff also know that I'm really very likely to touch them as well, and I think it just let's them know that I care about them and I love them. I do. I love them as family.” She goes on to explain that if someone is uncomfortable, she will not touch them as much, but she wants

everyone to know that they are certainly loved by one person in the school building-their principal.

When questioned about how she knows her middle school has a positive school culture, she mentioned, “I feel like we care about the whole person. I’m normally the first one a teacher is going to text and say something’s happened. I wish I had that relationship with everyone of the people on staff, but normally I gain that relationship as the years go by.” Acknowledging that relationships are not immediate was an insight that brought about another anecdote by Phyllis. “There are a couple of teachers that it is just now their second year and they have started stopping by my office almost every afternoon, and in fact, it’s getting to be kind of hard to even run them out about 6 pm sometimes. I have to say, ‘I’ve got to go home, and so do you’.” Having teachers who spend time with their principal, especially during the late afternoon and evening, points towards a positive school culture and does along with her secondary love language of Quality Time.

Phyllis also mentioned that her philosophy of making sure that her teachers were happy, and sometimes that meant having to give her teachers free time to go and participate in an event with their children. “One of the things we do here, particularly for our teachers that have got young kids, school aged kids, if they have an event at their school, and the teacher can get coverage for their class, I want them to go and participate with their child.” She shared that this philosophy evolved from a situation when she was teacher. “I remember being down the hall from my child, and you couldn’t go watch anything or do anything. We try to make sure that they’re able to be involved with their family.” Phyllis explained that she wanted her faculty members to be involved with their families when they could throughout the school day, but she also desired for the teachers and students at school to feel like they were a family.

One way that students feel like they are a part of the school is through their teams. “We are very purposeful in making sure that no one feels lost in this big old school, so we put all of our students on academic teams. That way they have four academic teachers that they go to throughout the day and they get to know 125 kids, not 900.” The researcher noted that this team structure also placed the students in close proximity to one another, which could be reflective of her love language of Physical Touch.

Next, turned her attention to the enormous year calendar that was sitting next to a counter in her office. There were already dates scheduled for the end of the next school year. She stressed the need to always know what event was next, and one way that she does that is having this calendar to make sure that they are keeping the important things a priority.

“Even something I started probably two years ago, was sending out an email. I’d send it on Sunday nights. Happy birthdays for the week, and what all is going on for the week, and send a snapshot of the calendar, and send all these events. That’s kind of like my lesson plans just like they are planning for education.”

The researchers noted that the email and planning was perhaps evidence of Phyllis’s Structural leadership frame. Though her primary leadership frame was Political, the calendar and structure that was evident in her calendars and the teaming of students indicates that she utilizes her Structural frame throughout the school week.

### **Tour of School**

Immediately when walking out of her office Phyllis and the researcher ran into a custodian who was diligently mopping the hallway. Phyllis bragged on what a hard worker the custodian was and asked him, “What’s important to me in the building?” The custodian chuckled and replied as if he had been asked the same question a hundred time, “The floors,

because everybody can see them.” Phyllis patted him on the back and told him that the school wouldn’t be able to run without him. The researcher noted that Phyllis’s secondary Love Language was Words of Affirmation and this interaction was evidence that she utilized this love language often.

The next stop at of the tour was what the researcher had been anticipating the most—the teams. Before even visiting the school the researcher had heard about the teams at this middle school. But not just from middle school students, from students who were in late high school or even college. The teams seemed to be a right of passage, evidence of a Symbolic frame, because once you were placed on a team the loyalty never subsided. The researcher knew of 5<sup>th</sup> graders who would weep with excitement when they were placed on their middle school teams. It was evident from hearsay that there was a strong positive school culture that was deeply influenced by these teams.

As the principal guided the researcher around the first corner the décor of the school immediately changed. The walls that had previously been white were now bright red with silver accents. Streamers crisscrossed the ceiling and poster exclaiming team pride were on every bare surface. Pictures of children with completely painted faces and matching t-shirts were displayed on a bulletin board. The principal explained that pep rallies at the middle school were “epic” and it was not uncommon to see alumni of the middle school or parents and siblings of current students at these pep rallies. Every team would have cheers and performances that were critiqued by outside judges and winning the pep rally was the most coveted accomplishment for a team. Hall after hall displayed this same sense of team pride. Teams were not just a set of academic teachers; teams were micro-cultures in the big waters of middle school.

As Phyllis introduced the researcher to one of the assistant principals, she got visibly upset. As Phyllis placed her arm around the assistant principal, she clutched her tightly and explained how incredible she is. Phyllis relayed a story about how she had had a couple of traumatic things happen in her family the previous summer that spilled into the school year. She said that both of the assistant principals made decisions and carried on the work of the school in her absence. She even told of how she stood up at the first faculty meeting of the year and became so overwhelmed with emotion that she had to excuse herself. She said that her teacher had seen a human side of her that she didn't usually reveal. Then she genuinely bragged on the assistant principal and said how she was so important and that the school would not be the same without her leadership. In one moment Phyllis seemed to embody her love languages of Physical Touch and Words of Affirmation with her Political frame, because she definitely had the right assistant principal for the job.

As Phyllis walked down the halls, students stopped to hug her, high-five her, and one even excitedly told her that earlier in the day he had made an A on his Social Studies project. Phyllis appeared very approachable by the students. She called most by name, but would always resort to a "man" or "sweet girl" nickname if she was unsure. The warmth of a school struck the researcher, especially a school made up of middle school students.

### **Summary**

Physical Touch principal, Phyllis, has led a suburban middle school serving sixth- and seventh-grade students for the past four years. For the six years prior, Phyllis served as the assistant principal at the school. Her hugs, high-fives, and tight embraces have created a positive school culture that is evident by her interactions with teachers and students alike. She is quick to brag on her teachers, students, and custodians, which demonstrated her secondary love




language of Words of Affirmation. The middle schools teams create a positive school culture that is reflected upon proudly by students who are well past middle school aged.

Table 6 depicts evidence of Phyllis’ primary Love Language, secondary Love Language, and predominant leadership frame. In addition, the table includes a listing of the ways in which Phyllis’ love language and leadership frame are enacted in her school culture. As indicated, Phyllis’ Physical Touch and Words of Affirmation love languages were noted in positive relationships with teachers, positive relationships with students, and in the safe and welcoming physical environment (all elements of positive school culture, as denoted in research literature).

Table 6

*Physical Touch Principal’s Elements of Positive School Culture*

<b>Phyllis, Physical Touch</b>					
	Positive Relationships with Teachers (Karakose, 2008; Owens & Valesky, 2007; Leithwood, Seashore, Lewis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Saphier, King, & D’Auria, 2006; Goodnight, 2011; Patterson & Patterson, 2004)	Positive Relationships with Students (Owens & Valesky, 2007)	Positive Attitudes and Beliefs of the Principal (Karakose, 2008; Rhodes, Stevens, & Hemmings, 2011; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Rooney, 2013; Saphier, King, & D’Auria, 2006)	High Expectations, (Chenoweth, 2007)	Safe and Welcoming Physical Environment (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008; Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Wolsey, 2008)
Evidence of Primary Love Language-Physical Touch	Hugs and pats on the back Teams Tightly clutching assistant principal	Hugs, pats on the back, and high-fives Teams	Care about the whole person	Not observed	Not observed

<b>Phyllis, Physical Touch</b>					
Evidence of Secondary Love Language – Words of Affirmation	Family atmosphere Encouraged to participate in children’s activities Weekly email Bragging on custodian Tightly clutching assistant principal	Family atmosphere	Calendars Family atmosphere	Collegiate pictures	Family atmosphere
Evidence of Leadership Frame-Political	Teams Tightly clutching assistant principal	Teams	Calendar Team loyalty	Not observed	Team decorations

Table 7 provides a comprehensive view of all five principals and evidence of their leadership frame in regards to the instances that were evident throughout the school visit with the researcher. Each icon represents one instance that was recorded during the school visit for each theme.

Table 7

Summary of Instances of Evidence in Each Case

Elements of Positive School Culture					
	Positive Relationships with Teachers	Positive Relationships with Students	Positive Attitudes and Beliefs of the Principal	High Expectations	Safe and Welcoming Physical Environment
Evidence of Primary Love Language					
Evidence of Secondary Love Language					
Evidence of Leadership Frame					

Note. —Gigi, Gifts; —Andy, Acts of Service; —Quinn, Quality Time; —Wilma, Words of Affirmation; —Phyllis, Physical Touch.

## **Cross-Case Analysis**

The previous cross-case analysis looked at each of the principals representing the five Love Languages, their schools, and their school culture. As the interviews were conducted, it was important for the researcher to reflect upon the research questions and sub-questions:

### **Central Question**

What are the ways in which school administrators in schools exhibit their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and what are their perceptions about how that impacts school culture?

### **Sub Questions**

1. What are the primary Love Languages of principals who lead schools?
2. What are the predominant Leadership Frames of principals who lead schools?
3. What are these principals' perceptions of how their primary Love language and dominant Leadership Frame affects their school culture?

The emerging themes detailed in each case labeled how the participants utilized their primary love language, secondary love language, and leadership frame to impact school culture. While each school had a positive school culture, the approaches to molding that culture were as vastly different as the principals themselves. However, four common themes emerged. In the next section the four common themes will be presented and then examined to see how each principal impacts school culture. For a summary of the cross-case emerging themes, see Table 8.

Table 8

*Research Cross-case Themes*

Theme	Principals impact school culture through the enactment of their Love Language and Leadership Frame by
Theme 1	nurturing positive relationships with teachers
Theme 2	fostering positive relationships with students
Theme 3	cultivating positive attitudes and beliefs
Theme 4	developing a safe and welcoming physical environment

Although the evidences documented for each theme varied in number by case, there was overall evidence where the cases were viewed in total, to support each of the four themes. Below are the cross-case themes and how they were demonstrated within each case.

**Theme 1 - The Love Language and Leadership Frame of principals’ impacts school culture as principals nurture positive relationships with teachers.**

All five principals explicitly discussed how important their teachers were to the overall school culture of the school and explained how they worked diligently to create positive relationships with these vital stakeholders. Each principal explained the importance of getting to know his or her teachers on a personal level, not just as an educator. While the strategies they used to achieve this goal may have differed, each principal had the common purpose of getting to know their teachers. Some principals had an open door policy where teachers were encouraged to talk to the principal about any matter that was on their mind. Other principals had more intentional ways, such as Wilma, Words of Affirmation, with her monthly Yak and Snacks.

Regardless of the form, all of the principals utilized getting to know their teachers as a way to positively impact school culture.

Four out of the five principals stated that they built positive relationships with teachers by giving explicit examples of how they demonstrated their appreciation on a regular basis. As Andy stated, “being a teacher is hard enough,” so each principal felt that it was important to show his or her gratitude. Often gratitude was handed out corporately, such as the case of Gigi’s Shout Outs, and Phyllis’ weekly emails, while others expressed their appreciation individually, such as Wilma, with her twice a year thank you cards. While Quinn did not explicitly mention ways that she showed appreciation for her teachers, it could be argued that the quality time she spends with them is her gift. Regardless, four principals clearly mentioned that showing gratitude to their teachers has positively impacted school culture.

The last demonstration of themes, on how principals impact school culture by using their love language and leadership frame to build relationships with teachers, is by listening. Four of the five principals specifically mentioned listening as a way to build a positive relationship with their teachers. Again, the open-door policy is a strategy that several of the principals used to encourage conversations. Quinn stated, “I think if you want to build the right climate, you’ve got to be approachable, you’ve got to be available.” Quinn believed that being approachable and available are indicators to teachers that their principal cares and will listen to their concerns. Andy even took listening so far as to invite teachers into interviews for prospective teachers. By placing priority on the input of his current teachers, he was sending the signal that their commentary was valuable for the future success of the school. By giving formal examples, these principals recognized that their ability to listen impacted school culture by creating positive relationships with teachers.

Table 9

*Description of Theme 1*

Theme	Gigi, Gifts	Andy, Acts of Service	Quinn, Quality Time	Wilma, Words of Affirmation	Phyllis, Physical Touch
The Love	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>
Language and Leadership	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>
Frame of principals’ impacts school culture as principals nurture positive relationships with teachers.	<i>Worked to know his/her teachers</i>	<i>Worked to know his/her teachers</i>	<i>Worked to know his/her teachers</i>	<i>Worked to know his/her teachers</i>	<i>Worked to know his/her teachers</i>
	<i>Appreciated his/her teachers</i>	<i>Appreciated his/her teachers</i>		<i>Appreciated his/her teachers</i>	<i>Appreciated his/her teachers</i>
		<i>Listened to his/her teachers</i>	<i>Listened to his/her teachers</i>	<i>Listened to his/her teachers</i>	<i>Listened to his/her teachers</i>

**Theme 2 - The Love Language and Leadership Frame of principals impacts school culture as principals nurture positive relationships with students.**

All five principals agreed that fostering positive relationships with students impacted school culture, though they had different strategies to accomplish this goal. Four of the five principals mentioned getting to know their students as a way to positively impact school culture. Again, the open door policy that some principals employed helped facilitate building those relationships with students. Other principals made sure to attend field trips with their students so that they were able to bond over a common experience. Quinn even saw the results of getting to know her students well when one returned to complete his Eagle Scout project at a place he “always felt at home.” Even by having the Twitter bulletin board, Quinn was able to get to know

what was on her students’ minds by their posts. Getting to know their students was a priority mentioned specifically by four of the five principals.

All five principals shared the importance of planning exciting activities for their students as a way to build relationships with students, thereby positively impacting school culture. These events looked different at each grade level. For the elementary students, Gigi planned the annual Market Day and Mother’s Day tea. Quinn described taking her students to the historical theater and popping their pop-tops as an exciting event. Wilma described the collegiate Field Day between the homerooms at her middle school, as Phyllis went on and on about how excited students got during their “epic” team pep rallies. Even on the day of the interview, Andy was hosting the area track and field meet, and was even late to the interview because he was collecting permission forms for an upcoming field trip. Exciting experiences are one avenue that principals utilize to create positive relationships with their students.

Table 10

*Description of Theme 2*

Theme	Gigi, Gifts	Andy, Acts of Service	Quinn, Quality Time	Wilma, Words of Affirmation	Phyllis, Physical Touch
The Love	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>
Language and Leadership	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>
Frame of principals’ impacts school culture as principals nurture positive relationships with students.	<i>Planned meaningful activities for his/her students</i>	<i>Worked to know his/her students Planned meaningful activities for his/her students</i>	<i>Worked to know his/her students Planned meaningful activities for his/her students</i>	<i>Worked to know his/her students Planned meaningful activities for his/her students</i>	<i>Worked to know his/her students Planned meaningful activities for his/her students</i>



**Theme 3 - The Love Language and Leadership Frame of principals impact school cultures as principals nurture positive attitudes and beliefs.**

All five principals utilized their love language and leadership frame to impact school culture by cultivating positive attitudes and beliefs. Each of the principals mentioned, or it was observed, that they intentionally modeled their principles. Andy was straightforward when he stated, “I believe in servant leadership. I’m no better than anybody else that walks these halls.” He then went on to give examples of how he jumps in to accomplish any task that may come up during the school day, but he also expects his teachers to do the same. Wilma stated that she aspires for all of her students to reach their goals, and for many of them, those are academic goals. She hopes to inspire all of those students who want to attend college to know that there are different colleges and different career paths. She demonstrates this by the hanging of the collegiate pennants down the hall, having each homeroom adopt a new college each year, and by celebrating her teachers’ academic accomplishments on the bulletin board outside the cafeteria. These are just two of the examples of how principals impact school culture by cultivating positive attitudes and beliefs.

Table 11

*Description of Theme 3*

Theme	Gigi, Gifts	Andy, Acts of Service	Quinn, Quality Time	Wilma, Words of Affirmation	Phyllis, Physical Touch
The Love	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>	<i>Therefore,</i>
Language and Leadership	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>	<i>he/she:</i>
Frame of principals’ impact school cultures as principals nurture positive attitudes and beliefs.	<i>Modeled his/her principles</i>	<i>Modeled his/her principles</i>	<i>Modeled his/her principles</i>	<i>Modeled his/her principles</i>	<i>Modeled his/her principles</i>

**Theme 4 - The Love Language and Leadership Frame of principals impact school cultures as principals nurture a safe and welcoming physical environment.**

Finally, the last theme that emerged from the five case studies was how principals used their love language and leadership frame to impact school culture by developing a safe and welcoming physical environment. Each of the principals either explicitly stated or there was evidence of the creation of a family environment. Gigi invited mothers in the for the annual Mother’s Day Tea, Andy has semester covered dish meals with his faculty and has student greeters in the office, Quinn is affectionately known as Aunt Quinn to the teachers’ children and has pictures with them hanging in her office, Wilma hosts Breakfast with the Principal each month, and Phyllis makes sure that each teams’ hallway is vibrantly decorated so that everyone feels like they belong. In a setting where teachers and students spend more of their waking hours

there than with their family, each of these principals has gone the extra mile to make certain that their physical environment is welcoming and makes everyone feel like family.

Table 12

*Description of Theme 4*

Theme	Gigi, Gifts	Andy, Acts of Service	Quinn, Quality Time	Wilma, Words of Affirmation	Phyllis, Physical Touch
The Love Language and Leadership	<i>Therefore, he/she:</i>	<i>Therefore, he/she:</i>	<i>Therefore, he/she:</i>	<i>Therefore, he/she:</i>	<i>Therefore, he/she:</i>
Frame of principals' impact school cultures as principals nurture a safe and welcoming physical environment.	<i>Created a family atmosphere</i>	<i>Created a family atmosphere</i>	<i>Created a family atmosphere</i>	<i>Created a family atmosphere</i>	<i>Created a family atmosphere</i>
	<i>Tended to the physical appearance of the building</i>	<i>Tended to the physical appearance of the building</i>	<i>Tended to the physical appearance of the building</i>	<i>Tended to the physical appearance of the building</i>	<i>Tended to the physical appearance of the building</i>

**Summary**

Chapter 4 developed a detailed report of the findings of this study. Each case is described in thick detail, including the school demographics, principal, setting of interview, interview, touch of the school, and a summary. Each of the cases answers the sub questions of the study by providing quotations and physical evidence identified. After each case, the sub questions were answered and within-in case themes are presented in a table. Finally, a cross-

case analysis was presented with the four cross-case themes, which summarized the strategies the principals utilized to impact school culture.

## CHAPTER 5. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify the ways in which school administrators exhibited their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and to obtain their perceptions on how that impacts their school's culture. The central research question for the study was: What are the ways in which school administrators in school exhibit their dominant leadership frame and primary love language, and what are their perceptions on how that impacts their school culture of improvement?

The researcher utilized the qualitative research approach with the intention of capturing how principals perceived their Love Language and Leadership frame affecting school culture. Qualitative methodology was appropriate to use for this study because the researcher needed to “get in touch” with the minds and hearts of the principals who were identified for participation in the study. This study was actually a multiple-case study because it looked at five principals and how they perceive that their dominant leadership frame and primary love language impacts school culture. The detailed findings of the study were reviewed in Chapter 4. This chapter contains a discussion of those findings in light of the research literature on school culture through the Discussion by revisiting the four frames of leadership, revisiting the five love languages, and the Study Findings through the themes revisited, Interpretation of the Findings, Limitations, Implications and Recommendations, Overall Significance, Recommendations for Future Research, and Summary.

## Discussion

The culture of an organization “includes norms, beliefs, values, traditions, and habits which have directed employee’s behaviors towards organizational aims. “There is a strong relationship between leadership and culture” (Karaköse, 2008, p. 570). Education researchers have recognized the importance of school culture in establishing effective schools (Pritchard, Morrow, & Marshall, 2005). Generally, school culture refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity (Schutz, 2010). There is a complexity to principals’ roles in school culture however, since they use teachers as a conduit to instituting their goals for the school. Owens and Valesky (2007) state that “because educational leaders work with and through other people to achieve organizational goals, understanding the behavior of people at work is fundamental to the success of their efforts” (p. 80). This understanding of behavior cannot be taught in a college lecture hall during educational leadership classes, but the awareness of “soft skills” of leadership (Ngang, Prachak, & Saowanee, 2012) can be cultivated by understanding oneself and the role one plays in an organization. Marques (2013) would agree with Ngang’s claim as she found that “soft leadership skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, are steadily on the rise, and that greater attention should be apportioned to strengthen these skills in future leaders” (p. 161). It is important to reflect on these soft skills and the importance they play when the principal is establishing school culture.

This researcher utilized a conceptual framework for the study that included the soft skills of leadership, Bolman and Deal's (1991) Leadership Frames, and Gary Chapman's (1992) Five Love Languages. Here, these concepts will be revisited.

### **Revisiting the Four Frames of Leadership**

The four-frame model proposed by Bolman and Deal (2010) provides a way for educators to critically view their learning organization. Bolman and Deal's four leadership frames provide a type of quadrilateral view of the leadership practices of principals (Hellsten, Noonan, Preston, & Prytula, 2013). Using a multi-faceted approach assists observers in creating an accurate assessment of how the school is functioning. Complex human organizations, such as educational institutions and programs, require multiple perspectives or views to understand and operate efficiently. "By breaking down challenges and issues into the four frames of the model, leaders can understand the problems they face in a broader context" (Thompson, et al., 2008, p. 2). The four frames each have different leadership styles associated with them, which will be discussed in each frame's section, which follows.

**Political frame.** The political frame deals with power, conflict, competition, and organizational politics (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The political frame is revealed when a leader advocates for what is best for the organization. The leader will develop an agenda and use the power base that he/she has to advance the items on the agenda. Political frame leaders ensure that they have the support of key faculty members so a proposed change will be successful, rather than defeated before it is even implemented. Leaders who effectively traverse the political jungle will build coalitions, alliances, listen with an open mind, and negotiate to enhance the school environment. Often political leaders thrive on conflict and instead of viewing it as a

negative aspect of the organization; they appreciate conflict that pushes progress and productivity (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

**Human resources frame.** The human resources frame deals with the needs, skills, and relationships of the school (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The leadership style of a person strong in the human resources frame is evidenced by someone who always empowers others. Distributed leadership is embraced, so that all members feel that they are important to the sustainability of the organization. Open communication is important to an effective human resources leader because he/she works to ensure that everyone has a voice and is listened to. The leader who is strong in the human resources frame is not afraid of telling the truth and asking for feedback as he/she leads an effective organization. Spending time with one another and building personal relationships can be an important component to leaders who want to enhance their success in the human resources frame. An effective leader ensures that the workers feel good about what they are doing while they work. Motivational strategies are important to utilize at appropriate times. The metaphor of a family works well when considering the human resources frame because like a family, everyone plays a vital role, and the family needs all of its' members to function well.

**Structural frame.** Rules, roles, policies, technology, and the environment characterize the structural frame in an organization. An effective structural frame leader takes on the image of structural architect (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Leaders must ensure that everyone knows his/her role in the organization and ensure that the roles are filled effectively. They must be strategic with changes and make certain that the right people are completing the tasks to make the organization thrive. The creation of committees takes on more importance when you consider the structural frame and how all participants must be working together. An effective



leader in the structural frame, especially in a school setting, must have discernment on what is truly important and make sure that resources are used to drive those agenda items. The metaphor for the structural frame is that of a factory or a machine. The job needs to be accomplished, so all resources should be used to make certain that the mission is accomplished.

**Symbolic frame.** The symbolic frame deals with the “culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, and heroes of the organization” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 18). An effective leader in the symbolic frame is characterized as inspirational (Bolman & Deal, 2008). These leaders create an environment where the participants can draw meaning and have the notion that they are working for a goal that is bigger than them. This leader shares in the rituals and traditions of the organization because these events are what add meaning to the community as a whole. A leader would thrive when he/she embraces the history of the organization and seeks to celebrate that history with colleagues.

### **Revisiting the Five Love Languages**

After years of collecting notes, receiving letters, and facilitating counseling sessions for married couples, Gary Chapman (1992) proposed that there are five major ways that people prefer to demonstrate and receive love. He coined the term Love Language to describe these five expressions. Each of the love languages will now be described.

**Quality time.** People who primarily speak the love language of quality time are those who want undivided attention and frequent conversation (Massey & Gardner, 2013). People who speak the love language of quality time are indifferent to the conversation topic or the activity that they might be engaged in. They are most concerned that they are doing it with someone who is important to them. Examples of principals’ behaviors that would indicate that quality time is their love language might be eating lunch at the table with their colleagues, asking

about another's weekend, or pulling up a chair and listening to the teachers speak to students. These are the principals who are just interested in the time they get to spend with someone. These are also the principals who enjoy small group instruction or after-school tutoring. They thrive on playing an important part of the school culture. They are interested in information beyond what the basic pleasantries of working in the same school building can provide. They want to create personal relationships with all of those around them; these relationships can work for the benefit of the school.

**Words of affirmation.** A person who speaks the primary love language of words of affirmation thrives on the encouraging words from others. These words of affirmation should be unsolicited and be heartfelt in order to have the greatest impact upon the recipient. These words can be shared in private or in the presence of others (Chapman, 1992). For principals whose primary love language is words of affirmation, they inspire their teachers with positive words of specific praise. They do not demand great amounts of attention (quality time), monetary means (receiving gifts), acts of service, or physical touch; instead use words to let their teachers and students that they are important to the principal and the school environment.

**Acts of service.** The third love language is Acts of Service. Those who speak the primary love language of acts of service yearn for tasks that are completed for their benefit. These are actions that require thought, planning, time, and energy (Massey & Gardner, 2013). An administrator who practices servant leadership will likely naturally speak the love language of acts of service to those who are in his/her circle of care. By attending an after-school conference, or placing a note bragging on an observed lesson, the principal will fulfill the acts of service desired by these teachers. Other acts of service could be helping them complete a project, write a grant, or set-up an activity that is taking a lot of time. Any activity that is

evidence of care, thought, and time allows teachers who speak the love language of acts of service know that they are important to the principal.

**Physical touch.** A person who speaks the primary love language of physical touch needs the physical presence of those around them. Whether it be a pat on the back, holding hands, hugging, or even the more extreme examples of physical contact (clearly not appropriate in the school or workplace), people who speak the love language of physical touch just desire the accessibility to touch the people who mean the most to them (Chapman, 1992). Principals can also easily reinforce teachers and students because the touch does not require planning, extra time, or even specific praise. Instead, a principal must ensure that the contact is appropriate and well received by the respondent. There is a warning for those who are in close contact to those people who speak the love language of physical touch: a harsh contact or withdrawal of contact can be detrimental to the relationship. The person may feel his/her importance to the principal has diminished because of the hurtfulness of the contact.

**Receiving gifts.** The last love language is receiving gifts. People who speak the love language of receiving gifts feel the most loved when they receive visual symbols of appreciation (Chapman, 1992). The most important aspect of the gift is not the size or the monetary cost; instead it is the thought behind the gift. Because someone took the time and effort to purchase a gift on their behalf, people whose primary love language of receiving gifts feel valued and loved. If a principal's primary love language is receiving gifts, the size or prestige of the gift is not important, it is the thought behind the gift that matters the most. For instance, a new pen, a ream of copy paper, or a new pack of Post-It notes are appropriate and meaningful for teachers. A pencil or piece of candy from a principal, or even a newspaper clipping about a subject of

interest to them would mean the world from a principal whose primary love language is receiving gifts.

While Bolman and Deal's leadership frames (1991) have been applied to school culture, Gary Chapman's Five Love Languages (1992) have not. Coupling the leadership frame and love languages and studying the evidence of how they impact school culture, provides a more comprehensive view of how principals impact school culture.

### **The Study**

Emails were sent to principals around the state asking them to participate in the research study by completing online inventories of the Four Frames of Leadership and the Love Languages. There were total of 25 respondents. The results of the inventory were hand scored by the researcher to determine each principal's love language and leadership frame. The results of the inventories allowed the researcher to answer the first and second sub-question, "What are the primary Love Languages of principals who lead schools?" and "What are the dominant Leadership Frames of principals who lead schools?" Eight respondents did not answer all of the questions, so their information was dismissed. Three additional respondents had multiple love languages, so their inventories were also dismissed. Of the 14 remaining respondents the researcher chose five to interview based on the level and location of the school, and the gender and experience of the principal, in order to have diversity in the participants. The principals were sent an email providing them with the results of the study, and information on their love language and leadership frame, along with the two research questions. The interviews were conducted at the schools, audio-taped, and were transcribed for accuracy. The interviews were coded for commonalities. The researcher took field notes during the school tour. The researcher

triangulated three sources of data for themes: the inventories, the interviews, and the observations of artifacts in the school during a school tour, and in the principals' offices.

For each case, the central question and sub-questions were addressed, and multiple themes were identified for each case. Four cross-case themes were identified which describe ways that principals use their primary and secondary love language and leadership frame to positively impact school culture.

## **Findings**

This section will describe the findings of the research in light of the Central Question and three Sub Questions.

### **Central Question**

What are the ways in which school administrators in schools exhibit their dominant Leadership Frame and primary Love Language, and what are their perceptions about how that impacts school culture?

### **Sub Questions**

1. What are the primary Love Languages of principals who lead schools?
2. What are the predominant Leadership Frames of principals who lead schools?
3. What are these principals' perceptions of how their primary Love language and dominant Leadership Frame affects their school culture?

The data from the first research sub-question, "What are the predominant Love Languages and Leadership Frames of principals who lead schools?" revealed no clearly predominant love language for principals. Of the 25 respondents to the inventory, 7% of the participants had Gifts as their primary love language, 7% of the participants had Quality Time as their primary love language, 14% of the participants had Physical Touch as their primary love

language, 29% of the participants had Acts of Service as their primary love language, and 43% of the participants had Words of Affirmation as their primary love language. These findings would affirm what Chapman (1992) noted — that there are no predominant love languages, rather there are five major ways that people prefer to demonstrate and receive love.

The second sub-question was answered similarly. “What are the Leadership Frames of the leaders who are represented in each of the Five Love languages?” With regard to the principals’ leadership frames, 14% of the participants had Political as their primary leadership frame, 14% of the participants had Structural as their primary leadership frame, 20% of the participants had Symbolic as their primary leadership frame, and 43% of the participants had Human Resources as their primary leadership frame. This would also affirm research done by Bolman and Deal (2002) where there were four primary frames that leaders worked through, but not one specific frame that made a leader more or less successful.

### **Themes Revisited**

The third sub-question “What are these principals’ perceptions of how their primary Love language and dominant Leadership Frame affects their school culture?” provided a very intimate look at how principals view school culture. There were four major themes that emerged from the cross-case analysis:

Theme: Principals impact school culture through the enactment of their Love Language and Leadership Frame by:

- Theme 1      nurturing positive relationships with teachers
- Theme 2      fostering positive relationships with students
- Theme 3      cultivating positive attitudes and beliefs
- Theme 4      developing a safe and welcoming physical environment

## **Theme 1- Principals impact school culture through the enactment of their Love Languages and Leadership Frames by nurturing positive relationships with teachers.**

Theme 1 was evident through all four cases as the principals considered how they worked to know their teachers, appreciated their teachers, and listened to their teachers. Words of Affirmation Principal Wilma was the first to explicitly mention getting to know her teachers through a gathering she called a Yak and Snack, where teachers got together off campus to get to know one another. Wilma's actions confirm the beliefs described previously: while having knowledge of one's field is important, academic material can be taught to most individuals. It is knowing one's self and knowing others that sets apart good leaders from great leaders (Ngang, Prachak, & Saowanee, 2012). Wilma stated that instituting this voluntary monthly gathering "was one of the most effective actions" she took after becoming principal because she got to know her teachers on a personal level, instead of just on an academic level. When reflecting on the Yak and Snack, Wilma seemed to self-discover that these meetings go right along with her leadership frame of Human Resources. Wilma identified a very obvious way that she appreciated her teachers through her primary love language of Words of Affirmation. She shared that each year she made it a point to write a handwritten thank you letter to each teacher. She even kept a running list, so that she was sure to write to each teacher twice throughout the school year. Wilma went on to say that teachers have shared with her how important those letters have been. Wilma said that she has no doubt that those letters help contribute to the positive school culture.

Acts of Service Principal Andy also confirmed that conversations with his teachers were vital to setting his school culture on an upward trajectory, especially after the restructuring in his district that took his school out of the local high school and created the new freshman academy.

“I immediately boosted our culture here by listening then trying to make their lives easier here at school, because being a teacher is hard enough as it is.” Though the conversations are direct evidence of Andy’s primary Human Resources leadership frame, he also said that he felt that having these conversations with his teachers was not only important to setting a positive school culture as the new freshman academy got started, but also referenced his love language of Acts of Service as he sought to make his teachers’ lives easier. The research confirms his feelings as the importance of these conversations cannot be underestimated (Seashore & Wahlstrom, 2011). Andy’s philosophy of servant leadership paired directly with his love language of Acts of Service and was evident by him helping teachers with permissions forms the morning of the interview. If making the teachers’ lives easier is one of Andy’s goals, his love language of Words of Affirmation is one of his best personal assets.

Another action of principals of schools with positive school cultures is that they are “accessible and visible to student and teachers” (Searby, 1999, p. 67). Acts of Service principal, Andy, and Quality Time principal, Quinn, both explicitly stated that they had an open-door policy in their office. Furthermore, they discussed how the teachers and students in their respective schools utilized this policy consistently. Andy said that his teachers “can walk in, they don’t have to have an appointment. We just deal with things as they come.”

Physical Touch principal, Phyllis, is another principal who has adopted the open-door policy. She says that often she has to send teachers home who are in her office talking, even as late as 6 o’clock in the evening. Being accessible is a key component of having a positive school culture. Having time to spend with teachers, even late in the evening, is strong evidence of Phyllis’ primary Political leadership frame. She says that getting to know her teachers also enables her to make sure they are on the right team that is best suited for them and will provide



the most benefit to students. She says that teachers are not placed on teams randomly; instead she makes certain that everyone gets their right “fit.” Seeking this right “fit” is evidence of Phyllis’ predominant Political leadership frame because she is effectively building coalitions and alliances that will enhance the school environment (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Phyllis’ love language was evident as she walked through the hallway and hugged teachers. She even sat right next to the researcher during the interview so that she was in close proximity. Phyllis utilized her leadership frame and love language together to create a positive school culture for teachers.

Quality Time principal, Quinn, shared that when she moved from the local middle school to her current elementary school that she admitted to her faculty that there was definitely a learning curve, especially with curriculum, that she would have to overcome. Instead of hiding in her office reading textbooks on curriculum, she explained to her teachers that she would be in their classrooms learning. Spending time in the classroom speaks to Quinn’s love language of Quality Time. Because of her transparency, she said that the teachers were “very willing for me to come in and be part of their class.” Being vulnerable about her faults seemed to endear Quinn to the faculty and allowed a relationship where they humbly accepted her into their classrooms as they sought to educate her on the school’s teaching philosophies and strategies. Searby (1999) noted that principals of moving schools are a “helping model” and “teachers feel free to disclose teaching weaknesses” (p. 67). Using her love language of Quality Time possibly allowed Quinn to show her teachers that she was willing to accept their help as she became educated about her new position as an elementary school principal. Perhaps spending time getting to know the curriculum and the teachers in her school also provided Quinn the opportunity to get to know the teachers’ children. Quinn told of how each year she would have an end of the year party for the teachers’ children thanking them for sharing their parents with the students at the school every

day. This annual party is evidence of Quinn's Symbolic leadership frame, and can be seen through the pictures she has in her office with the children each year. It is easy to love someone when they love your children, and Quinn used these parties to reiterate her love for her teachers, which positively impacted school culture.

Finally, the Gifts principal, Gigi, shared that she utilized her love language by bestowing gifts to her teachers. Gigi mentioned that once a month she would purchase bagels or other treats and leave them in the workroom to show appreciation to her teachers for the hard work they do for the students of the school. These small treats coupled with sticky notes and candy bars are specific ways that Gigi cited that she demonstrates her appreciation for her teacher through her primary love language. The leadership frame that Gigi most often works from is the Political frame. Initially Gigi was resistant to accepting that this was her frame because it made her "cringe" and left her feeling like she was doing things only because people wanted her to. However, she then gave a perfect example of how she utilized the Political frame with her teachers. "You've got to have the right people doing the right things and have their purpose be pure, not political." By getting to know her teachers well, Gigi could ensure that everyone's best strengths were being used for the betterment of the school, which should result in a positive school culture. Additionally, Gigi mentioned to the researcher that she always tries to be transparent with her teachers, a product of a previous experience she had working at the system's Board of Education.

"In my position at central office I was very transparent with the principals, but I didn't feel like the principals were very transparent with the information that I gave them. I find most educators are pretty reasonable. I think if you're transparent and say, 'These are the

parameters, I'm going to need you to leave your agenda somewhere else because I can't change it.' I think they're pretty on board.”

The researcher labeled this transparency with teachers as evidence of the Political frame as the principal was ensuring that all teachers were on board with the mission and vision of the school. Gigi's transparency illustrates Senge's (1990) belief that the “leader's sense of stewardship operates on two levels: stewardship for the people they lead, and stewardship for the larger purpose or mission that underlies the enterprise” (p. 12). Gigi's transparency allowed her to effectively lead her teachers, while also leading the school as an entity to fulfill its' mission and vision.

## **Theme 2 – Principals impact school culture through the enactment of their love languages and leadership frames by nurturing positive relationships with students.**

Theme 2 was evident in four of the cases as the principals considered how they worked to know their students, and planned meaningful activities for their students. Physical Touch principal, Phyllis, admitted that while it would be impossible for her to get to know all 1, 204 students in her middle school, she has made assurances that each student is known by someone on the faculty and that was a main reason she instituted teams. She explained that by having students on small, four teacher teams, they are prevented from getting that “lost” feeling in the midst of 1,200 other students. Teams seemed to be a natural choice for Phyllis as she shared that she likes that the team classrooms are in close proximity to one another, which is characteristic of someone whose primary love language is Physical Touch. By utilizing teams, Phyllis was working through the teachers to demonstrate her values and beliefs of how important each of her students is to school culture. To go along with teams, Phyllis used her Political leadership frame in order to ensure that all teachers were teaching to their strength and were grouped with other

teachers who would complement their teaching styles. By getting to know her teachers, she was able to strategically place them on a team while ensuring they had buy-in to how this placement was most beneficial for students. A principal with an accurate view of the political frame will sometimes point to the people in the school who have the most support and power (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Phyllis ensures that these teacher leaders are strategically placed to have the maximum positive effects for students. Phyllis' positive school culture is a direct evidence of her utilizing her primary love language and leadership frame.

Quality Time principal, Quinn, referenced her Symbolic leadership frame when she explained about the annual trip to the historical theater. She explained that she stands on stage and conducts all of the students in popping their pop-tops in unison. This tradition is important to the students as they look forward to it year after year. An effective leader in the symbolic frame is characterized as inspirational (Bolman & Deal, 2008). These leaders create an environment where the participants can draw meaning and have the notion that they are working for a goal that is bigger than themselves, just as the students in Quinn's school earned the trip to the historical theater and get to pop their pop-tops in unison. Quinn's love language of Quality Time was also evident in her interactions with her students. As she was leaving a classroom during a school tour, she "checked-in" on some second grade boys on how their friendship was going. It was obvious they had visited her office previously. They all had positive things to report back to their principal. Instead of just leaving the conversation, Quinn asked the boys about a baseball game they had played the night before and they were ecstatic to share the play-by-play with Quinn. It was obvious that their principal had spent time getting to know these boys and their interests, which is a hallmark of someone whose primary love language of Quality Time.

Gifts principal, Gigi, also planned meaningful opportunities for her students, which seemed to go right along with her love language. Each Spring, Market Day is celebrated as students purchase gifts that they have made throughout the year to sell. Purchasing gifts that are made by students throughout the year is evidence of Gigi's love language of gifts. Instead of having elaborate items for the students to purchase that might have been donated by parents or local businesses, the students instead sell gifts that they have made. These handmade treasures go right along with Chapman's (1992) assertion that the most important aspect of the gift is not the size or the monetary cost; instead it is the thought behind the gift. Students were learning about an economy and supply and demand, but they were also excitedly purchasing gifts for themselves and loved ones. The Mother's Day Tea was also a meaningful day celebrated each year, which paralleled Gigi's love languages, as students created and bestowed gifts on their mothers. Gigi believed that planning and executing these meaningful events supported the positive culture in her school. Gigi's case study did not show evidence of how she got to know her students. It is possible that she used strategies that were not mentioned or that the researcher could not see direct evidence of on the day of the visit.

Acts of Service principal, Andy, demonstrated his love language as he walked into his office for the interview. He immediately apologized to the researcher for being late because he was helping teachers collect permission forms for a trip they were going on. He said that if he could help make a teacher's life "easier" it was worth it "because being a teacher is hard enough." The trip Andy was referring to was the area track meet the day of the interview that the freshman academy was hosting. Though there were numerous schools and a multitude of children, the event was well organized, evidence of a principal who had knowledge that this activity was not only meaningful to the students in his building, but also to students in the area.

His meticulous planning was definitely an act of service and evidence of his love language. Andy's open-door policy was evidence of his primary leadership frame of Human Resources. He shared with the researcher that students came by his office frequently because they know his door is always open. He stated that "students come by all the time and tell me things I would not otherwise know." Bolman and Deal (2008) believe that relationships of the school are evidence of a strong Human Resources leadership frame. Andy naturally creates relationships with students by utilizing his Human Resources leadership frame with his open-door policy.

Words of Affirmation principal, Wilma, had clear evidence of her love language for Theme 2, creating relationships with students. Upon entering her office the researcher noticed a stack of thank you card from students, thanking her for leading their school and getting all of the materials ready for standardized testing. The students were speaking the love language of Words of Affirmation because it had been spoken to them by their principal. The collegiate banners that lined the halls of the school and the subsequent activities evidenced the Human Resources leadership frame. Wilma caught the researcher eyeing the pennants and explained that there were two large schools in the state and as she talked to students she got the feeling that they were under the impression that they had to go to one of those two colleges. There were no other choices. To combat this perception they ordered these pennants to line the hallways and each year each homeroom chose a different college to research. They found out the location, mascot, course offerings, and events that made that particular college unique. Throughout the year there were different activities to celebrate the school they had chosen. Students participated in a pep rally, made short presentations on the school news about their college, and even got to watch a sporting event from the particular school. Wilma shared that the feedback had been very positive from students and parents because students were gaining knowledge at an early age to consider

all of their secondary school options upon graduation. Wilma looks forward to a couple of years from now when she anticipates a more diversified group of colleges chosen by the school system's graduating class. These activities seemed to be meaningful to students now, but could also prove very meaningful in the future as they are making their choice of collegiate institutions to attend. Planning meaningful activities for her students was one way that Wilma utilized her Human Resources leadership frame and got to know her students.

**Theme 3- Principals impact school culture through their enactment of their love languages and leadership frames as they nurture positive attitudes and beliefs.**

Theme 3 was evident in each of the cases as the principals considered how they modeled their principles to positively impact school culture. Words of Affirmation principal, Wilma, shared that when she became principal there was a negative perception of the middle school stemming from the previous five years when there had been five different principals. Because she truly felt in her heart that the middle school was doing great things to teach children, she wanted the public perception to change immediately. As a result, she began having a monthly Breakfast with the Principal meeting with stakeholders to share her beliefs about the positive things that were going on each day at the school, and hopefully to begin shaping new attitudes and perceptions throughout the community. This event encapsulated Wilma's love language of Words of Affirmation and Human Resources frame perfectly. Her passion for her school helped her lead her teachers, students, and stakeholders to embrace her vision for her school. Wilma demonstrated that "leading with the heart requires the leader to think about his or her stewardship in terms of legacy, direction, effectiveness, and values" (Palestini, 2005, p. 280).

Acts of Service principal, Andy, also explicitly shared how he utilized his attitudes and beliefs to positively impact school culture, especially with his teachers. "One of the very first

things that I said is, I'd do anything for them. They'd do anything for me. We do that together. I believe in servant leadership. That's the philosophy we go to from top to bottom in this building." He later noted, "If you asked the teachers, 'What is Acts of Service's driving vision? What does he tell you all is paramount, above all else?' They would tell you that we're going to build positive relationships with students." Andy demonstrated that his organization is high in values, and affirms this quote: "we see good manners, respect for people, and an appreciation for the way in which we serve one another" (Palestini, 2005, p. 280) as markers of positive school culture. Evidence of his philosophy of servant leadership was in his students as they greeted visitors and one even gave up his chair for me, a visitor to the school. It did not take more than getting a few yards into the school to see that his vision for the school permeated right down to the students. Research has shown the importance of schools having a culture with high expectations for all (Chenoweth, 2007) and Andy certainly had these high expectations for everyone. His servant leadership philosophy further demonstrated his Acts of Service love language and his Human Resources leadership frame.

When asked how she thought her Love Language of Gifts impacted school culture, Gigi replied, "I think whether it's a sticky note that says 'Hey, I loved that lesson,' or 'I know you were out yesterday because your little one was sick', I'm communicating with a little gift." Gigi felt that she modeled her principles of having a positive attitude and her primary love language of Gifts by being gracious and thankful for all of her teachers. An upcoming trip to the local park was evidence of Gigi's Political leadership frame, but also her philosophy of getting student buy-in. On the classroom bulletin boards there were graphs where students were charting different data in anticipation of the upcoming trip. There was a graph where students had voted on what types of food would be eaten during the picnic: hamburgers, hotdogs, or turkey and



cheese sandwiches. The researcher saw what was obviously a brainstorm of games to play: on the playground, tag, kickball, volleyball, or soccer. There was also a list of relay teams that students were signing-up for: track relay, egg toss, sponge toss, and crab race. A school culture that is centered around students and values student buy-in was unmistakable. While the Political Frame can deal with power, conflict, competition, and organization politics (Bolman & Deal, 2008), Gigi has put those attributes to rest as she has gone straight to the source of the participants of the activity-the students. Her coalition-building (one of the characteristics of the Political frame) was with the students. Gigi had put her Political frame to work to model that she valued her students' opinion.

It was the interactions between Quality Time principal Quinn and the teachers in her school that most reflected her love language and her belief of creating a family setting in the school. Quinn asked every teacher and student she met a personal question peppered amongst the questions that were school related. She asked how a child's arm was healing after a nasty fall, she was concerned with an ailing parent who was being released from the hospital to a rehabilitation center, and she delighted in hearing that a teacher's son had played well at a basketball game the previous evening. Quinn was intimately familiar with her faculty and had created an environment that appeared to feel like family. The positive school culture seemed to have been impacted by Quinn's love language of Quality Time. The evidence of the Quinn's Symbolic leadership frame came from the annual trip planned to the historical theater. In order to go on the field trip the students had to meet a lofty academic goal. Quinn said that each year the goal was set higher and she would "hold her breath" that the goal would be attained, but that her students always pulled through. Tying a large academic goal to an annual field trip sends a message to the students that academic achievement should be celebrated, even with a trip to the

local historical theater. These high expectations model Quinn's attitudes and beliefs through her Symbolic leadership frame while also forming "a cultural tapestry of secular myth, rituals, ceremonies, and stories that help people find meaning, purpose, and passion" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 253). While it might have just felt like an academic goal to Quinn, she was creating a ritual of high academic achievement and then celebrated with the ceremonious trip to the historic theater where all students felt that the feat that they had accomplished was a significant part of the school year.

Physical Touch principal, Phyllis, demonstrated evidence of her love language and Political leadership frame together during an interaction with one of the assistant principals. As Phyllis introduced the researcher to one of the assistant principals, she got visibly upset. As Phyllis placed her arm around the assistant principal, she clutched her tightly and explained how incredible she was. Phyllis relayed a story about how she had had a couple of traumatic things happened in her family the previous summer that spilt into the school year. She said that both of the assistant principals made decisions and carried on the work of the school in her absence. She even told of how she stood up at the first faculty meeting of the year and became so overwhelmed with emotion that she had to excuse herself. She said that her teacher had seen a human side of her that she didn't usually reveal. Then she genuinely bragged on the assistant principal and said how she was so important and that the school would not be the same without her leadership. In one moment Phyllis seemed to embody her love languages of Physical Touch with her Political frame, because she definitely had the right assistant principal for the job.

#### **Theme 4- Principals impact school culture through the enactment of their Love Languages and Leadership Frames as they nurture a safe and welcoming physical environment.**

Theme 4 was evident in each of the five cases as the principals considered how they created a family atmosphere and tended to the physical appearance of the building. Leadership is not just reflected in how a leader *leads* the organization, but rather how the leader *loves* the people in the organization (Hoyle, 2002). The principals of each school demonstrated their love for their organization as they established a family atmosphere in their respective schools which was welcoming.

Gifts principal, Gigi, demonstrated her love for families by intentionally inviting them into the elementary school often, which created a safe and welcoming environment for families and stakeholders. She incorporated her love language of Gifts during the annual Market Day where students purchase gifts that they have made throughout the year and also during the Mother's Day Tea where students make gifts to celebrate their mothers. She also tried to create a family atmosphere by having parents come to the school for blood drives and by dropping by the picnic hosted at the local park. There was no direct evidence of Gigi's Political leadership frame in regards to Theme 4, a safe and welcoming physical environment.

Acts of Service principal, Andy, demonstrated his love language so much that it seemed to have trickled down into the students and become part of their character. Upon entering the busy office with people bustling about, trying to get all of their morning duties accomplished, the researcher was caught off guard to be greeted by a student, instead of an adult. The student greeted the researcher and confidently inquired how he could be of service. The waiting area where the researcher was directed was standing room only. As the researcher stood off to the side of the room, a female student immediately got out of her seat and offered it to the researcher

and would not accept no for an answer. It appeared obvious before ever meeting the principal that there was a positive school culture that transcended the faculty and permeated the students. It is not often that a visitor to a school is impacted so strongly by two students before ever even speaking to an adult. It brought to mind this quote: “The manner in which a school building is designed, managed, and maintained cues its occupants and the community beyond about the value placed on educational activities which occur within its walls” (Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Woelsey, 2009, p.401). Even through the hustle and bustle of the office, there was a surpassing inviting and calm climate that made one feel welcome and even at home with such nice students. The students’ actions could be considered a direct influence of their principal Andy, and his primary love language of Words of Affirmation and Human Resources leadership frame.

Just as an appointment is not necessary to speak to a family member, two of the principals explicitly expressed that they had an open-door policy, and there being evidence of an open-door policy with the remaining three principals, each principal was accessible and open to the cares and concerns of their teachers and students. Quality time principal, Quinn, was one principal who specifically mentioned her open-door policy. This was of no surprise to the researcher because the interview and school tour with Quinn was longer than the previous interviews, due to the times she stopped in the interview to talk to others. Quinn would brag about her teachers after each encounter. Spending time with other people was easily identified evidence of Quinn’s love language and of how she was a principal of a moving school, as characterized by Searby (1999) because Quinn was “accessible and visible to students and teachers” (p. 67). Her leadership frame of Symbolic was also seen in the welcoming physical environment as she showcased the garden beds that the local Boy Scout had completed for his Eagle Scout project. The student chose the school because he said that he had always felt like he

had belonged there, and Quinn treated the beds almost as a monument to how beloved the school was to all of the students who learned in its' halls. Quinn recognized that investing in the members of an organization is also investing in the organization itself (Siccone, 2012). There was no doubt that Quinn's love language and leadership frame were positively impacting school culture as she ensured that everyone felt like family.

Words of Affirmation principal, Wilma, invited parents and community stakeholders to Breakfast with the Principal, so that everyone knew the amazing things going on at the middle school. Wilma shared that she loved to "brag and brag" to the community about the excellent education their students were receiving in the middle school. She also boosted the physical environment by celebrating her teachers and their academic accomplishments. Upon entering the school there was a bulletin board where teachers' degrees were hung. The degrees gave visitors a sense that their children were in capable hands with this competent staff of educators. The bulletin board demonstrated that Wilma "constantly encourages professional growth and development" (Searby, 1999, p. 67) as she showcased the educational achievements of her teachers. Wilma definitely showcased her love language of Words of Affirmation and Human Resources leadership frame to create a welcoming school environment.

Physical Touch, Phyllis, had created a school culture around the various teams and created family-like groups so that each student had a strong sense of belonging in the building. These facets of school culture invited students into more than just a school; instead they were welcomed as family. There was also evidence that she tended to the physical environment of the school as a custodian happily told the researcher "if the floors are clean, Phyllis is happy." While there was no direct evidence of Phyllis' Political leadership frame, the happiness of the students was evidence enough that she was positively impacting school culture.

Figure 4 is a visual representation of the research findings. In the center of the table are the five Love Languages. Encircling the five Love Languages are the four Leadership Frames representing that all participants had a Love Language and Leadership Frame from which they worked. In between the Love Languages and Leadership Frames are the examples that were evidenced in each of the five cases studies. Around the outer edge are the four themes that emerged when looking at the all five case studies. This model is intended to show what the researcher believes is a phenomenon that might be found to be true if this study was replicated time and time again. That is, every school leader brings his/her innate personality to the role, and that includes characteristics such as a dominant love language, as described by Chapman (1992), and a preference for a particular leadership frame, as described by Bolman and Deal (1991). The personality and leadership behaviors of the principal impact school culture, so much so, that one could speculate that the personality of the school takes on the personality of the principal over time. Every principal will enact his or her innate love language and leadership frame in different ways (as illustrated by the examples in the model), but this researcher speculates that evidences of these two concepts (love languages and leadership frames) will not be hard to identify if one spends time with a principal and take a school tour.

**Theme 1**  
Nurturing positive relationships with teachers

**Theme 2**  
Fostering positive relationships with students

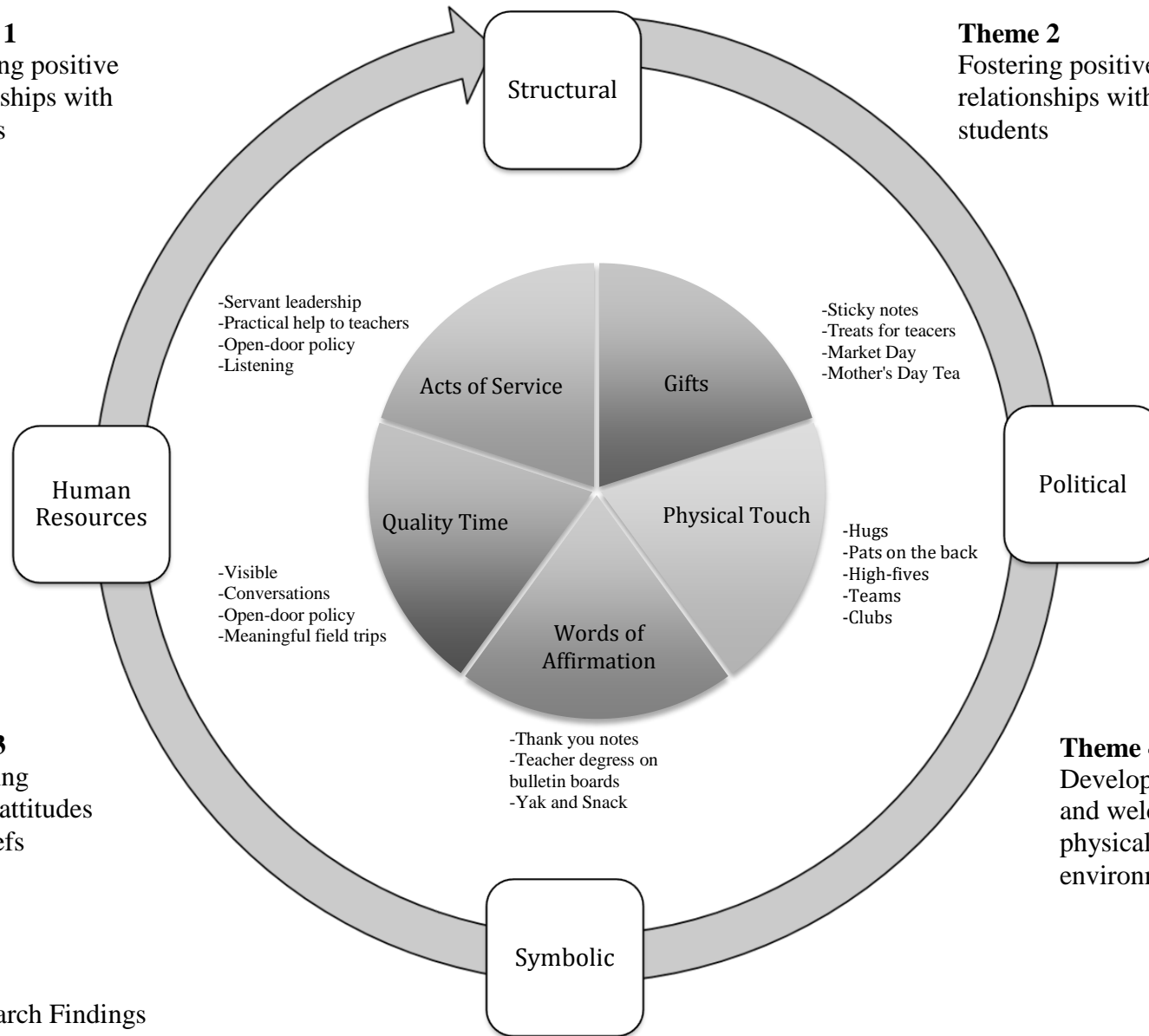


Figure 4. Research Findings

## **Interpretations of Findings**

The researcher began this study with a thorough knowledge of the Five Love Languages and Chapman's work. She utilizes this knowledge with her students in her elementary classroom each year, having students take the inventory and talking to them about what their love language means. She has seen how it makes a difference in her classroom when the students know each other's love language as well as hers. This is what sparked her to want to investigate whether principals have a primary love language or not. In addition, she had studied the Four Frames of Leadership in her graduate coursework, and wondered if principals had a dominant frame, as well as wondering if any frames paired with certain love languages in any patterned form. But primarily, the researcher was interested in the principals' responses to her questions about how they perceived their love languages and leadership frames were enacted in their school cultures, once she made them aware of the results of their inventories. The researcher could find no evidence that a study like this had ever been conducted. As she delved into the literature review, she discovered that attributes like ones' love language characteristics, are actually being researched as the 'soft skills' of leadership which are found to be very important in a leader's repertoire of skills.

The researcher had several instances of confirmation throughout the study that led to some reflective moments. First was the strong realization that her "hunch" that principals build positive school culture by utilizing their love language was indeed, a reality. There was evidence of this speculation throughout the study. However, the principals themselves often had not recognized that their love language was enacted on a regular basis in their schools, and that it had an impact on the school's culture. But once they "connected the dots," so to speak, as a result of interviewing with the researcher, principals were eager to give examples of how they



used their love language daily to interact with teachers, students, parents, and stakeholders. Often after they would give one example, one after another after another would come because they were seeing, some for the first time, how their love language was consistently used throughout their school on a regular basis. Additionally, as each school tour was being conducted and artifacts reviewed, the researcher was able to see evidence of their love language in their office, on bulletin boards, in decorations, on their calendars, in classrooms, in emails, and in their interactions with teachers and students. They each all but had a sign proclaiming their love language to all who they came into contact with.

Secondly, the researcher, herself, was impressed with the myriad of ways that the schools were enhanced by their principals' love language. Mothers were receiving gifts during a Mother's Day Tea where the principal speaks the love language of gifts. Students in a school offered their chair to a stranger. What ninth grader does that? One whose principal models daily his love language of Acts of Service. Teachers are so at ease in a school building when the principal's love language is Quality Time because they are so accustomed to her being not a woman who sits in an office at the front of the building, but regularly is being an active participant in their classrooms. Students write thank you notes to their principal for "helping keep the school together" because they know that their Words of Affirmation principal lavishes words of endearment to them regularly. And finally, students feel like they are an important part of a family because they have a principal whose love language is Physical Touch and she is not afraid to hug them tightly, give them a pat on the back, ruffle their hair, or give them a high-five. All of the actions demonstrated to the researcher that principals' love languages may not always be consciously utilized to impact school culture, but rather they are so much a part of the principal, that they impact others and the culture in a natural extension of their whole persona.

But the additional “aha” was recognizing just how many ways the principals’ soft skills were evidenced throughout the school. The researcher was further impressed when she returned to the literature on the elements of school culture, and found that the findings of this study align perfectly with four delineated behaviors of principals which impact school culture:

- Principals nurture positive relationships with teachers
- Principals nurture positive relationships with students
- Principals cultivate positive beliefs and attitudes
- Principals create safe and welcoming environments.

Contrary to what the researcher thought she might find, there was no dominant love language or leadership frame of the respondents of the initial survey. This would demonstrate that the principal position is held by individuals with varying leadership approaches and not one leadership frame or love language dominates this role. Because there was no pattern of leadership frame, this coincides with Bolman and Deal’s earlier research that emphasized that leaders can utilize more than one frame when they are making decisions, though they often work from a primary frame.

### **Limitations**

Although care was taken to ensure that this scholarly work contributed to research, there were limitations in the study that should be considered. First, the thoughts, ideas, and assertions considered were only from the participants that were interviewed. Therefore, like any qualitative study, the findings cannot be generalized to the entire population. Secondly, the respondents were all from one geographic location, so there is a possibility that principals in a different region would have different experiences. Although the researcher had different school levels and different levels of experience from the principals interviewed, there was no ethnic diversity

represented in the sample. Finally, the interviewees did not have much of a background on the love languages and the leadership frames, so perhaps it was difficult for them to give a clear picture of how they love languages and leadership frames were or were not utilized to impact their school culture.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Practice**

When beginning to research love languages and how they affect school culture, it was evident quickly that no research had been done pairing these two concepts. There was research on Love Languages, and there was research on principals and school culture, but there was no research on how principals' Love Languages impact school culture. Therefore, this research study impacts the field of educational leadership and provides an additional tool to consider for leadership preparation programs.

### **Implications for Current Principals**

Principals are reading professional development books and attending conferences as they look to gain an edge on how they can positively impact school culture. They are looking for quick-fixes, step-by-step programs, and ways to create better relationships with their teachers and students, promote positive attitudes and beliefs, and make their schools safe and welcoming environments for all. The data from this research study illustrates how they can utilize their soft-skills of leadership to inherently achieve these things. Principals may be unaware that there has been more attention given to the importance of 'leading with love' and that they can actually take an inventory that will indicate how they prefer to give and receive love. They could even have their teachers and staff take the inventory and learn each other's love languages. This could create better quality interpersonal relationships in the building, thus fostering a more pleasant environment in which to work. There is also evidence that indicates that leaders who are

successful at dealing with their emotions and the emotions of other are successful in creating a positive culture (Moore, 2009). The Four Frames of Leadership inventory can also be very revealing to a principal, as well as to his/her staff, when results are shared. Many years ago, Socrates said, “know thyself – it is the beginning of wisdom.” By identifying their Love Language and Leadership Frame, principals will know themselves better, and will understand how their innate traits, personality, and leadership ‘bent’ have the potential to permeate the school culture they are trying to influence.

### **Implications for Educational Leadership Preparation Programs**

First, the results of this study should be considered by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Steering Committee because they set the standards for all collegiate educational leadership programs nationwide. Currently, there is no standard that speaks to the importance of the school leader’s self-knowledge. While it is important to have theory based knowledge of the inner workings of a school, this research demonstrates that it is also important to understand one’s self and have an accurate concept of how one leads. As Owens and Valesky (2007) point out, “courses in educational administration tend to focus on practical, “how-to-do-it” problems, drawing on the past experience of practicing administrations” (p. 103) rather than on the self-knowledge the leader must possess. George (2000) indicated that emotional intelligence is more important to the process of leading and should be considered an essential component of effective leadership. Because preparing effective leaders for today’s complex school environments is the goal of all educational leadership programs, it would be worthwhile, and perhaps even vital, to consider having instruction in the soft skills of leadership as an integral component of leadership preparation curriculum. Instead of teaching from textbooks about the ten strategies that impact school culture, why not help the students analyze

why they do the things they do, and build upon their natural behaviors? Marques (2013) found that “soft leadership skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, are steadily on the rise, and that greater attention should be apportioned to strengthen these skills in future leaders” (p. 61). Knowing how to utilize their innate strengths, love languages, frames of leadership, and personality traits would prepare aspiring principals to build and enhance the cultures of their schools.

### **Overall Significance**

The overall significance of this study is the discovery of how principals are using their Love Languages and Leadership Frames to positively impact school culture. This study has expanded our knowledge of the soft skills of leadership that principals are utilizing as tools to naturally influence their schools to accomplish their vision and mission. The varied ways in which the study principals enacted their Love Language and Leadership Frames re-emphasizes that there are multiple ways to enhance relationships with teachers, students, and the community, and that there is not a one-size-fits-all formula for an effective leader to follow. As was summarized in the findings, principals enacted their love languages and leadership frames in different ways, but achieved the same positive outcomes: positive relationships with teachers and students, positive attitudes and beliefs, and safe and welcoming physical environments for all stakeholders.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Further research into the soft skills of leadership is recommended. This study could be replicated with a larger sample, in other regions of the United States, and even internationally in other cultures. Additionally, a study could be conducted that probes the different enactments of the Love Languages and Leadership Frames in principals who are veterans over 15 years versus

new principals. Consideration could be given to principals of different generations with their love language and leadership frame. Another, study could be conducted changing the participants to teachers, asking their perceptions of what the principals' love languages are and how they are enacted to impact school culture, and compare their love language to the principal's. It would be interesting to have an entire school staff take the love languages inventory and create a school profile, comparing results of various grade levels, departments, and staff classification and in addition, ask each staff person's opinion on how their love language enactment contributes to school culture. To take a different perspective, this topic could be studied comparing low performing versus high performing schools and their leaders' love languages and leadership frames. A quantitative study could be completed to determine the correlation between love language and leadership frames. Finally, interviews could be conducted without the researcher knowing the love language and leadership frame of the interviewee, so as to bracket out all preconceived ideas of what should or should not be evident during an interview or school tour. There are many ideas to consider when reflecting upon future research of love languages and leadership frames in the school setting.

### **Summary**

There is a constant need for improvement in school culture. "Leaders are designers, teachers, and stewards. These roles require new skills: the ability to build shared vision, to bring to the surface and challenge prevailing mental models, and to foster more systemic patterns of thinking" (Senge, 1990, p. 9). While educational leaders work to fulfill these roles on a daily basis, most do it out of a love for their school and the teachers and students they serve. The magnifying glass has shifted from how the leader *leads* the organization, to how the leader *loves* the people in the organization (Hoyle, 2002). By utilizing the soft skills of leadership and

becoming more self aware of the emotional intelligence one possesses, principals are able to implement strategies that positively impact school culture. Principals who recognize their primary love language and dominant leadership frame can make natural decisions that flow from their authentic selves and positively impact school culture for years to come.

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## Appendix 1

### Characteristics of Principals of Stuck and Moving Schools

Principals of Stuck Schools	Principals of Moving Schools
School Climate and Culture	
Principal is a “scolding” presence which threatens teachers	Principal is a “helping model” and teachers feel free to disclose teaching weaknesses
Principal fosters isolation of teachers	Principal establishes collaborative norms
Principal like to have control of everything	Principal shares decision making
Principal has infrequent communication with teachers; hides in office	Principal is accessible and visible to students and teachers
Principal protects his turf	Principal encourages collegial dependence
Instructional Leadership	
Principal manages a learning impoverished school	Principal leads a learning enriched school
Principal ignores teachers’ classroom problems; abdicates responsibility	Principal is willing to confront classroom problems; empowers teachers in the process
Principal is uncertain of technical knowledge of good instructional practice	Principal has technical knowledge of good instructional practice
Principal does not go along with teachers’ new ideas	Principal encourages teachers to try new ideas; trusts teachers’ creative instincts
Principal undervalues school improvement plans; rejects teachers’ ideas for improvement	Principal empowers and joins teachers in school improvement plans
Principal accepts teachers’ low commitment to their work	Principal expects teachers to have high commitment to their work
Principal Growth and Development	
Principal does little to remedy the problems of ineffective teachers	Principal helps poorly performing teachers to improve
Principal has a “nothing can be done” attitude toward ineffective teachers	Principal believes teacher remediation and improvement is possible
Principal encourages little professional growth and development	Principal constantly encourages professional growth and development
Principal accepts numbing sameness, routines	Principal establishes continuous improvement model as the norm
Principal believes that teaching is easy and teachers should learn how to teach in 3–4 years	Principal believes that teaching is hard and learning to teach is a lifelong pursuit
Parental Involvement and Concerns	
Principal not concerned with lack of parental involvement	Principal marshals parental involvement and support
Principal “just smoothes things over” with parents when conflict arises	Principal upholds teachers’ rules and supports them in dealing with parents
Principal abdicates responsibility in dealing with parents; wants teachers to handle it	Principal is actively involved when parents bring concerns to school



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The Principal in the District Context

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Principal usually has a superintendent whose goals focus on surface features such as clean buildings and mowed lawns (motivated by politics and pleasing public)	Principal usually has a superintendent whose goals have a clear academic focus
There is loose coupling between the superintendent and the principal	The superintendent demands accountability from the principal
Principal is responsible for any new learning if he/she wants it	District inservice and professional development for principals is expected and supported

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Compiled by Searby based on data from Rosenholtz, 1991