The Influence of School Organization on School Performance at Selected Low and High Performing Elementary Schools in Georgia

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ABSTRACT

Georgia elementary schools had not made adequate gains in school performance as measured by the College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) score. The purpose of this study was to determine if the presence of specific school organization themes influenced school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools. This quantitative comparative correlational study examined if there was a significant difference in the influence of school organization themes on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia and if there was a significant relationship between the influence of school organization themes on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Elementary schools in Georgia perform below acceptable standards, as evidenced by low student scores in reading and mathematics (Georgia Department of Education, 2015). The study was quantitative in methodology and used the parametric statistical analyses of independent sample *t*-tests and Pearson correlation analysis to address the objectives. The required assumptions of these statistical analyses included normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Each of these assumptions was tested. Results of the independent sample *t*-test showed there was a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes in high performing selected schools in Georgia based on the School Culture Survey. Results of the Pearson correlation analyses showed there was a statistically significant positive correlation between school organization themes in high performing selected schools in Georgia, as measured by the School Culture Survey.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my work to my family for their unwavering support of me completing this assignment. Felicia, Tre, Matthew, Winter, Willie Sr., Viola, Sylvia, and Shirley, I love you guys.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002 required states to implement accountability plans to the U.S. Department of Education (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). The focus of these plans included student performance, public reporting of performance results, and consequences for academic underperformance (Yoon et al., 2007). Consequences for not meeting standards included requiring schools: (a) to offer students the opportunity to attend a school which met the required benchmarks, (b) to provide additional education services to students, and (c) to close the institution if the standards were not met after several years in a row. Since the implementation of the NCLB Act, the focus on student performance continued to intensify, putting immense pressure on students, teachers, and educational leaders (Yoon et al., 2007).

State leaders decided to develop and implement the Common Core State Standards to measure performance and help teachers ensure students had the knowledge needed to be successful in life (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2019). Adopting the Common Core Standards provided an opportunity for students, teachers, and parents to have a clear set of expectations or skills needed at each grade level. According to Metlife (2010), a sizable percentage of teachers and principals surveyed believed possessing core skills and having elevated expectations for students were critical

in student performance. There are no mandated data collection requirements for states implementing the Common Core Standards. The assessment of the standards varies based on the discretion of each state (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2019).

Education reforms continued with the U.S. Department of Education (2009) introducing the Race to the Top grant initiated by the Obama Administration. This grant pushed the education system to improve teacher effectiveness, pursue higher standards, and adopt new strategies to help struggling schools. States had to meet the rigorous program eligibility requirements and guidelines. Successful Race to the Top programs spread school reforms across states and the country (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Leaders of Race to the Top also offered rewards to states demonstrating success in raising student performance (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, the Common Core Standards, and the Race to the Top grant all placed accountability in schools to ensure students demonstrate a minimum level of academic performance (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2019; Yoon et al., 2007). Leaders created these educational reforms to emphasize the importance of organizational themes to influence positive change within the school system, including the performance of students (Schwartz, Stiefel, Rubenstein, & Zabel, 2011). Even though there is little consensus on what organizational characteristics promote student performance, school culture and school performance have been highly correlated (Schwartz et al., 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Over the past two decades, states have responded to national school reform directives focused on improving school performance by contributing vast amounts of

human, financial, and fiscal resources. During this time, Georgia elementary schools had not made adequate gains in school performance as measured by the College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) score. The College and Career Readiness Index is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders to promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students (Georgia Department of Education, 2015). The variations in organizational themes of educational institutions are challenging due to many components that can influence the success of schools (Danielson, 2002). School organization themes can be instrumental in affecting various aspects of educational institutions, such as student success, teacher effectiveness, and organizational commitment (Danielson, 2002). Subsequently, Danielson (2002) stated effective school organization may challenge students while ensuring their success. Furthermore, class schedules of students must be correct for students to make accurate choices based on their educational goals (Danielson, 2002). Students should be viewed as learners who can complete any task (Swindlehurst, Shepherd, Salembier, & Hurley, 2015). Research indicates small schools yield better results than larger schools and teachers who collaborate and work as teams are more beneficial to students (Swindlehurst et al., 2015). Many current school reforms are costly, controversial, or political (Jacob & Rockoff, 2011). However, (Schwartz et al., 2011) posted there was consensus regarding the best school organization that promotes student performance. Additionally, Scheerens and Creemers (1989), observed how school effects can occur in a multi-level context: the individual student level, the classroom level, and the school level.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if the presence of specific school organization themes influence school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. The School Culture Survey (Edwards, Green, Lyons, 1996) was used to determine the school organization theme of the sixteen selected elementary schools. The 10 themes central to the School Culture Survey instrument included collaborative decision-making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human resources needs, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming. Archived data from the Georgia Department of Education were used to measure the school performance of the eight selected elementary schools and to determine the two study groups: (a) high performing schools and (b) low performing schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant correlation between school organization themes as measured by the School Culture Survey and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

Significance of Study

This study addressed the lack of improvement in Georgia's elementary schools and how the schools' structures contribute to teachers' ability to make adequate gains in

school performance as measured by the College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) score. The significance of this study will support efforts to determine if the presence of specific school organization themes influence school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. The findings of the study will support national policy makers, federal and state departments of education, university and college teacher preparation programs, regional and local education units on how to better structure schools, using specific school organization effective themes to improve school performance. The results of the study could be used as justification for emphasizing positive organizational characteristics to boost school performance.

This study may assist principals and district level administrators in better understanding the relationship between school performance and specific school organization themes, such as collaborative decision-making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human resources needs, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming, in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. The findings in this study may enrich the content shared in principal development programs and in district and school improvement plans.

The Race to the Top grant has helped drive states to reach higher standards, improve teacher effectiveness, use data effectively in the classroom, and adopt innovative approaches to help struggling schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Race to the Top has directed meaningful changes in the education system, particularly in placing accountability on school organizations to influence positive student outcomes. The

results of the study could lead to information to help leaders address organizational themes factors in which could improve the academic performance of students.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was rooted on the organizational structure of schools and its role with reforms and school improvement (Bryk, 2010; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Danielson (2002) defined school organization as "how schools arrange the resources of time, space, and personnel for maximum effect on student learning" (p. 1). School organization can create an environment for success (Hughes, 2009) and influence student behavior (Cusick, 1978; Lee & Burkman, 2002). According to Barth et al. (2004), the organizational structure of a school is one of the most crucial factors affecting the learning of students, even more than the role of school leaders and administrators.

Recognizing school as a type of organization, researchers then noted the conceptual framework was also rooted in organizational behavior theory. Based on organizational behavior theory, the alignment of appropriate structures with behaviors was expected to produce positive results (Ott, Parkes, & Simpson, 2008). Based on the review of literature as the foundation and the tenets of organizational structure and behavior theory, organizational themes and school performance was examined using the School Culture Survey (Edwards et al., 1996). The rationale for using the School Culture Survey derived from recognizing the organizational structure as a component of organizational culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

Methods

The study was quantitative in methodology, examining if there was a significant difference in the school organization themes of low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia and if there was a significant relationship between the school organization themes and school performance in elementary schools in Georgia. Quantitative research involves the quantification of attitudes, behaviors, or problems into numerical data using statistical tools (Creswell, 2013). The rationale for using a quantitative research method was to compare how two study groups differed based on school organization themes and examine how variables were related with each other using numerical data.

The research design of the study was comparative and correlational in nature, utilizing *t*-test analysis and Pearson's correlational analysis. *T*-test analysis was used to compare if there was a significant difference between two groups based on a given variable (Slavin, 1992). In this study, the two groups were high performing schools and low performing schools, and the variables were school organization themes. Pearson's correlational analysis using the correlation coefficient (*r*) is a common statistical technique utilized to examine how two variables related with each other (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005).

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations pertain to methodological factors which can affect the validity of the study. This study had one limitation. Cause and effect conclusions could not be made regarding school organization themes and school performance because the research design was only comparative and correlational in nature. Comparative and correlational

design researchers determine significant difference between study groups and significant relationship between variables (Creswell, 2013). Another limitation of the study was the single geographical setting. Even though the results may be generalized to elementary schools in Georgia, the results may not be applicable to all elementary schools in the United States.

Delimitations pertain to methodological factors intentionally excluded from the study. This study excluded middle and high schools in Georgia because learning tends to be more critical within the elementary years. This study also excluded the perceptions of students and administrators, focusing only on the perspectives of teachers. This decision was influenced by the ethical responsibility to protect young children from possible harm as participants in the study. Finally, school performance was delimited to using archived records from the Georgia Department of Education.

Definition of Terms

The following key terms are defined:

College and career readiness index is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders to promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students (Georgia Department of Education, 2015).

Collaborative decision making pertains to a working practice by which individuals work together for a common purpose to achieve business benefits ("What is Collaboration," 2019). In this study, collaborative decision-making refers to the collaboration among all key staff members within a school.

Concern for school/stakeholders refers to a climate wherein the people working in the school care about the success of the educational institution regardless of job description (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013).

Continual school improvement focus refers to a school climate that encourages continued enhancement and advancement of the school as an educational institution (Cook, 2014; Weishaar, 2015).

Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of the individuals to make transforming choices to achieve the desired actions and the outcomes ("What is Empowerment," 2011).

Human resources needs pertain to the ability of leaders to provide for the needs of the people working in the school (Zhang & Sternberg, 2011).

Intent/Direction refers to the shared beliefs about how the school should be operated (Edwards, Green, Lyons, 1996).

Leadership is the capacity and commitment contributed beyond the classroom with the teachers (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

Management of excellence refers to a climate with a systematic plan for managing excellence in the school (Connelly, 2013).

Organization effectiveness entails the ability to perform functions that will be at optimal levels representing the inputs and outputs of an organization (Gish, 2005).

Professionalism refers to the way a person conducts, aims, or entails the qualities that characterize a profession (Merriam-Webster.com, 2019).

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life

and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997).

School culture is defined as the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules shaping every aspect of the functions of a school ("School Culture", 2013).

School organization refers to the arrangement of the school pertaining to the resources, time, space, and personnel representing the maximum effect of student learning (Danielson, 2002).

School performance is positive effects of school and its actors to attaining the goals, related to the academic achievement and personal development of students (Cobb, 2014).

Teaming is the collaboration between workers or professionals to achieve a specific educational purpose or goal (Bullough, 2015; Mandel & Eiserman, 2016).

Summary

Georgia elementary schools have not made adequate gains in school performance as measured by their scores in the CCRPI. The purpose of the quantitative comparative correlational study was to examine if there was significant difference in the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia, and if there was a significant relationship between the influence of school organization on school performance. The conceptual framework of the study derived from the organizational structure of schools, organizational behavior, and the role on reforms and school improvement (Bryk, 2010; Ott et al., 2008; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). The study was significant because the findings could support policy

makers at the state and federal levels, university and college teacher preparation program developers, and regional and local education leaders on how to structure schools better by using specific school organization themes to improve school performance.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the study, identified the problem, outlined the purpose, listed the research questions, and explained the significance of the study. The review of relevant literature on organizational structure as it relates to the themes in the School Culture Survey and organization themes makes up Chapter 2. Chapter 3 reviews the methodology, population, research questions and respective hypotheses, survey instrumentation, and data analysis. The fourth chapter contains the findings from the study and a detailed discussion of the data analysis, and Chapter 5 consisted of the final discussion and summary.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The general problem of this study was the continued deficient performance of elementary school students in the state of Georgia, as seen from the comparatively lower performance scores students attained in reading and mathematics. Over the past two decades, leaders of states have responded to national school reform directives focusing on improving school performance by contributing vast amounts of human, financial, and fiscal resources to improve school performance (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2009; Yoon et al., 2007). During this period, Georgia elementary schools have not made adequate gains in school performance, as measured by their College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) scores (Georgia Department of Education, 2015).

According to research conducted for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2015, only 31.8% of Georgia's students were at or above proficient in reading and math (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2015). Moreover, a drop in proficiency was observed between Grades 4 and 5; 8.35% of the state's fourth-grade students were at or above proficient in math, while 34% were at or above proficient in reading, which was slightly above the national average (NCES, 2015). For Georgia's eighth-grade students, the number who was at or above proficient decreased to 28% for math and 30% for reading, which was below the national average (NCES, 2015). Several scholars and policymakers have attempted to address this problem, and one promising

solution is using organizational behavioral theories to restructure schools to maximize students' performances (Cobb, 2014).

Scholars have presented a relationship between school organization, school climate, and student performance (Bear, Gaskins, Blank, & Chen, 2011; Cobb, 2014; Bruggencate, Luyten, Scheerens, & Sleegers, 2012). However, despite the potential of school organization to influence school performance, few studies have been conducted on whether a school's culture and its specific school organization themes correlate with overall school performance.

The purpose of the quantitative comparative correlational study was to examine if there was significant difference in the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia, and if there was a significant relationship between the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. There was a gap in the literature regarding the correlation between a school's culture, its specific school organization themes, and a school's overall performance. By addressing this gap in the literature, a more thorough understanding was gained regarding the relationship between specific school organization themes and school performance. Two research questions were posed in the study:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant correlation between school organization themes as measured by the School Culture Survey and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

The lack of improvement in Georgia's elementary schools was addressed by examining the school organization themes of low and high performing elementary schools and determining if school organization themes and school performance were significantly related. The significance of this study may support efforts to determine if the presence of specific school organization themes influenced school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. The findings of the study could be useful in developing school organizations that could cultivate organizational success regarding the academic enhancement of students.

The articles for this review of related literature were gathered from the following databases: EBSCOHost, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, PsychArticles, and Google Scholar. The search terms used were as follows: *school organization, school organization themes, school culture, school climate, school environment, principal roles, teacher roles, counselor roles, student roles, school improvement, collaborative decision-making, concern for school and stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human resources needs, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, teaming, student performance, empowering, human resources, management, organizational theory, organizations,* and *school organizations.*

This chapter is divided into several sections that can further illuminate the research problem. These sections include the following: (a) conceptual framework, (b) key actors who play a role in school effectiveness and school climate, (c) school climate,

and (d) the relationship between school climate and school organization themes. Lastly, a summary of the key themes of the literature review is provided, and a transition to the next chapter is outlined.

The academic learning of students primarily occurs in classrooms, where they interact with their teachers about a subject matter (Bryk, 2010). The success of this interaction relies on how the school, as a social context, helps the teaching process and maintains student engagement (Bryk, 2010). In other words, the organizational structure of a school significantly affects the classroom interaction between teachers and students, and by extension, the academic learning of students (Bryk, 2010; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Danielson (2002) defined school organization as "how schools arrange the resources of time, space, and personnel for maximum effect on student learning" (p. 1). School organization can create an environment for success (Hughes, 2009) and influence student behavior (Cusick, 1978; Lee & Burkman, 2002). According to Barth et al. (2004), the organizational structure of a school is one of the most crucial factors affecting the learning of students, even more than the role of school leaders and administrators.

Bryk (2010) enumerated five organizational features of successful schools: a coherent instructional guidance system, professional capacity, strong parent-community-school ties, a student-centered learning climate, and leadership that drives change. Schools with elevated levels of most of the supports mentioned above were found to be 10 times more likely to improve, as compared to schools with low levels of the supports (Bryk, 2010). To improve schools, Bryk (2010) noted all five supports must be maintained together, as weaknesses in one support could decrease the effectiveness of other supports and minimize school improvement.

Recognizing school as a type of organization, the conceptual framework was based on organizational behavior theory, in which the alignment of appropriate structures with behaviors was expected to produce positive results (Ott et al., 2008). School organizational themes and school performance was examined using the School Culture Survey (Edwards et al., 1996). The rationale for using the School Culture Survey as a tool to examine organizational themes was based on recognizing organizational structure as a component of organizational culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

Key Factors Playing a Role in School Effectiveness and Climate

In this section, the key factors involved in the organizational themes and positive school climate of educational institutions are presented. Because of the dedicated support for the key role of school climate in numerous positive outcomes for both students and teachers, multiple studies have been conducted to reveal how to create and maintain a positive school climate to influence organizational themes. When evaluating school climate and school effectiveness, one must consider the various roles played by different school community members. Key factors contributing toward the formation of a school climate and organizational themes include the principals, teachers, and students (Cobb, 2014).

Principals. School principals play an integral part in the school community, as they are tasked with providing instructional leadership to shape school climate and influence school effectiveness (Hallinger & Lee, 2013; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). Based on the seminal research conducted by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), school principals must accomplish three tasks; define a school mission, manage the instructional program, and develop a positive school learning climate. School principals must ensure their

schools have a clear direction in advancing the development of their students (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). School principals must also be able to coordinate with teachers and other school staff in their shared goal of teaching students (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Lastly, school principals must be able to develop a positive school climate, marked by ambitious standards for their students and a drive to develop and improve their learning process (Hallinger, Dongyu, & Wang, 2016; Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

School principals have the responsibility of choosing and enforcing the school's activities relevant to its educational and instructional aims (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). These activities are chosen to help students' academic and social progress. In the state of Georgia, the Leaders Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) provides standards for these activities, stipulating the school's activities must help the progress, transmission, execution, and assessment of the school mission, which leads to positive school climate and continuous school improvement (Georgia Department of Education, 2012). In this manner, the role of principals is to provide leadership; serve as role models for the teachers, staff, and students; and steer their schools' direction toward the fulfillment of the school mission (Ali & Hale, 2009; Hallinger & Wang, 2015). When principals are perceived by teachers as good examples, building trust and working together toward a common goal become easier and lead to better relations among teachers, principals, and students (Beauchamp & Parsons, 2012; Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Voight, Austin, & Hanson, 2013).

Teachers. The role of teachers can be understood as an extension of the principal's role, in that teachers often follow the lead of principals in the pursuit of specific goals for the school. Thus, they help bring about the principal's vision for the

school's climate. According to Le Cornu (2009), the perceptions, expectations, and behaviors of teachers play a key role in the development and maintenance of a positive school climate, thus boosting overall student performance. Teachers' perceptions about their students' current performances in class can influence how the students perceive themselves and their performances. Cobb (2014) provided the following example: When teachers believed their students were intelligent, this belief influenced the students to become more confident in themselves and their abilities, which could lead to better student performance. Conversely, when teachers believed their students were unintelligent, this belief influenced their students to lose confidence, which could lead to even worse student performance (Cobb, 2014). This example illustrates the key role teachers' perceptions play in the development of their students. Because students often admire their teachers and view them as role models, teachers' perceptions can influence the teachers' actions, which can then influence students' perceptions, and ultimately students' actions.

Another way teachers can influence students' performances is in teachers' perceptions of students' future performances (Le Cornu, 2009). This perception can manifest itself when teachers perceive certain students as good or bad, college material or not (Cobb, 2014). If a teacher thinks one of the students has good potential to enter college, it would be more likely for the teacher to set high standards for the student's performance, thus helping the student prepare for a college education (Cobb, 2014). If a teacher feels otherwise, he or she may limit students' exposure to topics and issues the teacher deems too difficult, which can negatively affect the students' future college prospects (Cobb, 2014).

Le Cornu (2009) explained these possibilities as an illustration of how teacher expectations can influence student performance. Teachers can over and underestimate students' performances, which can lead to either a self-fulfilling prophecy effect or a sustaining expectation effect (Cobb, 2014). Cobb (2014) noted teachers should remain positive in their expectations for their students, as this was the most significant role they could play in creating a positive school climate.

Students. Students have a role as well in the pursuit of a positive school climate, beyond attending class and progressing academically. School leaders must consider perceptions and opinions of students whenever they institute school policies to determine whether these policies serve the best interests of the students (Cobb, 2014). This aspect is especially important today due to an increasing awareness of the marginalization of certain subgroups of students—mostly because of race or ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status rendering them as passive recipients of school policies that may not serve their best interests (Irizarry, 2009).

In previous decades, students were often unable to participate in the formulation and implementation of school policies (Cobb, 2014), and they were treated more as a data source, rather than active participants in the school community (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Today, there is convincing evidence of the value of including student experiences, opinions, and perceptions in the development of a positive school climate (Mansfield, Welton, & Halx, 2012). Hence, the role of students can be understood as providing other members of the school community with insight on how they perceive the school's policies and how it affects them (Cobb, 2014; Mansfield et al., 2012).

School Climate

Scholars have offered numerous definitions of school climate, and no consensus has been reached on an absolute definition. Haynes et al. (1997) defined school climate as the degree and frequency with which members of the school community interacted with one another, in ways that affect the students' development cognitively, socially, and psychologically. Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) shared this definition and added safety, which may derive from safety concerns emerged in recent years, such as school shootings.

According to Bear, Yang, Pell, and Gaskins (2014), Haynes et al. (1997) and Cohen et al. (2009) shared the same concern for social interactions and relationships between students and the members of the school community, both of which were important aspects of a positive school climate. This emphasis on how social interactions between members of the school community can influence the development of the school's students may be taken as the essential feature of school climate, and it has been supported by a number of studies conducted recently (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; O'Malley, Voight, Renshaw, & Eklund, 2015).

Based on the literature review on the operationalization of school climate, the construct can be measured in terms of the School Culture Survey instrument. The School Culture Survey components include 10 themes central to school climate. These behavioral practices, beliefs, and core values influencing school climate include collaborative decision-making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human resources needs, intent/direction, leadership,

management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming. Each of these themes is discussed in this section of the review.

Collaborative decision-making. Collaborative decision-making is considered part of a positive school climate (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis, 2013). A healthy school climate is likely to occur when there are favorable relationships among principals, teachers, and school staff (Kilinc, 2014). Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis (2013) found collaborative decision-making could be instrumental in the development of teachers sharing their expertise and showing concern for the effective management of schools.

The implementation of reform initiative can play a vital role in the success of collaborative decision-making (Siebersma, Wheeler-Clouse, & Backus, 2011). Critical to the implementation of reforms is the presence of a collaborative culture: a supportive atmosphere where trust is prevalent, where teachers are allowed to discuss problems and practices freely, and where it is a priority for staff to receive continuous learning opportunities (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

An effective collaborative culture is the professional learning community (PLC). According to Dufour (2004), a PLC is defined as "a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice" (p. 17). Collaborative communities or PLCs ensure all staff members have a voice, including those resistant to change. Resistance may weaken or disappear once individuals are given the opportunity to share their concerns and are reassured, making them feel more at ease with any changes (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Collaboration of teachers and administrators additionally allows for school personnel to learn from mistakes and successes (Henderson

& Mapp, 2002). Henderson & Mapp, (2002) stated seeing success can boost morale and is a critical incentive. Being able to acknowledge and identify mistakes allows learning to occur for one's self and from others.

Moore (2009) noted decision making was prevalent daily in the field of education. Some decisions can be made easily, while others must be analyzed to achieve the best outcome. Educators should become relevant practitioners, which means they would need to be briefed on the school's approach on problem-solving and decision-making. PLCs have been used as a successful way to focus on student learning. A shared commitment to learn and act continually on learning in ways to influence students' experiences is the focus of these communities. The climate and culture of a school can be shown by studying how teachers develop the learning environments of their classrooms.

Identifying the kind of school environment that would best advance a collaborative mindset in the decision-making process is important. Data should be collected for this placement regarding the students in the least restrictive environments. The decisions need to be based on the best interests of the students. The essence of making group decisions allows for the "administrators, teachers, parents, and students" (Moore, 2009, p. 14) to work together by determining the placements appropriate for the student. However, decision making is difficult for administrators in situations where they must prioritize the information they deem most necessary in pursuing the best outcome. Administrators must "have focus for a school vision that is positive, have learning performances for students, and include the students with disabilities in this decision making" (Moore, 2009, p. 14).

Concern for school and stakeholders. Having care and concern for the school and the stakeholders, such as parents and students, is another factor that influences a positive school climate (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Somech, 2016; Talebloo, Basri, Hassan, & Asimiran, 2015). The stability of the school system depends on the leadership teams of key stakeholders, who must always keep in the mind the best interests of the school and stakeholders (Talebloo et al., 2015). The stakeholders are important to the effectiveness of the school. Stakeholders are individuals who are affected by the success or failure of a system. Obvious stakeholders in the education system include students, faculty, and administration. Additional stakeholders include parents and the community where the school is located.

Concern for the school and stakeholders can be understood in terms of the presence of organizational citizenship behaviors among leaders, teachers, and the school staff (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Organizational citizenship behaviors can be beneficial to schools because of the care and concern for the success of schools, even if no direct personal benefits can be achieved (Somech, 2016). For instance, teachers who have high organizational citizenship behaviors are more likely to contribute to the success of their schools regardless of their job descriptions (Talebloo et al., 2015).

Parents contribute to the students' time management skills, study habits, eating practices, and personal safety (Waters, 2011). Parent participation in school functions, the decision making, and overall school process can influence the success of the school. The National Education Association (2015) contended students' success in school significantly affected their futures in society. Parents can influence appropriate behavior of children through four key actions for families to close the performance gap: provide an

environment at home that prioritizes the importance of learning, support the schools' and teachers' high expectations for their students, engage in discussions with teachers and staff, and remain active in school decision-making (McDougall, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education (2009) reported the communication between parents and teachers must increase to improve student performance.

Community cultures often make change difficult. Anaxagorou (2007) found differences between rural and urban school communities. Teachers and community stakeholders in rural areas demonstrated openness in their communication and relations. In contrast, results from the research indicated urban communities were more limited in their cooperation and relations. All participants agreed community and school collaborations benefited everyone. School leaders recognized the need for community support in meeting educational performance standards and securing financial resources (Cunningham, 2002). Learning more about trends within the community will also allow for identifying risk factors that may lead to a decline in student performance. As Cunningham notes, "The entire community benefits from understanding social and health conditions that interfere with learning" (Cunningham, 2002, p. 6), and school leaders must be prepared to work with the communities they serve and understand how important they are to the process.

According to Anaxagorou (2007), progress needs to be made in extending and improving school-community relations. Anaxagorou conducted a comparative study of rural and urban communities of primary teachers and community stakeholders concerning perceptions of school-community relationships. Results indicated teachers and stakeholder in urban sites tended to be more conservative, believing relationships should

be more limited. Teachers and stakeholders in rural sites within this study were more willing to extend communication and relationships. All participants affirmed that through school and community collaboration, benefit occurs for both the school, as a system or as individuals, as well as the community.

Continual school improvement focus. Continual school improvement focus is another factor that can influence the school climate of educational institutions (Simmons, Graham, & Thomas, 2015; Weishaar, 2015). The need for continuous improvement is often regarded as natural tendency for individuals (Cook, 2014). School leaders must never be complacent and should seek to improve their performance every year. The impetus for continual school improvement is sometimes based on the need to secure sustainable funding from the federal government (Weishaar, 2015). However, continual school improvement can also be motivated by the desire of teachers and principals to provide the most effective instruction to students (Pourrajab, Basri, Daud, & Asimiran, 2015).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 has been perceived as an impetus to aim for improving the quality of schools (Cook, 2014). Continual school improvement can be exhibited from various professionals within the school, which include principals, teachers, or guidance counselors (Domingo, Caballero, & Barrero, 2013). According to Cook (2014), the need for continual improvement can often be led by leaders, but this can also affect the entire school climate, particularly in the behaviors and beliefs of teachers and other school staff.

According to Ah-Teck and Hung (2014), continual school improvement can be understood in the following two dimensions: (a) leadership and (b) teaching/learning.

Leadership provides an opportunity for continual school improvement because of leaders' authenticity, ethics, and values. Regarding the role of teaching/learning in the continual school improvement, Ah-Teck and Hung (2014) stated that transformation of students, teacher leadership, and authentic leadership were important factors to be considered. This framework had both practical and theoretical relevance in the continual improvement of schools.

Professional development is one of the strategies that school leaders, such as principals, use to ensure continued school improvement (Jones, Stall, & Yarbrough, 2013; Watson, 2014). When teachers regularly face professional development, their knowledge and skills continue to improve (Jones et al., 2013). Through participation in professional development, teachers face a learning community, allowing these educators to be agents of change in their schools (Watson, 2014).

Empowerment. Empowerment involves having teachers being heard within the school. Empowerment is a crucial factor influencing positive school climate because of the belief that everyone can affect positive change within the educational institution (Liu, Ding, Berkowitz, & Bier, 2014). Empowerment can manifest in terms of delegation of work and responsibilities, the provision of individualized support and concern, articulation of vision, and fostering an environment that encourages collaboration among different professionals (Lee & Nie, 2017).

According to Hume (2006), leaders should be able to empower teachers within the schools, which is one of the most daunting challenges for change within the school. The process of change should involve everyone who is part of the organization. Furthermore, leaders must be able to operate and govern outside the box. Leaders must

be able to listen to the needs of others instead of internal dialogue. Additionally, leaders must be able to listen to others and realize when there is resistance involved. These skills can eliminate many of the barriers to creativity within the workplace.

In education, improvements must be identified by the weaknesses within the schools and, followed by the learners utilizing the 360-degree review within their schools. For this process to work, trust should be established between the leaders and coworkers. One of the major components in the process is for the leaders to be able to listen; leaders can then assess employees within the organization on different tasks (Hume, 2006).

Empowering can be used in many ways within an organization. According to Miller (2009), teachers must be able to work collaboratively on adjusting practices for students, which is done to meet the academic needs of students. There should be cohesion with a well-developed purpose and implementation of a vision shared with the school, where modeling of student performance is present in a positive manner. Moreover, leadership is exemplified by all the employees who can ask questions, take risks, and learn within the organization. Additionally, principals must be willing to share leadership by utilizing the exemplary teachers within the school building. This is done so the school can be successful without the using an excessive amount of resources. These teachers are educated on how to use the existing, effective instructional approaches and how to work with the personalities prevalent within the community.

Miller (2009) continued to note leaders redefining the elements within the school. Principals can develop new planning and assessment strategies by empowering the teachers as leaders. The changes can produce and provide fertile ground or conflict

within the school. Principals should ensure teachers are not resistant to making changes but rather are prepared to take the role of being an informal leader. Likewise, leaders should be able to redefine the informal teacher leaders. One of the most essential ways of using an effective leader is by grasping leadership from those who are fresh with innovative ideas within the organization.

Miller (2009) concluded leaders should be able to balance and incorporate a group consensus with the teacher leaders in discussions leading to effective cohesion and collegiality. The leaders should engage in this process by showing how conflicts should be handled. To thrive with leadership, teacher leaders must be part of a culture that gives them the opportunity to voice their different opinions and view opportunities to learn. Principals should capitalize on the talents of others within the school by modeling and creating a culture that will promote collegiality. This type of culture within the school will guide the students to reach their maximum potential. Support should be provided by the principals on how to implement this type of culture by establishing times for teachers to have discussions. When this type of atmosphere is present, the teachers can utilize instructional strategies useful and effective in raising student performance.

Edwards, Green, and Lyons, (1996) found empirical support for the role of teacher empowerment as an element of school organizational themes in predicting the variance in the performance of low and high performing schools in South Georgia and Florida. Data were based on the scores of students on the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (Georgia schools) and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. According to Edwards, Green, and Lyons, (1996), the association between teacher empowerment and school performance indicated the synergy generated in organizations

could be critical in the promotion of collective positive outcomes, underscoring the importance for school leaders to ensure teachers were empowered as educators.

Human resources needs. Being able to address the needs of human resources is important to educational institution leaders, teachers, and the school staff who play a crucial role in the schools (Boudreaux, Martin, & McNeal, 2016). For instance, access to resources can contribute to teachers' abilities to be effective in their instruction (Boudreaux et al., 2016). When human resources have adequate support, their work tends to support the overall success of educational institutions (Rania, Siri, Bagnasco, Aleo, & Sasso, 2014).

Zhang and Sternberg (2011) indicated creativity as one of the key resources needed in the workplace. There are two approaches to this concept, namely person and context centered. A person-centered approach includes individuals outlining more emphasis on the inner person, and the context approach focuses on the interaction of the individual's external context. The person-centered emphasis is on the creativity displayed and rooted from psychometric traditions. Individuals are provided with tasks of creative problem solving. Conversely, the contextual factors examine the factors within the environment that influence creativity.

Six identified resources focus on creativity exhibiting intelligence. The first creative resource entails intelligence. There are three types of intelligences: synthetic, analytical, and practical. The second creativity resource is knowledge. There are students using knowledge. This process occurs when creative ideas and behaviors are addressed. Third, the creativity resource is the intellectual style which refers to a person using his or her abilities. Three creative abilities stand out: legislative, global, and liberal

styles. Fourth, creative resource is personality. A person needs to be working to overcome obstacles that become creative. The person should be responsible and take risks. Fifth, the creativity resource focuses on motivation. The person must be intrinsic and task motivated. Sixth, the creativity resource involves the environment. The environment is important because without the external environment supporting and rewarding, the creative ideas and creativity of the person would not be displayed (Zhang & Sternberg, 2011).

Intent/direction. Intent/direction can be operationalized as the shared beliefs about how the school should be operated (Edwards et al., 1996). Shared beliefs involve having collective responsibility, continuous improvement, and non-defensiveness (Rudasill, Snyder, Levinson, & Adelson, 2017). When shared beliefs exist in educational institutions, the intent or direction of the school is clearly defined to the members, such as leaders, teachers, parents and students, and the school staff (Rudasill et al., 2017).

Schools can be improved in unique ways (Vesely, 2010). Change with educational accountability can involve the adaptation of content standards along with state assessments. Data driven decision making can enable the schools and leaders to use the data as a reflective process to drive school improvement. Furthermore, teachers must have a focus on content and leaders must be knowledgeable on how to use data. There is an urgent need for the administrators to focus on the students who are at risk. Leaders should use the research and evidence based analysis to drive solutions for the at risk population (Vesely, 2010).

Incentives for teachers are an additional way school leaders can improve student performance. Bonuses can be given to the teachers for performances in the top

percentile, according to student performance. District leaders have the right to develop their own incentive programs for teacher performance; however, if annual evaluations were developed to oversee the implementation of the merit pay within the districts, these evaluations could be used by specific district leaders to enhance their own incentive programs. A program called the Quality Compensation for Teachers, based on teacher advancement, includes a career ladder, as well as professional development given to the teachers as part of the requirement for the program (Exstrom, 2006).

Other elements of school improvement will signify teachers utilizing a collaborative analysis regarding student performance. This process starts with having strategic learning communities where teachers are engaged in the collaborative inquiry. Teachers must conduct collaborative analysis of student learning because teachers are tasked with analyzing the relationship between their instruction and the performances of students. Components of this collaborative analysis include classroom assessments, writing samples, and standardized testing, all of which were chosen to provide a holistic picture of the students' progress. Teachers must be able to collaborate with each other, as well as with school leadership, to strengthen the school leaders' policies and practices on how to educate the students (Langer, 2005).

Different processes must be used with different students, which can complicate the process of teaching. Teachers must determine which strategies work for which students, going beyond general interventions to developing specific interventions for certain students with their peers or other teaching professionals. Working collaboratively on the cases of individual students can help the teacher develop specialized interventions for their students in need, and thus provide them a better chance at learning (Langer,

2005). School improvements can be utilized with formative assessments in the classroom. The use of formative assessments can be one of the strategies used by the students as the traditional way of teaching the students from each grade level. Goals are essentially important for this process within the school. The reason to use this approach is to utilize learning shortfalls with the low performing students because students learn differently.

Core values pertain to the goals of leaders and teachers, especially their aspirations for their students and the school (Edwards et al., 1996). A clear direction within an organization allows for good execution and increases the likelihood of success within that organization (Murphy & Torre, 2015). Two aspects of core values are discussed: (a) having shared goals and (b) having concern for the school and the stakeholders.

A positive school environment can be created by leadership practices with cooperative relationships and a vision that is shared (Murphy & Torre, 2015). Organizations that develop practices where everyone participates can promote cooperative relationships and indicate a shared vision. The emphasis of collaborative thinking with the relationships can bring about the ease, commitment, and task accomplishments that are significant for the organization (Brunner, 1997).

A collaborative process involves the students feeling empowered where they will identify their cultural values. Administrators within the schools must exercise their collaborative styles instead of utilizing the authoritative types of leadership. Students and administrators will have more effective communication within the school by utilizing the collaborative model of communication when addressing the needs of the students. A

researcher found students could not relinquish their objectives of monitoring their school cultures (Brunner, 1997). Additionally, Brunner (1997) revealed students underestimated the amount and rigor of discourse required to promote collaboration.

Charter schools are shifting the direction of the educational system. This educational reform provides an alternative from the requirements imposed by the local districts. Innovative and new educational ideas can be implemented, designed, demonstrated, and evaluated. These programs must meet specific state standards and criteria representing the allowed designs and methods for such schools. The mission of the charter schools is to enhance intellectual development, technology literacy, and leadership development.

There are other ways to enhance and provide direction to schools. According to White (2007), leaders or managers should recognize the positive behaviors through the vision and the plan of action for the school. The leaders must be able to keep everyone focused and active in their pursuit of educating children. The leaders must be able to get the followers to carry out this task by putting the children first. When the education of the children is put first, positive results will exist within the organization. The performances of the students will improve, and the school districts will be recognized and rewarded for their efforts.

Leadership. Leadership can influence the school climate of educational institutions (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). According to Cook (2014), leadership is important in the academic growth of students and professional development of teachers. Sustainable leadership is important to a positive school climate, ensuring the that the

positive behavioral practice and beliefs within a school can be passed on despite transitions and changes in leadership (Cook, 2014).

According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2019), "standards alone will not improve schools and raise student performance, nor will they narrow the performance gap. It will take implementation of the standards with fidelity by school leaders and teachers to significantly raise student performance" (p. 30). Effective leaders have been found to produce this kind of influence by providing guidance, developing people, and ensuring everything required to make the organization work is present (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Ross & Cozzens, 2016). Through a positive school climate of strong leadership, principals can continuously provide an avenue for growth and improvement regardless of changes in leadership (Cook, 2014).

Syed (2013) reported that to implement the Common Core Standards, five practices were identified for effective principals. These practices included: (a) shaping a vision for academic success, (b) creating a climate hospitable to education, (c) cultivating leadership in others, (d) improving instruction, and (e) managing people, data, and processes (Syed, 2013). Setting the tone for a strong vision of academic success can be obtained by ensuring all students are receiving the same rigor and high quality education. Effective principals must ensure leadership teams within the school regard each other as partners who share the same guiding vision as the school. This understanding will allow the leaders to engage the diverse relationships prevalent in the school and marshal them towards the shared goal of educating children.

Leaders seek optimal learning environments for every child. According to Connelly (2013), the essence of effective leadership depends on the leader's being able to

conduct collaborative decision making. Effective leaders create a climate where teachers feel they are part of a professional community (Syed, 2013). Rogers (2001) indicated administrators or leaders operating from a hierarchical structure faced difficulty with involvement in teachers' professional development, in addition to other managerial duties. To meet instructional goals, leaders must promote collaborative collegial relationships in authentic ways. To achieve this kind of collaboration, school leaders must openly support the fostering of social relationships among staff and students within the schools.

Leaders can set the tone of inquiry in the school. Building meaningful relationships among administrators and faculty promotes loyalty and commitment. Furthermore, it creates an optimal learning environment (Syed, 2013). In addition to leaders' relationships with teachers, Syed (2013) also highlighted cultivating and promoting a positive attitude toward students created a climate hospitable to education. This climate will help the students to feel safe as well as supported. The parents will feel welcomed at the schools and begin getting involved.

The principals are the primary entities of a positive school organization and can create focus for the improvement of the school. Syed (2013) studied student performance and leadership in early childhood elementary schools and suggested principals must realize the need for teachers and staff to receive professional development geared specifically to their needs. Additionally, a study of school leadership indicated student performance increased in the areas of math and reading when leadership came from a variety of persons (Syed, 2013). Not only principals but also teachers, staff members,

and others were said to influence this improvement. With current standards, a collaborative effort and effective leadership are vital to success within the school system.

The influence of principals on leadership can hardly be overstated. Finnigan, Daly, and Stewart (2012) used organizational learning theories to reveal how educators from school leaders under sanctioning chose their reform strategies to comply with higher standards of school accountability and how their schools' climate and culture affected such decisions. The authors found because of the high-stakes situation and short timelines the educators found themselves in, they rarely produced innovative ideas on how to improve their student outcomes (Finnigan et al., 2012). Instead, the educators from these schools often engaged in recycling ideas and approaches that could not meet the standards set by policymakers, and teamwork was not prioritized (Finnigan et al., 2012). For example, teachers from these schools were found to operate individually and seldom mentored other teachers or visited other classrooms (Finnigan et al., 2012). This kind of school climate can be seen to come from the principals' ineffectiveness in rallying all members of the school community to work together and improve the student outcomes (Finnigan et al., 2012).

School leaders should follow and use ethical principles. According to Toor and Ofori (2009), leaders should maintain their ethical integrity to ensure their effectiveness and success. Leaders often face more stringent moral standards than their subordinates, and these standards are demonstrated by leaders in their "everyday practices, actions, decisions, and behaviors" (Toor & Ofori, 2009, p. 533). Philosophers and religious leaders have emphasized the importance of ethics by school leaders. This emphasis is essential if they are to attain effective governance to decrease the number of unethical

school leaders who engage in behaviors that undermine the mission and vision of the school. These behaviors, if left unchecked, may lead to negative consequences for everyone in the school and stem the learning of students.

The standards and demands for school leaders seem to be greater than ever before. School leaders are no longer just expected to provide guidance for the overall direction of a school. They are now also expected to establish relationships, promote teamwork, and coordinate with all members of the school community to best serve their students' diverse needs (Beachum & Dentith, 2004; Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

To this end, it has been found that transformational leadership is most suited for the development and maintenance of a positive school climate. In contrast to a transactional leadership style, where rules are instituted and strictly enforced with very little room for creativity (Inandi, Tunc, & Gilic, 2013), a transformational leadership style values competence, consistency, openness, and respect (Handford & Leithwood, 2013), which promotes a climate of creativity in the organization (Inandi et al., 2013). Given that school leadership involves the management of many different people and interests, school leaders must foster a sense of community and listen to innovative ideas. Transformational leaders are often most needed in schools with negative school climates, as these leaders are charismatic and can help shepherd everyone toward the same shared values and goals (Sagnak, 2010).

Even though educational leadership is more commonly associated with principals (Finnigan et al., 2012; Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Leithwood & Sun, 2012), teacher leadership can also be an integral part of school climate (Kilinc, 2014). For instance,

Kilinc (2014) found that teacher leadership was more likely to be fostered in directive school climate where institutional improvements were observed. Conversely, a restrictive school climate was negatively associated with teacher leadership.

Management of excellence. Management practices can also influence the climate of an educational institution. Connelly (2013) stated principals who were accomplished could build and manage complex networks by detailing the relationships where this occurred with the diverse groups of individuals. Principals focus on vital relationships where there are strategies and insights developed for strengthening relationships. Principals seek to develop skills based on relationships. One of the most important relationships to receive minimum attention is principal to principal relationship. However, these are difficult to develop. For example, principals feel isolated within their buildings as there are limited opportunities to share and learn from their peers. Another reason is the principals put the needs of others ahead of their own. They invest energy to provide the networks of support for students and teachers. However, principals overlook building and nurturing valuable networks for themselves. More important, the principals should invest in well-nurtured professional relationships to support the teachers and students through strategic alliances. Moreover, the well-nourished partnerships will enhance their skills to deepen knowledge and broaden their vision to validate judgment and instincts.

Changes can influence the way leaders will manage schools. Billot, Goddard, and Cranston (2007) noted how changing demographics apparent within the school have more influence on the work of the educators, which was particularly evident in the school from formal leaders with leadership positions. Principals in various locations recognize

the existence of ethno-cultural diversity as a significant factor in displaying the schools' identity of how the schools are managed and perceived. Therefore, this aspect can affect the relationship with the community stakeholders and require interactions of the community within the school.

Billot et al. (2007) revealed how principals acknowledged diversity in a variety of forms according to ethnic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, which represented the diversity of learning needs of the students. Billot et al., 2007 found ethno cultural diversity was one area of concern for the principals concerning the workplace school community. Principals revealed how diversity and culture differences of the schools had a significant influence on the rising ethnic and cultural backgrounds that contributed to the identities of the schools. Ultimately, the uniqueness of the schools became a reflection of the ethno-cultural mix representing the characteristics of the schools.

Professionalism. Professionalism is essential for the cultivation of a positive school climate. Ross and Cozzens (2016) defined professionalism as one of the strongest predictors of school climate. Certain necessary characteristic traits are central to the development of professionalism in schools. These characteristics include (a) competency, (b) integrity, (c) work ethics, and (d) genuineness (Clamp, 1990).

The first attribute needed for professionalism is competency. Second, the person should have integrity. Professionals trust their colleagues without question, and they expect trust in return. The influence of collegial integrity is the groundwork of professionalism. Third, reliability consists of "punctuality, stability, and commitment" (Clamp, 1990, p. 54). This process is where the individuals strive to be on time with

situations or occasions. Professionals will accept challenges as well. Fourth, the bosses express a genuine care for people. The humanitarian aspect is displaced in professionals by exemplifying the conduct and the attitude toward the people who are around them (Clamp, 1990). Bruhn, Zajac, and Al-Kazemi (2002) argued that when individuals exhibited more professionalism, they adhered to a strict code of ethics evident in their professions.

Some empirical evidence has indicated that professionalism among leaders, teachers, and the school staff significantly predicts school climate (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). Professionalism is also instrumental in developing organizational citizenship behaviors from educators, highlighting the positive role of professionalism both at the individual and institutional levels (Kilinc, 2014). When professionalism is practiced and valued in the organization, it fosters a school climate in which high quality teaching is encouraged (Kilinc, 2014; Ross & Cozzens, 2016).

Professional development is one of the ways professionalism can be enhanced in schools (Cook, 2014; Jones et al., 2013). Professional development must consider teacher knowledge and practices in the classroom; otherwise, student performance will not be influenced. Ross and Cozzens (2016) found principals who provided professional development to teachers were perceived as more effective leaders by educators. Yoon et al. (2007) indicated three ways in which professional development influenced student performance. First, the knowledge and skills of teachers must be prioritized and augmented regularly. Second, the augmented knowledge and skills of the teachers will likely lead to more effective teaching in the classroom. Lastly, this improved teaching in the classroom can promote higher student performance.

Teaming. Positive relationships with coworkers or teaming is another factor for cultivating positive school climate (Bullough, 2015). One strategy to encourage positive relationships of teachers with coworkers is teaming, the process of pairing new teachers with veteran teachers. Since teachers often work in isolation, teaming provides an opportunity for educators to work in tandem and be exposed to the professional practices of other educators (Mandel & Eiserman, 2016). Folly and Baxter (2001) emphasized that the essence of pairing the teachers was not a new concept. Teacher strengths can be combined, and weakness improved. Teaming allows for different approaches to spark interest, keep attention, and prevent boredom. Emphasis is on student and faculty growth, the clear and interesting presentation of content, and student development and cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes.

More schools are teaming due to the Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA). There are mandates requiring students receive special education services in the least restrictive environment. Each student learns at different rates, as exemplified with team teaching providing an avenue viable to help reach students with special needs. Teachers can address different study skills and learning techniques.

The essence of forming teams can be characterized by seeking volunteers (Folly & Baxter, 2001). Administration drafts members of the school and brings them together. However, the administrators cannot assure there will be effective team reaching or even engaging general relationships. Successful teaming is characterized by the adoption of a desired educational practice because of the interaction of two teachers who do not share the same level of expertise or knowledge at a given point in time (Mandel & Eiserman,

2016). According to Habeeb (2013), teaming can empower teachers by allowing them to enhance their skills and knowledge as educators.

Teaming requires planning, skilled management, open-mindedness, and willingness to risk change (Folly & Baxter, 2001). Teams who are effective work in an atmosphere of mutual respect as well as cooperation. Team teaching can also offset the danger of imposing ideas, values, and values on minorities. Teachers can enrich one another and students. There can be an effective relationship when both individuals are willing to work together and compromise. Hence, the members of the team need to discuss grading policy, classroom space, pet peeves, and planning and instruction.

Teaming can also occur between teachers and their students, but difficulties can be experienced because of the differences in personality (Baeten & Simons, 2016). Student-teacher personality problems can be reduced by the implementation of teaming in the classroom (Folly & Baxter, 2001). The class can continue, while one team member can attend to the problem. Teaming has also been reported to aid in recruiting and keeping faculty. As the numbers of teachers and the quality of teaching grow, so does happiness. Research indicated when teachers worked cooperatively, results showed improved student behavior and work ethic. Researchers focused on the integration of curriculum, which allowed for a team approach to planning and instruction. This collaboration "promoted innovative and energetic instruction and also mitigated the sense of professional isolation common among both elementary and music teachers" (Folly & Baxter, 2001, p. 73). The researchers used journaling and videotaping to follow the influence on student learning. Student comments and body language consistently demonstrated higher levels of enthusiasm and attentive behaviors. Teachers could "gain

new insight on the complicated job of teaching children" (Folly & Baxter, 2001, p. 73). Teaming proved both effective for student and personally empowering for teachers (Folly & Baxter, 2001; Habeeb, 2013).

Teaming can also occur between teachers and principals (Baeten & Simons, 2016). Hewson (2013) noted situations occurred where the principals struggled with ways of interacting with the teachers with the hopes of influencing teachers' behaviors. The essence of the principals' resigning themselves rather than leading the schools can be significant. For example, there are the principles of the amount of time regarding the teachers' weekly schedules in which can be limited with classroom instruction. The teachers had a better understanding of the students when they were able to examine the data from the school. Furthermore, the dialogue given by the school was positive as well. Teachers in the classroom were asked to give immediate and more logical feedback. The effective teaching teams were focused on the individualized instruction. These efforts gave the teachers more comprehensive understanding of the backgrounds of the students. The observation allowed the principals to have a deeper knowledge of the students' learning needs in the classroom. More important, the essence of principal leadership had a significant influence on the students' performances.

Relationship Between School Climate and School Organization Effectiveness

Investigating a school's climate has been seen by scholars as a useful tool in explaining why some schools succeed and others do not. A school's climate affects how students and teachers perceive their safety (Berg & Cornell, 2016; Bosworth & Judkins, 2014). Seminal Researcher Maslow (1943) showed the fundamental necessity of safety for human beings. Safety can be understood in multiple ways: socially, emotionally,

intellectually, and physically (Cobb, 2014). When individuals perceive dangers to their safety, they cannot perform optimally, which extends to students and how they perceive their safety in schools. Without feeling safe socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically, students may find it difficult to engage fully in their studies to fulfill their potential (Cobb, 2014). Therefore, school leaders must take the necessary steps to ensure students feel safe in their environment at school.

A number of researchers have contended the best way to ensure safety in schools is the creation of a positive school climate and maintaining its existence (Clifford, Menon, Gangi, Condon, & Hornung, 2012; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2012). Positive school climates have been shown to correlate with multiple positive outcomes, such as safer environments for teachers that allow them to teach to the best of their abilities (Berg & Cornell, 2016; Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Pogodzinski, Youngs, Frank, & Belman, 2012) and safer environments for students that can allow them to thrive behaviorally, intellectually, physically, and socially (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, & Johnson, 2014; Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, & Kilinc, 2012; Espelage, Low, & Jimerson, 2014; Steffgen, Recchia, & Viechtbauer, 2013; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012). School climate has been consistently seen as correlated to better outcomes for both students and teachers.

According to the National Association of Secondary Principals (2015), "transformations do not take place until the culture of the school permits it—and no long-term, significant change can take place without creating a culture to sustain that change" (p. 4). The culture of the school can play an intricate role in the success of the school. Edmonson, Fisher, and Brown (2002) suggested there was more emphasis focusing on

the importance of having healthy environments for the schools, which was important for the well-being and productivity of the workers. The collaboration of working together with employees can demonstrate how to work and can be successful by creating a collaborative culture.

Scholars have provided compelling evidence regarding the correlation between school climate and student academic performance (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Calik et al., 2012; Steffgen et al., 2013). For example, O'Malley et al. (2015) tested the hypothesis that school climate could counteract students' home-school risks. They investigated the moderating effects of students' perceptions of school climate on family structure and academic performance. Researchers used 490,000 students from 902 California public high schools (grades 9 and 11) as participants for the study. O'Malley et al. (2015) found students who reported positive perceptions regarding their school's climate also self-reported a higher GPA. Additionally, homeless students and those who came from one-parent homes exhibited the strongest moderation effect of perceiving a positive school climate on their self-reported GPAs (O'Malley et al., 2015). This finding may indicate that schools with positive climates may have a protective function for students in these situations (O'Malley et al., 2015).

For teachers, researchers have found school climate to help decrease teacher retention and improve job satisfaction (Pogodzinski et al., 2012). Pogodzinski et al. (2012) examined if there was a correlation between new teachers' perceptions of school climate in terms of the relation between the administration and teachers, and the new teachers' desire to renew their contracts next year. Using survey data from new elementary and middle school teachers from 11 districts, Pogodzinski et al. (2012) found,

notwithstanding their intent to continue in their professions, new teachers who perceived a poor school climate were significantly less likely to renew their contracts. This finding showed the importance of a positive school climate, as a constant turnover of teachers due to a negative school climate was detrimental for the continued academic progress of a school's students (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

Summary

In this chapter, a review of the related literature was conducted on the topic of school climate and school effectiveness. Based on the literature reviewed, school climate is an important aspect of a school's success as it has been seen to positively influence student outcomes academically, psychologically, and emotionally (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2014; Calik et al., 2012; Espelage et al., 2014; Steffgen et al., 2013; Waasdorp et al., 2012). A positive school climate has been seen to lead to improved academic outcomes (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Calik et al., 2012; O'Malley et al., 2015) and less bullying and violence (Benbenishty, Astor, Roziner, & Wrabel, 2016; Cornell, Shukla, & Konold, 2015). Moreover, a positive school climate also helps teachers do their jobs in a more effective manner by reducing student aggression against teachers, reducing teacher stress, and improving teacher job satisfaction (Berg & Cornell, 2016; Collie et al., 2012; Pogodzinski et al., 2012).

A discussion was also provided on school organization themes: collaborative decision-making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human resources needs, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming. The essence of leadership signified influencing student performance, which was one of the most important concepts of the

school and would entail many attributes that were positive for the school. Simultaneously, leadership effectiveness is critical to the school because of the factors that leadership strives to conduct in the school. The involvement of stakeholders is important to the school organizational themes as well because they can increase effective decision making, but this must be emphasized with the leadership at the school. Professionalism was another component important to the school because of the importance of the teachers and administrators conducting themselves in a professional manner. Furthermore, teachers teaming can be derived as an important theme because of the influence of the inclusion that is evident according to laws.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides detailed information about the methodology for the study. The chapter begins with outlining the purpose and the research questions of the study, which were already discussed in Chapter I. The next paragraphs include discussion about the other aspects of the methodology including the research design, setting, participant selection, rights of participants and ethics, research instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. A summary of the major aspects of the methodology concludes the chapter. The purpose of the quantitative comparative correlational study was to examine if there was a significant difference in the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Additionally, the study aimed to detect any significant relationship between school culture and school performance in elementary schools in Georgia. The School Culture Survey (Edwards et al., 1996) was used in this current study to determine the school culture of elementary schools in Georgia. Using the School Culture Survey in this current study, school organizational themes were operationalized using 10 themes which include collaborative decision-making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human resources needs, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming.

The following research questions guided the analysis of this study:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant correlation between school organization themes as measured by the School Culture Survey and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

Research Design

The study was quantitative in nature, focusing on examining if there was a significant difference in the school culture of low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Another objective was to determine if there was a significant relationship between school culture and school performance in elementary schools in Georgia. Quantitative research involves the quantification of attitudes, behaviors, or problems into numerical data using statistical tools (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) stated that quantitative methods are used to test objective theories by examining the relationship between variables. Using objective measurements, and statistical procedures, data is collected and analyzed. For this reason, the research questions in this study were examined using quantitative procedures.

The research design of the study was comparative and correlational in nature, utilizing *t*-test analysis and Pearson's correlational analysis. *T*-test analysis was used to compare if there was a significant difference between two groups based on a given variable (Slavin, 1992). In this study, the two groups were high performing schools and low performing schools, and the variables were school organization themes. Pearson's correlational analysis using the correlation coefficient (*r*) was a common statistical

technique utilized to examine how two variables are related to each other (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). The range of possible values generated from Pearson's correlational analysis was -1.00 to 1.00, with 0 indicating no correlation between variables, -1.00 indicating negative correlation between variables, and 1.00 indicating positive correlation between variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005).

Research Setting

The research setting included 16 elementary schools, including eight high performing schools and eight low performing schools in Georgia using convenience sampling. The ranking was based on overall school performance or performance of the student population. For the recruitment of schools, I started with the highest-ranking school and continued down until the required number of eight schools was secured. Given that some school leaders might not have agreed to be part of the study, the ranking was based on the highest ranked schools based on those who gave consent to use their schools as setting. The same recruitment procedure was used to select the eight lowest ranking schools in Georgia.

Only 16 schools were selected because the Institutional Review Board approved the polling of 20 elementary schools. However, out of the 20 schools, only 16 principals gave the researcher permission to conduct the research. The other four school principals said no. The other district leaders also said no as well to conduct research in their counties. Only leaders of the Davis County School District and the Harris County School District approved the researcher pending the permission of the building level principal. Davis County Schools is a public school district located in Davis, Georgia. It has 101,284 students in grades PK, K-12 with a student-teacher ratio of 15 to 1. According to state test

scores, 29% of students are at least proficient in math and 33% in reading. Harris County Schools is a top rated, public school district located in Davis, Georgia. It has 46,238 students in grades PK, K-12 with a student-teacher ratio of 17 to 1. According to state test scores, 73% of students are at least proficient in math and 70% in reading.

The population comprised of public-school teachers in Georgia teaching any of the elementary core subjects, such as mathematics, English, and science. The population came from all the school districts in Georgia but was specifically teachers who were employed in the highest ranked and lowest ranked schools in the state based on the overall academic performance of the students in standardized exams.

The sample consisted of teachers from the 16 elementary schools in Georgia. From those, 382 teachers completed the surveys in the actual data collection. A non-probability sampling technique of convenience sampling was used when selecting the teachers who needed to complete the survey to obtain the data of the study. To answer the first research question on whether there was significant difference in the school culture of low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia, the survey responses of the teachers in the low performing schools were compared to the teachers in the high performing schools. To answer the second question if there was a significant relationship between school culture and school performance in elementary schools in Georgia, the survey responses of all 382 teachers were examined as one group.

Non-probability sampling is a technique whereby the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected. One specific type of non-probabilistic sampling is convenience sampling. In convenience sampling, the investigator uses participants because they are willing and

available to be part of the study. This type of sampling is weak because the researcher cannot state with certainty that the individuals are representative of the population (Creswell, 2013). However, a convenience sample can still provide useful information in answering questions and hypotheses. Convenience sampling was conducted to recruit samples to address restrictions in time and resources. Convenience sampling is a non-probability method through which participants are chosen because they are accessible given their time availabilities and locations (Sedgwick, 2015).

According to Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016), convenience sampling is primarily done because it has been proven as a more efficient sampling technique in comparison to random sampling. However, they also stated that the sampling technique could be limited by a higher likelihood of bias, and researchers were advised that convenience samples should not be assessed as representative of the population. This limitation could, in turn, impede the researcher from drawing inferences about the general population being studied (Etikan et al., 2016). The characteristics of the sample consisted of the teachers at the study school who had at least one year of professional experience, worked as full-time instructors, and had degrees demonstrating they were highly qualified in their areas of study.

Rights of Participants and Ethics

Ethical considerations can signify importance with the research studies. All researchers must be aware of the rules and regulations when involving research participants. The researcher must consider the well-being of the study participants. The relationship should be built on trust between the researcher and the participants.

Furthermore, two rules must be adhered to where the researcher demonstrates participants not being harmed in any way physically, mentally, or socially.

The rights of the participants were upheld by obtaining their informed consents. An informed consent form was prepared to provide details about the key aspects of the study and how participants' rights were respected and preserved. This process outlined the possible dangers possibly involved with the research because of participation. Moreover, I ensured freedom from harm without exposing the participants to the undue risks. This requirement entailed confidentiality and the personal privacy of the participants (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The participants must participate with their own free will, recognizing the risks attached to the study (Gay et al., 2009). All participants who agreed to be part of the study were required to sign the informed consent form. Because the survey questionnaire was administered online, online signatures were sufficient.

Ethical research was strengthened by securing the approval of the university's institutional review board (IRB). The IRB process with this study focused on the areas of concern with the participants and followed protocol in the county. The IRB form contained key procedures used to protect the participants from harm or abuse because of their involvement in the study. The online administration of the survey questionnaire only commenced after the approval of the IRB was secured from the school administrators (see Appendix B).

Role of the Researcher

At the time of this study, I was an employee of the Bibb County school system as a school teacher. I was a career technical instructor in one of the high schools in the

county located in the central part of Georgia. I was also a coach within the school system. I had taught for more than 10 years in education. However, I did not work at any of the low performing or high performing schools for the study.

The role of the researcher included the collection of data using survey questionnaires from the sample of teachers and archived data from the state of Georgia. Another role was analyzing the quantitative data to address the research questions of the study.

Instruments

The instruments for the study included a survey questionnaire and archived data from the state of Georgia. The School Culture Survey (Edward et al., 1996) was used to determine the school culture themes of the 16 selected elementary schools. Archived data from the Georgia Department of Education were used to measure the school performance of the 16 selected elementary schools to determine the two study groups: (a) high performing schools and (b) low performing schools.

The School Culture Survey questionnaire provided information about the structural effectiveness of schools based on several criteria. Using the School Culture Survey, structural effectiveness was operationalized using the three subscales of the instrument: (a) norms, (b) beliefs, and (c) core values. The first part of the instrument focused on behavioral norms, such as the quality of the environment where teachers were working. The second part of the instrument focused on the shared beliefs about how the school should be operated. The third part of the instrument focused on core values, especially what teachers wanted for their students.

Saphier and King (1985) initially developed the School Culture Survey. The version used in this study was the modified instrument developed by Edward et al. (1996). The School Culture Survey instrument developed by Edward et al. (1996) has 50 items, with five items dropped from the original instrument because of poor factor loading.

The 50 items in in the School Culture Survey involved asking participants to provide ratings and answers to a series of questions presented either as metaphors or statements. The items were rated in a 5-point Likert type scale, wherein 1 was considered the lowest score (*Almost Never*), and 5 was considered the highest score (*Almost Always*). From the three subscales, the following values or characteristics were asked to the participants: (a) collegiality, (b) experimentation, (c) reaching out to knowledge base, (d) high expectations, (e) recognition and appreciation, (f) protecting what's important, (g) tangible support, (h) professional respect, (i) decision-making, (j) honest and open communication, (k) initiative, (l) collective responsibility, (m) continuous improvement and non-defensiveness, (n) reflective environment, (o) goals, and (p) core values.

The 50-item School Culture Survey measured 10 School Culture Survey themes of collaborative decision-making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human resources needs, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming. The School Culture Survey subscale of norms included four themes of collaborative decision-making, continual school improvement focus, leadership, and management of excellence. The School Culture Survey subscale of belief included three themes of concern for

school/stakeholders, professionalism, and teaming. The School Culture Survey subscale of core values included three themes of empowerment, human resources needs, and intent/direction. Each of the scores of the School Culture Survey themes was obtained by getting the average score of question items measuring each item. The scoring instructions are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Scoring Instructions of the 10 SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY Themes of the Subscales of Norms, Beliefs, and Core Values[*]

SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY Themes	SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY Item Numbers
1. Collaborative Decision-Making	1, 2, 3, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23
2. Continual School Improvement Focus	3, 14, 19, 25, 27, 28, 38, 41, 48, 50
3. Leadership	3, 4, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 26, 35, 37, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48
4. Management of Excellence	2, 5, 7, 12, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 32, 36, 49, 50
5. Concern for School/Stakeholders	7, 12, 23, 34, 36, 39, 43
6. Professionalism	2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 21, 24, 32, 33, 40, 47
7. Teaming	3, 4, 11, 15, 21, 46
8. Empowerment	1, 6, 8, 10, 20, 26, 29, 30, 35, 44, 45
9. Human Resources Needs	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 43, 47
10. Intent/Direction	12, 14, 27, 28, 31, 33, 34, 42, 48

* Norms subscale includes themes 1 through 4; Beliefs subscale includes themes 5 through 7; and Core values subscale includes themes 8 through 10.

To determine the school performance of the 16 elementary schools, data were derived from the archived records of the Department of Education of Georgia (2019). These archived records, which were accessible online through the department's website, contained information about each school's overall performance when compared to other elementary schools in Georgia. The archived records also included the performance of students in reading and mathematics in three consecutive years. School performance was measured using the overall school ranking based on the school CCRPI score. The 16 eight elementary schools were ranked in order from 1 to 16. After ordering the school

from highest to lowest based on the school ranking, the first eight elementary schools in the list were grouped as the high performing schools, and the remaining eight were grouped as low performing schools. The principal or principal designee was contacted from the top of the school performing list and the process continued until eight high performing schools were secured. The same process continued from the bottom of the school performing list until eight low performing schools were secured. To protect the identity of the schools, pseudonyms (Schools 1 to 16) were used when presenting information regarding overall performance and student performance.

Data Collection

Before the actual collection of data, all the necessary forms and approval from the site and the IRB were secured (see Appendix B). The permission from the schools in the district to recruit teachers as participants for the study was obtained. After the site permission was secured from the 16 schools, the IRB approval was sought to commence the administration of the survey questionnaire.

The administration of the School Culture Survey occurred manually by willing participants at each elementary school. The surveys were hand delivered to the schools and given to the principal/principal designee. These principal/principal designees administered the survey to the teachers in the school during their faculty meetings. Each participant was asked to fill out demographic questions and the School Culture Survey. The entire survey questionnaire was accomplished by the participants in 15 to 30 minutes. They mailed the package in a readdressed envelope to the researcher, which was forwarded to Dr. Simmie Raiford who was the manager for the instrument used. Dr. Raiford then compiled the survey results into the Excel document, which was then sent to

the researcher. The duration of the data was four months, from January to April 2018. I accessed the responses of all participants by acting as the survey's administrator.

Data Analysis

Data collected from survey questionnaires and archived recorded from the Georgia Department of Education were analyzed statistically to address the research questions of the study. All data were transferred to a statistical software called SPSS to facilitate the analysis. Descriptive statistics were performed to generate an overview of the summary of the survey responses for the teacher samples for each school and for the entire study sample and to summarize the school ranking. Frequencies and percentage summaries were used to summarize the data for categorical or nominal measured variables. Means and standard deviation were used to summarize the data of continuous measured variables, such as the scores of the 10 School Culture Survey themes to measure school organization themes between selected low and high performing elementary schools.

Prior to conducting the independent sample *t*-test and correlation analysis, I performed several tests on data to ensure these met the necessary assumptions for the parametric analyses used. The assumptions included tests of normality, linearity of the relationship between the variables, and homoscedasticity. First, a test of normality using skewness and kurtosis statistics was conducted. To determine whether the data follow normal distribution, skewness statistics greater than three may indicate violation of the assumption of normality (Kline, 2005). Additionally, kurtosis statistics with values between 10 and 20 also indicate non-normality (Kline, 2005). Second, the linearity of the relationships between the variables was evaluated using scatterplots of the variables.

Third, homoscedasticity assumption was tested using Levene's test. If there were violations of the required assumption, the non-parametric versions of the stated statistical analyses were conducted. The non-parametric version of the independent sample *t*-test was the Mann-Whitney U test. The non-parametric version of the correlation analysis was the Spearman correlation analysis.

For the first research question, an independent sample *t*-test was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in the 10 school organization themes between selected low and high performing elementary schools. An independent sample *t*-test analysis was used to compare if there was a significant difference between two groups based on a given variable (Slavin, 1992). The independent variable was school type with two groups that were the high performing elementary schools and low performing schools, and the dependent variable was scores of the 10 school organization themes. To perform the *t*-test analysis, the mean of the two groups was calculated for each of the school organization themes. The level of significance was determined using the *p*-value of 0.05, where *p*-value of 0.05 or less led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis.

For the second research question, Pearson's correlational analysis was used to examine if there was a significant relationship between school culture and school performance in terms of school performance rank of elementary schools in Georgia. Pearson's correlational analysis using the correlation coefficient (*r*) is a common statistical technique utilized to examine how two variables are related with each other (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). A level of significance of 0.05 was used in this correlation analysis. A *p*-value that was equal to or less than the level of significance indicated

significant relationships between variables. Then, the *r* coefficient was investigated to determine the strength and directions of the correlation between variables. The range of possible values generated from Pearson's correlational analysis was -1.00 to 1.00, with 0 indicating no correlation between variables, -1.00 indicating negative correlation between variables, and 1.00 indicating positive correlation between variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). If there was a perfect relationship between two variables, the coefficient was either -1.00 or +1.00. The weaker the relationship between the variables, the closer the coefficient was to 0. If the values of the correlational coefficient were between 0 and -1.00 or 0 and 1.00, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected. If the value of the correlational coefficient was 0, the null hypothesis was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Validity

Validity is the extent to which a measurement is truthful, accurate, authentic, or free of system error with evidence supporting the conclusion (Jimenez-Buedo & Miller, 2010). Studies are valid if the instrument used to test measures consistently what it is intended to measure. Threats to validity can be both external and internal. Studies are valid if the instrument used to test measures consistently what it is intended to measure. This aspect can be achieved if the instruments used in this study have good or acceptable reliabilities. Threats to validity can be both external and internal. In attempting to limit one or the other, there is necessarily a trade-off (Jimenez-Buedo & Miller, 2010). A high degree of control over a situation that disallows the interaction of extraneous variables with the independent variable is conducted to determine a cause and effect relationship in experimentation. However, by enforcing such a high degree of control over a situation to

enforce internal validity, there arises a lack of generalizability to a wider population, threatening external validity.

The internal validity of a quantitative study is the degree to which the results can be replicated by others, accuracy of the measurement, and the consistency with which the measurements remain the same over time (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 2013). The data for school culture and school performance was assumed to be accurate. These data for school performance were actual rankings of the schools. The threat of the internal validity was the wrong input of actual records in the database, which was an uncontrollable factor.

Another threat to the internality of validity problem was response bias. This study involved measuring the full-time teachers' perceptions of school culture using a self-report or perception survey questionnaire. Therefore, it was subject to potential response bias. A threat to the internal validity of the study was the respondents' attitudes or honesty towards answering the survey, which might have resulted in inaccurate or untruthful responses (Simon & Goes, 2013). The respondents might have answered the questionnaire carelessly or in a random manner. I assumed participants were not deceptive with their answers in the survey questionnaire, and participants completed the survey honestly because the questionnaire asked for the respondents' self-perceptions. I assumed honest answers from the participants were obtained. To support this assumption, identities of the respondents were not obtained or were kept anonymous and confidential. I had a responsibility to protect the privacy of study respondents to create a sense of trust to attain unbiased responses.

Another aspect of internal validity of a quantitative study is the degree to which observed changes in a dependent variable can be attributed to changes in an independent variable (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 2013). The researcher determines the threat to internal validity and ways in which these may influence the study by examining the scheme and the level of control the researcher has regarding sampling, data collection, and data analyses (Mertens, 2014). For this study, there were no threats to internal validity involving history, statistical regression, instrumentation, and mortality. These internal threats to validity are relevant only to experimental studies and other studies that use pre-test and post-test data, or longitudinal studies (Mertens, 2014). For this quantitative study, the research design used was a non-experimental correlational research design.

External validity is the degree to which conclusions from a study can be generalized to additional groups of persons, locations, or periods (Salkind, 2010). In this study, the results only remained true for full-time teachers in selected 16 elementary schools in Georgia regarding the relationships between school culture and school performance. Therefore, outcomes from this study may not be generalized to additional population groups. This threat was considered a limitation of the study, as discussed in the final chapter. Recommendations to address this threat in future studies were made accordingly. There should be enough samples to generalize the results of the study to the targeted sample.

Lastly, the threat in relation to the chosen research design of correlational research design was already acknowledged; therefore, the findings of this study did not include conclusions regarding causal relationships between the variables, only significant associations or relationships to form the basis for further investigation. The nature of a

correlative examination of isolated variables could reveal correlation but not causation. The inability to adjust independent to determine influence on the dependent meant a cause and effect relationship could not be established.

Reliability

Reliability is a precursor of validity; for measure to pass validity tests, it must first possess reliability. Reliability of a construct or measure is defined by its consistency or, rather, the stability (Heale & Twycross, 2015). The common adage is that a reliable measure will produce the same result when the same experiment or research is repeated with the same participants and under similar conditions. Several threats may undermine the reliability of a specific measures. These threats are broadly classified as either systematic or unsystematic. Heale and Twycross (2015) explained that reliability of measure could be described using three attributes, including internal consistency, stability, and equivalences. In the current study's measurement scales, reliability was expressed in previous studies. According to Edwardet al. (1996), all three subscales of the School Culture Survey were highly correlated with each other and had good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.81 to 0.91.

Summary

The purpose of the quantitative comparative correlational study was to examine if there was significant difference in the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia, and to discover if there was a significant relationship between the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools. The rationale for using a quantitative method was to compare how two study

groups differ based on a specific criterion to examine how variables were related with each other using numerical data (Creswell, 2013). The research settings were 16 elementary schools in the state of Georgia.

The sample consisted of teachers as survey participants from low and high performing elementary schools. Data were collected using the School Culture Survey (Edward et al., 1996) and archived data from the Georgia Department of Education. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, *t*-test analysis, and Pearson's correlational analysis. The next chapter presents the results of the data analysis.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Introduction

There are three main sections in this chapter: the data collection summary, data analysis results, and summary. Descriptive statistics, independent sample *t*-test, and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to address the objectives of the study. SPSS was the statistical tool used to conduct the data analysis to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses. Specifically, the following research questions were tested:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant correlation between school organization themes as measured by the School Culture Survey and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

Data Collection Summary

In summary, 16 elementary schools in Georgia were included in the samples. The 16 elementary schools are enumerated in Table 2. A total of 382 teachers completed the surveys. The surveys were hand delivered to the schools and given to the principal/principal designee. These principal/principal designees administered the survey through their faculty meetings. They mailed the package in a readdressed envelope to me, and I forwarded it to Dr. Simmie Raiford, the manager for the instrument used. Dr.

Simmie Raiford then compiled the results into the Excel document and sent it to me. The data were collected from January to April 2018. There were only 16 schools because the IRB was approved to poll 20 elementary schools, which was compromised of eight high performing schools and eight low performing schools. However, out of the 20 schools, only 16 principals gave permission to conduct the research. The other four school principals declined participation. The other districts also declined participation as well to conduct research in their counties. Only two school district leaders of the Davis County School District and the Harris County School District approved this research, pending the permission of the building level principal.

I met with all 20 principals, and only 16 school principals gave permission. Twelve elementary schools from the Davis County School District and four elementary schools from Harris County School District were included in the sample. Table 2 summarizes the school performance rank for each of the 16 elementary schools as for the school year 2016 to 2017. The *N* is the number of teacher samples who completed the surveys from each of the schools. For instance, 24 teachers completed the surveys from Austin Elementary. There were no data for respondents' rates.

As stated in Chapter 3, the grouping of schools, whether it was high or low performing, was based on the school performance rank information. The 16 elementary schools were ranked in order from 1 to 16 based on the school rankings. After ordering the schools from highest to lowest based on the school rankings, the first eight elementary schools in the list were grouped as the high performing schools, and the remaining eight were grouped as low performing schools.

Table 2
Breakdown of School Performance for the 2016-2017 School Year per Elementary School

School	*N*	County	School Performance Rank	School type
School 1	24	Davis	11	High performing school
School 2	20	Harris	63	High performing school
School 3	19	Davis	306	High performing school
School 4	42	Davis	1148	Low performing school
School 5	42	Davis	1178	Low performing school
School 6	18	Harris	89	High performing school
School 7	21	Davis	1162	Low performing school
School 8	22	Davis	1151	Low performing school
School 9	17	Davis	87	High performing school
School 10	35	Harris	1166	Low performing school
School 11	23	Davis	1163	Low performing school
School 12	19	Davis	1149	Low performing school
School 13	20	Harris	147	High performing school
School 14	21	Davis	1185	Low performing school
School 15	21	Davis	33	High performing school
School 16	18	Davis	3	High performing school

Next, summaries of the scores of the 10 themes of the three school organization themes subscales of norms, beliefs, and core values based on the School Culture Survey were computed by calculating the descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics summaries of each of the 10 themes of the School Culture Survey to measure school organization themes between selected low and high performing elementary schools are summarized in Table 3. Mean comparison showed high performing elementary schools in all four measures of the school organization themes subscale of norms, all three

measures of the school organization themes subscale of beliefs, and all three measures of the school organization themes subscale of core values were significantly higher than the low performing elementary schools. These findings were determined based on the comparison of mean scores for each score on the 10 themes of the School Culture Survey between high performing and low performing elementary schools. These findings indicate school organization themes in terms of norms, beliefs, and core values of high performing elementary schools were better than low performing elementary schools. However, the significance of these mean differences was tested using independent sample *t*-test.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistic Summaries of Scores of Different School Culture Survey *Themes between Low and High Performing Elementary Schools*

School Culture Survey Subscales	School Culture Survey Themes	School type	*N*	*M*	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
Norms	Collaborative Decision-Making	Low performing schools	8	51.85	2.37	0.84
		High performing schools	8	66.05	11.30	4.00
	Continual School Improvement Focus	Low performing schools	8	49.20	7.22	2.55
		High performing schools	8	67.75	10.05	3.55
	Leadership	Low performing schools	8	49.89	3.65	1.29
		High performing schools	8	66.52	11.39	4.03

School Culture Survey Subscales	School Culture Survey Themes	School type	*N*	*M*	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
	Management of Excellence	Low performing schools	8	50.98	5.84	2.06
		High performing schools	8	69.47	11.50	4.07
Beliefs	Concern for School/Stake-holders	Low performing schools	8	53.54	7.31	2.58
		High performing schools	8	69.80	9.52	3.37
	Professionalism	Low performing schools	8	52.29	3.93	1.39
		High performing schools	8	68.39	11.51	4.07
	Teaming	Low performing schools	8	50.02	2.39	0.85
		High performing schools	8	67.44	13.10	4.63
Core Values	Empowerment	Low performing schools	8	48.22	3.43	1.21
		High performing schools	8	64.65	10.69	3.78
	Human Resources Needs	Low performing schools	8	50.66	3.32	1.17
		High performing schools	8	68.80	12.56	4.44
	Intent/ Direction	Low performing schools	8	51.94	8.94	3.16

School Culture Survey Subscales	School Culture Survey Themes	School type	*N*	*M*	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
		High performing schools	8	69.57	8.69	3.07

Results

Test of required assumptions of parametric statistical analysis. Parametric statistical analyses of independent sample *t*-test and Pearson correlation analysis were employed in order to address the objectives of this quantitative study. The different required assumptions of these statistical analyses included normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Each of these assumptions was tested.

***Normality*.** The first assumption tested was normality of the data of the study variable. It was a required assumption of both the independent sample *t*-test and Pearson correlation analysis that the data of the study variable should exhibit normal distribution. The skewness statistic values (-0.12 to 0.91) of all 10 School Culture Survey themes for the school organization themes subscales, as based on the School Culture Survey enumerated in Table 4, were not greater than three and kurtosis statistic values (-1.32 to 0.90) enumerated in Table 4 were not in the range of 10 to 20 for non-normality. With these results, the data of the 10 School Culture Survey themes did not violate the normality distribution assumption.

Table 4
Skewness and Kurtosis Statistics of Scores of School Culture Survey *Themes*

School Culture Survey Subscales	School Culture Survey Themes	*N*	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Norms	Collaborative Decision-Making	16	0.90	0.56	-1.07	1.09
	Continual School Improvement Focus	16	0.18	0.56	-0.90	1.09
	Leadership	16	0.73	0.56	-1.19	1.09
	Management of Excellence	16	0.54	0.56	-1.01	1.09
Beliefs	Concern for School/Stakeholders	16	0.18	0.56	-1.11	1.09
	Professionalism	16	0.76	0.56	-1.07	1.09
	Teaming	16	0.91	0.56	-1.10	1.09
Core Values	Empowerment	16	0.68	0.56	-1.32	1.09
	Human Resources Needs	16	0.78	0.56	-1.23	1.09
	Intent/Direction	16	-0.12	0.56	-0.90	1.09

Linearity. The second assumption tested was that the relationship between the two variables of school performance and the three school organization themes subscales of norms, beliefs, and core values should be linear. The linearity assumption was best tested with scatterplots of the two variables. These scatterplots are shown in Figures 1 to 3. The different scatterplots showed decreasing straight-line patterns between the school performance rank with each of the four themes of the school organization themes subscale of norms (Figure 1), indicating negative linear relationships. The different scatterplots showed decreasing straight-line patterns between school performance rank with each of the three themes of the school organization themes subscale of beliefs (Figure 2), indicating that there were negative linear relationships. The different scatterplots showed decreasing straight-line patterns between school performance rank with each of the three themes of the school organization themes subscale of core values (Figure 3), indicating negative linear relationships. Thus, the required assumption of linearity was not violated.

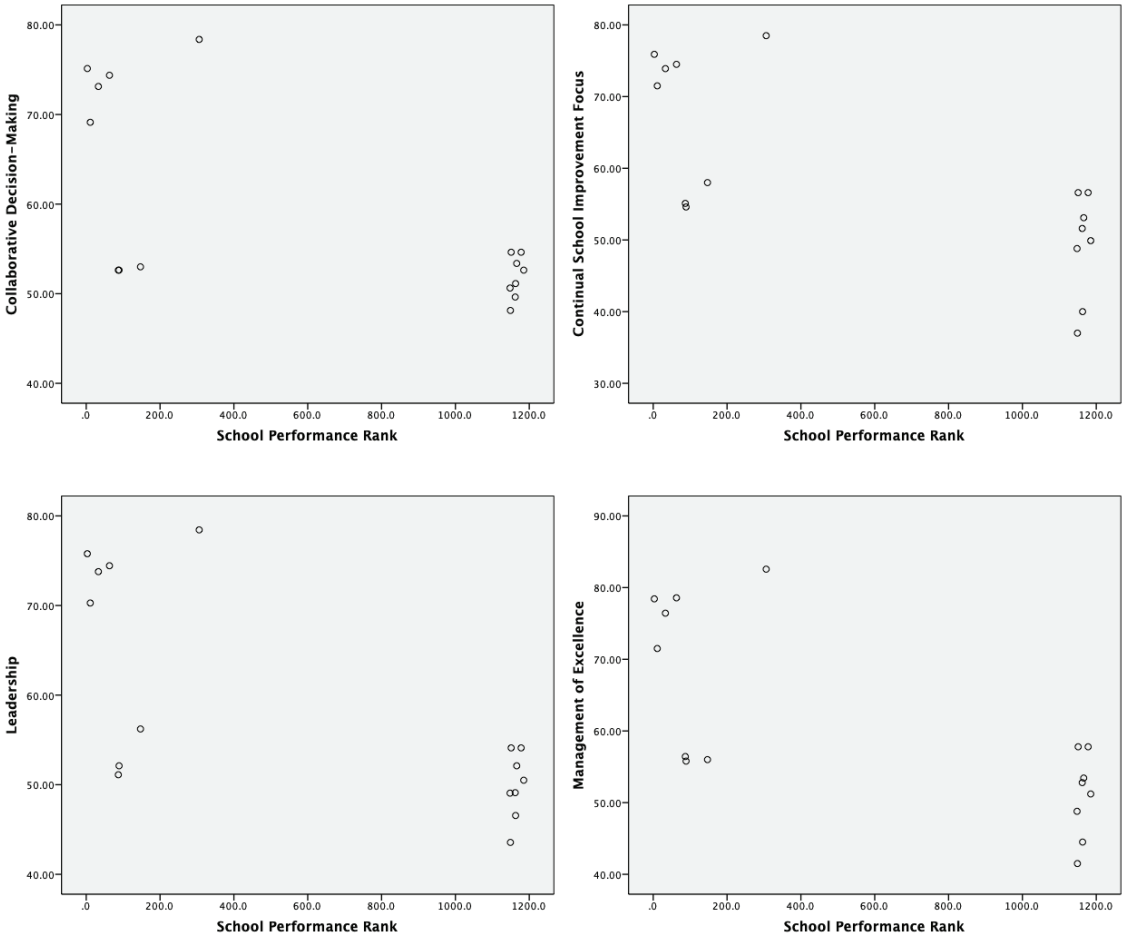

Figure 1. Linear plots of linear relationships between school performance and school organization themes subscale of norms.

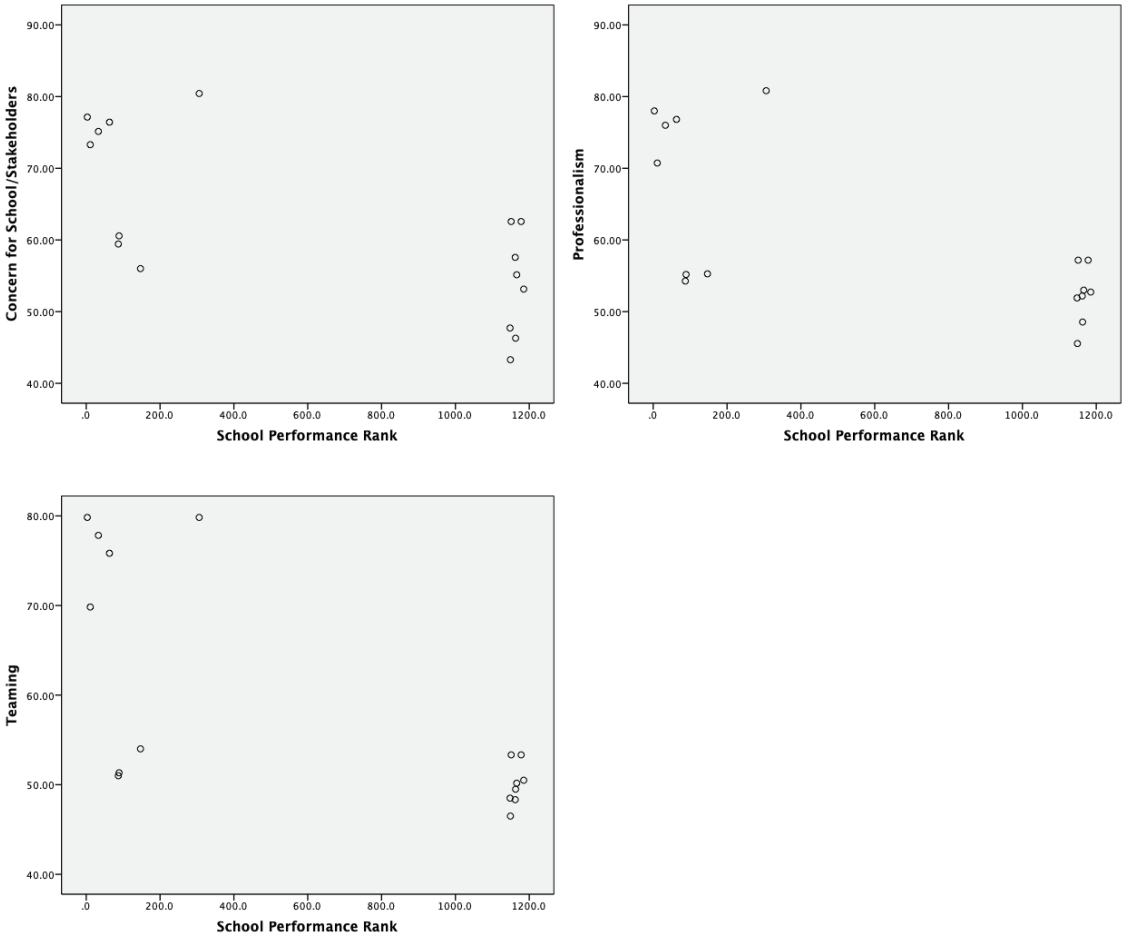

Figure 2. Linear plots of linear relationships between school performance and school organization themes subscale of beliefs.

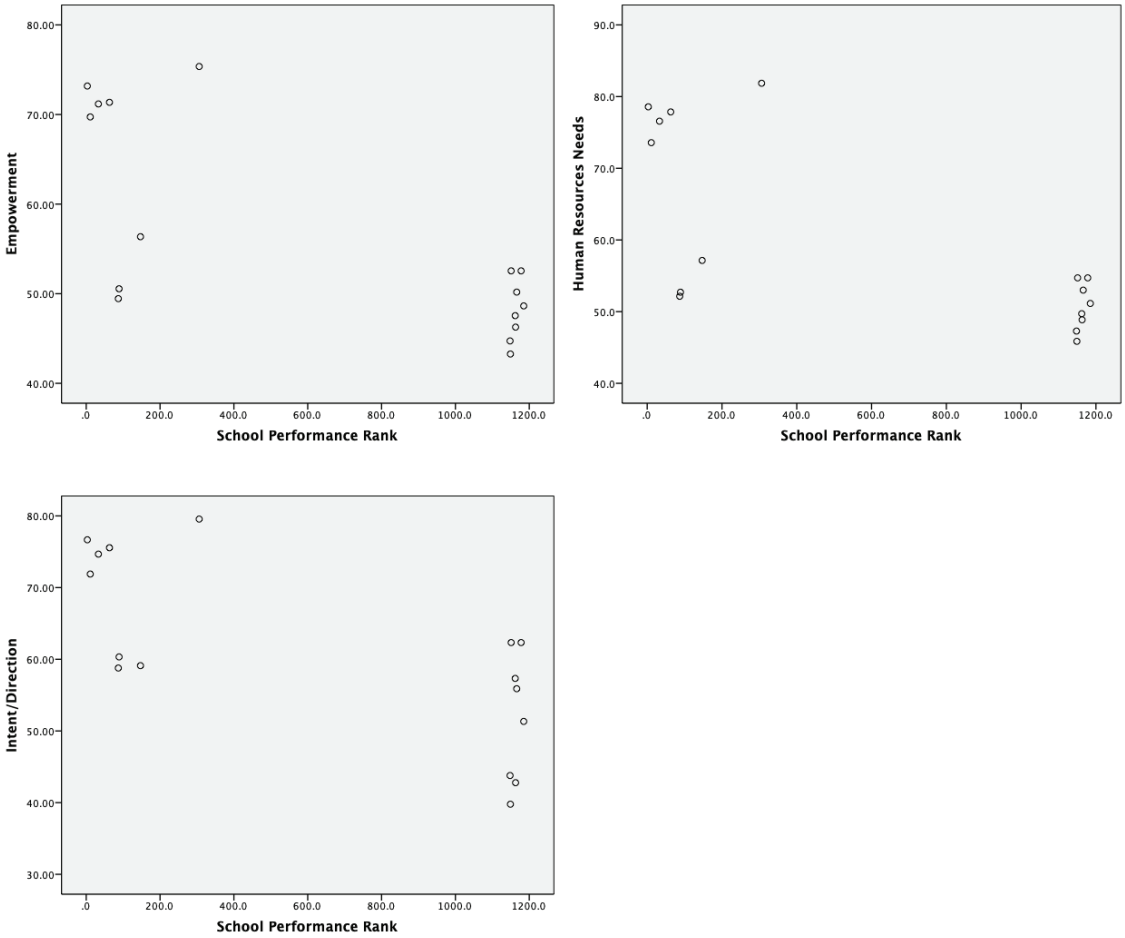

Figure 3. Linear plots of linear relationships between school performance and school organization themes subscale of core values.

Homoscedasticity. The last required assumption tested was homoscedasticity. Therefore, the variances of each of the 10 different themes included in the three school organization themes subscales of norms, beliefs, and core values should be homogeneous or equal across the two categories of the independent variable of school performance groups of low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Levene's test for equality of variance was conducted to test the homoscedasticity assumption, as shown Table 5. I observed only three out of the 10 different themes of the three school organization themes subscales of norms, beliefs, and core values had equal variance.

These included continual school improvement focus ($F = 3.27$, $p = 0.09$), concern for school/stakeholders ($F = 1.95$ $p = 0.19$), and intent/direction ($F = 0.00$, $p = 0.96$), which had p-values of the Levene's test greater than the level of significance value of 0.05. For those without an equal variance assumed, the "equal variances not assumed" row results for the independent sample t-test was used. These included collaborative decision-making ($F = 33.73$, $p < 0.001$), leadership ($F = 21.79$, $p < 0.001$), and management of excellence ($F = 8.80$, $p = 0.01$), professionalism ($F = 19.29$, $p < 0.001$), teaming ($F = 33.14$, $p < 0.001$), empowerment ($F = 21.45$, $p < 0.001$), and human resources needs, $t(14) = 29.18$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 5
Results of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY Themes	*F*	Sig.	Results
Collaborative Decision-Making	33.73	0.00	Equal variances not assumed
Continual School Improvement Focus	3.27	0.09	Equal variances assumed
Leadership	21.79	0.00	Equal variances not assumed
Management of Excellence	8.80	0.01	Equal variances not assumed
Concern for School/Stakeholders	1.95	0.19	Equal variances assumed
Professionalism	19.29	0.00	Equal variances not assumed
Teaming	33.14	0.00	Equal variances not assumed
Empowerment	21.45	0.00	Equal variances not assumed
Human Resources Needs	29.18	0.00	Equal variances not assumed
Intent/Direction	0.00	0.96	Equal variances assumed

Results of independent sample *t*-test for Research Question 1. An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there are significant differences in the 10 different measures of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. A level of significance of 0.05 was used in the t-test. There was significant difference in the school organization themes if the p-value was equal or less than the level of significance value

of 0.05. Mean comparison was conducted if significance difference was observed. The results of the independent sample *t*-test are presented in Table 6.

Results of the independent sample *t*-test showed that all four measures of the school organization themes subscales of norms of collaborative decision-making, $t(14) = -3.48$, $p = 0.004$; continual school improvement focus, $t(14) = -4.24$, $p = 0.001$; leadership, $t(14) = -3.93$, $p = 0.002$; and management of excellence, $t(14) = -4.05$ $p = 0.001$, were significantly different between low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Mean comparison showed high performing elementary schools have significantly higher score in all four norms themes of collaborative decision making, continual school improvement focus, leadership, and management of excellence than low performing elementary schools by mean differences of 14.20, 18.55, 16.63, and 18.49, respectively. These findings indicated school organization themes in terms of norms of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools.

For the beliefs subscale, all three measures of concern for school/stakeholders, $t(14) = -3.83$, $p = 0.002$; professionalism, $t(14) = -3.75$, $p = 0.002$; and teaming, $t(14) = -3.70$, $p = 0.002$, were also significantly different between low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Mean comparison showed high performing elementary schools have significantly higher score in all three beliefs themes of concern for school/stakeholders, professionalism, and teaming than low performing elementary schools by mean differences of 16.27, 16.10, and 17.42, respectively. This indicated that school organization themes in terms of beliefs of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools.

Each measure of the core values subscale had significant differences between low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Empowerment, $t(14) = -3.70$, $p = 0.001$; human resources needs, $t(14) = -3.95$, $p = 0.001$; and intent/direction, $t(14) = -4.00$, $p = 0.001$, were significantly different. Mean comparison showed high performing elementary schools have significantly higher score in the three core values themes of empowerment, human resources needs, and intent/direction than low performing elementary schools by mean differences of 16.43, 18.14, and 17.63, respectively. This finding indicated that school organization themes in terms of core values of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools.

Table 6
Independent Sample t-*Test of Difference of Measure of School Organization Themes Based on the* School Culture Survey *Between Low and High Performing Elementary Schools in Georgia*

	t	*df*	Sig. (2-tailed)	*M* Dif.	Std. Error Dif.	95% Conf. Int. of the Dif.	
						Lower	Upper
Collaborative Decision-Making	-3.48	14	0.004	-14.20	4.08	-22.96	-5.45
Continual School Improvement Focus	-4.24	14	0.001	-18.55	4.38	-27.93	-9.17
Leadership	-3.93	14	0.002	-16.63	4.23	-25.70	-7.56
Management of Excellence	-4.05	14	0.001	-18.49	4.56	-28.27	-8.71
Concern for School/ Stakeholders	-3.83	14	0.002	-16.27	4.24	-25.37	-7.17
Professionalism	-3.75	14	0.002	-16.10	4.30	-25.32	-6.88
Teaming	-3.70	14	0.002	-17.42	4.71	-27.51	-7.32
Empowerment	-4.14	14	0.001	-16.43	3.97	-24.94	-7.92
Human Resources Needs	-3.95	14	0.001	-18.14	4.59	-27.99	-8.29
Intent/ Direction	-4.00	14	0.001	-17.63	4.41	-27.08	-8.17

*Significant at level of significance of 0.05

Results of Pearson correlation analysis for Research Question 2. A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to address Research Question 2 to examine if there was a significant relationship between school culture and school performance in elementary schools in Georgia. A level of significance of 0.05 was used in the Pearson correlation analysis. There was a significant correlation if the *p*-value was less than or equal to the level of significance value. The Pearson correlation results are presented in Table 7.

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis showed that school performance as measured by the school performance rank of the elementary schools was significantly negative correlated with all four School Culture Survey norms themes of collaborative decision-making, $r(14) = -0.67$, $p = 0.004$; continual school improvement focus, $r(14) = -0.74$, $p = 0.001$; leadership, $r(14) = -0.71$, $p = 0.002$; and management of excellence, $r(14) = -0.72$, $p = 0.002$. The negative correlation means a higher school organization themes subscale of norms would result in a higher ranking in school performance. The lower number of ranks indicates higher ranking.

School performance, as measured by the school performance rank of the elementary schools, was significantly negatively correlated with all three School Culture Survey beliefs themes of concern for school stakeholders, $r(14) = -0.71$, $p = 0.002$; professionalism, $r(14) = -0.70$, $p = 0.003$; and teaming, $r(14) = -0.70$, $p = 0.003$. The negative correlation meant a higher school organization theme of beliefs would result in a higher ranking in school performance.

School performance, as measured by the school performance rank of the elementary schools, was significantly negative correlated with all three School Culture Survey core values themes of empowerment, $r(14) = -0.73$, $p = 0.001$; human resources needs, $r(14) = -0.72$, $p = 0.002$; and intent/direction, $r(14) = -0.72$, $p = 0.002$. The negative correlation meant a higher school organization theme of core values would result in a higher ranking in school performance. With these results of the Pearson correlation analysis, there was a statistically significant correlation between school organization themes, as measured by the School Culture Survey and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia.

Table 7
Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis Between School Culture and School Performance

School Culture Survey Themes	Statistics	School Performance Rank
Collaborative Decision-Making	Pearson Correlation	-0.67*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004
	N	16
Continual School Improvement Focus	Pearson Correlation	-0.74*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	16
Leadership	Pearson Correlation	-0.71*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002
	N	16
Management of Excellence	Pearson Correlation	-0.72*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002
	N	16
Concern for School/Stakeholders	Pearson Correlation	-0.71*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002
	N	16
Professionalism	Pearson Correlation	-0.70*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003
	N	16
Teaming	Pearson Correlation	-0.70*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003
	N	16
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	-0.73*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	16
Human Resources Needs	Pearson Correlation	-0.72*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002
	N	16
Intent/Direction	Pearson Correlation	-0.72*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002
	N	16

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

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative comparative correlational study was to examine if there is significant difference in the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia, and if there is a significant relationship between the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Descriptive statistics analysis, independent sample *t*-test, and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to address the different research questions.

Results of the independent sample *t*-test showed a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Specifically, all four measures or themes of the school organization themes subscale of norms of collaborative decision-making, continual school improvement focus, leadership, and management of excellence of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools. Additionally, the three measures of the school organization themes subscale of beliefs of concern for school/stakeholders, professionalism, and teaming of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools. Lastly, the three measures of the school organization themes subscale of core values of empowerment, human resources need, and intent/direction of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools.

Results of the Pearson correlation analyses showed that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between school organization themes, as measured by the

School Culture Survey and school performance rank in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Specifically, school performance was significantly negative correlated with all four School Culture Survey norms themes of collaborative decision-making, continual school improvement focus, leadership, and management of excellence. School performance was significantly negative correlated with all three School Culture Survey beliefs themes of concern for school stakeholders, professionalism, and teaming. School performance was significantly negative correlated with all three School Culture Survey core values themes of empowerment, human resources needs, and intent/direction. The significant negative correlations meant higher school organization themes in terms of norms, beliefs, and core values would result in a higher ranking in school performance. These findings indicated elementary schools with higher school organization themes would result in a higher ranking in school performance.

Chapter 5 concludes this study. Chapter 5 contains the discussion of findings from the analysis. It also includes discussion of findings as these relate to literature, implications for action, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

The NCLB Act (2002), Common Core State Standards (2019), and U.S. Department of Education's (2009) Race to the Top grant have all placed accountability on schools. Leaders wanted to ensure students would demonstrate a minimum level of academic performance through improving measurement of student performance and improving teacher effectiveness (Yoon et al., 2007). These education reforms emphasize the importance of organizational themes to affect positive change in the school system to benefit students, teachers, school leaders, and the community. While literature provides evidence on the positive correlation between school organization themes and school performance, there is little consensus on what organizational characteristics promote student performance (Schwartz et al., 2011). The problem in this study was the poor performance of elementary schools in Georgia as evidenced by low performance scores of students in reading and mathematics (Georgia Department of Education, 2015). The purpose of this quantitative comparative correlational study was to examine if there was significant difference in the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia and if there was a significant relationship between the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. The School Culture Survey (Edward et al., 1996) was used to determine the school organization themes of the eight selected elementary schools in Georgia.

According to the results of the independent sample *t*-test, there was a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. There were three specific sub findings from this major finding: (a) School organization themes in terms of norms of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools, (b) school organization themes in terms of beliefs of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools, and (c) school organization themes in terms of core values of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools. According to the Pearson correlation analyses, there was a statistically significant positive correlation between school organization themes, as measured by the School Culture Survey and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia.

This chapter is divided into four sections that discuss the results of the study. These sections include the following: (a) interpretation of the findings, (b) implications of the findings, (c) limitations of the study, and (d) recommendations for further research. Lastly, a summary of the whole dissertation is presented.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section, the meanings of the findings are addressed by comparing the results with what has been found in the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. The findings are also analyzed and interpreted in the context of the conceptual framework.

Norms. The results indicated that school organization themes in terms of norms of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools. In this section, each component of norms is discussed in the context of current literature and conceptual framework.

Collaborative decision-making. The finding that collaborative decision-making was significantly better in high performing elementary schools supported the studies of Malinen and Savolainen (2016) and Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis (2013). Malinen and Savolainen (2016) concluded that collaborative decision-making was part of a positive school climate and resulted in positive school performance. This finding showed that this organizational characteristic was related to school performance. In addition, Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis (2013) found collaborative decision-making can be instrumental in the development of teachers to share their expertise and show concern for the effective management of schools. This finding may mean the teachers were invested with the school and its students, which also positively influenced the performance of the school. When collaborative decision-making is present in a school, it empowers the teachers and makes them more effective, thereby positively influencing school performance.

Continual school improvement focus. The finding that continual school improvement was significantly better in high performing elementary schools supported the findings of previous researchers about the role of school improvement and school performance (Jones et al., 2013; Pourrajab et al., 2015; Watson, 2014). Continuous school improvement may be motivated by the desire of teachers and principals to provide the most effective instruction to students (Pourrajab et al., 2015). This aspect could exist in high performing schools, as evidenced by school performance. To ensure that

continual school improvement is achieved, school administrators and leaders can use professional development programs, as teachers who are regularly exposed to professional development continuously improve their knowledge and skills (Jones et al., 2013; Watson, 2014).

Leadership. The finding that leadership was significantly better in high performing elementary schools supported the findings of researchers about the importance of leadership (Cook, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2004; Ross & Cozzens, 2016; Talebloo et al., 2015). According to Talebloo et al. (2015), the stability of the school system depends on the leadership teams of key stakeholders, who must always keep in mind the best interests of the school and stakeholders. Leaders have an important role in school organization. School principals must be effective to ensure everything required to make the organization work is present (Leithwood et al., 2004; Ross & Cozzens, 2016). An effective school principal can ensure the positive behavioral practice and beliefs within a school are passed on, despite transitions and changes in leadership (Cook, 2014).

Management of excellence. The finding that management excellence was significantly better in high performing elementary schools supported the findings of researchers about the crucial role of effective management practices in performance (Connelly, 2013). Connelly (2013) stated principals who were accomplished could build and manage complex networks detailing the relationships where this occurred with the diverse groups of individuals. Principals focus on vital relationships where strategies and insights are developed for strengthening relationships. These relationships would strengthen the collaborative atmosphere in schools and promote continuous improvement for all stakeholders.

Beliefs. The results indicated that school organization themes in terms of beliefs of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools. In this section, each component of norms is discussed in the context of current literature and conceptual framework.

Concern for school and stakeholders. The finding that concern for school and stakeholders was significantly better in high performing elementary schools was consistent with the findings of previous researchers (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Somech, 2016; Talebloo et al., 2015). According to Talebloo et al. (2015), stakeholders are important to the effectiveness of the school. Thus, these stakeholders should demonstrate concern for school and other stakeholders as well to have positive influence on the performance of the school. In addition, concern for the school and stakeholders can be understood in terms of the presence of organizational citizenship behaviors among leaders, teachers, and the school staff (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2014). When every stakeholder demonstrates organizational citizenship behaviors, it could lead to several benefits to the school, especially in terms of school performance. Organizational citizenship behaviors can be beneficial to schools because of the care and concern for the success of schools even if no direct personal benefits can be achieved (Somech, 2016). This aspect would mean the stakeholders would always think of the common good for the school and all the stakeholders.

Professionalism. The finding that belief in professionalism was significantly better in high performing elementary schools was consistent with the findings of previous researchers about the relationship of professionalism and school climate. Professionalism is one of the strongest predictors of school climate (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). Indeed,

professionalism among leaders, teachers, and the school staff significantly predicts school climate (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). When leaders, teachers, and the school staff demonstrate professionalism, they are doing their jobs to the best of their abilities and are concerned with the effect of their performances on the overall performance of the school. Professionalism is also instrumental in developing organizational citizenship behaviors from educators, highlighting the positive role of professionalism both at the individual and institutional levels (Kilinc, 2014). Professionalism has both positive effects to the individual and institution. When individuals demonstrate professionalism, they develop organizational citizenship behaviors that would benefit the institution, especially the performance of the schools.

Teaming. The findings teaming was significantly better in high performing elementary schools was consistent with previous studies (Baeten & Simons, 2016; Bullough, 2015; Mandel & Eiserman, 2016). Positive relationships with coworkers or teaming is another factor cultivating positive school climate (Bullough, 2015). Positive school climate could be achieved because there will be less competition between and among the teachers through teaming. Since teachers often work in isolation, teaming provides an opportunity for educators to work in tandem and be exposed to the professional practices of other educators (Mandel & Eiserman, 2016). This aspect would mean the teachers would be learning different professional practices that could help them improve their own teaching strategies and practices and would lead to them being more effective at their jobs.

Teaming can also occur between teachers and principals (Baeten & Simons, 2016). This relationship is also related to the importance of collaborative decision-

making, wherein teachers and school leaders work together for the betterment of the school. When teachers were empowered through collaborative decision-making, they would be more committed to the school, and could have positive influence on their performance and to the overall performance of the school.

Core values. The results revealed school organization themes in terms of core values of high performing elementary schools were significantly better than low performing elementary schools. In this section, each component of norms is discussed in the context of current literature and conceptual framework.

Empowerment. The finding that empowerment was significantly better in high performing elementary schools was consistent with the literature (Lee & Nie, 2017; Liu et al., 2014). Empowerment is an important factor influencing positive school climate because of the belief that everyone can affect positive change within the educational institution (Liu et al., 2014). This finding was related to the finding of norm of collaborative decision-making and belief of teaming. Teachers must be able work collaboratively to learn more strategies and practices to be effective teachers. Teachers and principals must work together to create a school climate where both are committed to improvement. Principals must be willing to share leadership by utilizing the exemplary teachers within the school building.

Human resources needs. The finding that the core value of addressing human resource needs was significantly better in high performing elementary schools was consistent with the literature (Boudreaux et al., 2016; Rania et al., 2014). Addressing human resource needs is important to educational institution as leaders, teachers, and the school staff play a crucial role in the effectiveness of schools (Boudreaux et al., 2016).

The quality of the human resources must be aligned with the objectives and standards of the school (Boudreaux et al., 2016). Moreover, human resource needs must be addressed for them to remain effective. When there is adequate support, the work of human resources tends to support the overall success of educational institutions (Rania et al., 2014).

Intent/direction. The finding that the core value of intent or direction was significantly better in high performing elementary schools was consistent with the literature (Rudasill et al., 2017). Intent/direction can be operationalized as the shared beliefs about how the school should be operated (Edward et al., 1996). Having shared beliefs involves having collective responsibility, continuous improvement, and non-defensiveness (Rudasill et al., 2017). When there are shared beliefs in an educational institution, the intent or direction of the school is clearly defined to the members, including leaders, teachers, parents, and students, as well as the school staff, so all stakeholders know the goal of the school, and individuals must work hard together to achieve this goal.

Implications of the Findings

In this section, the issue of whether the research findings improve (or change) the field's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation is addressed. Specifically, the implications of the findings are considered in three areas: theory, research, and practice.

Conceptual framework. The conceptual framework in this study was about the organizational structure of schools and its role on reforms and school improvement (Bryk, 2010; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). According to this framework, school

organization influences the environment and culture of the students as well as students' behaviors and performances (Cusick, 1978; Hughes, 2009; Lee & Burkman, 2002). The results supported the conceptual framework, as the framework suggested school organization influenced students' behaviors, performances, and overall school performances. The results showed a significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. There may be a good quality of school organization in high performing elementary schools in Georgia that could be observed through its performance.

Research. I explored the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. The results indicated the difference between school organization in between low and high performing elementary schools may mean there was a relationship between school organization themes and school performance. The current study provided the foundation to determine what factors of school organization affect school performance.

Practice. School leaders may use the results of the study in terms of identifying school organization themes such as collaborative decision-making, concern for school/stakeholders, continual school improvement focus, empowerment, human resources needs, intent/direction, leadership, management of excellence, professionalism, and teaming form the School Culture Survey to determine the level of school organization themes of their schools. In this way, school leaders may continue to improve their school organization themes. School leaders can emphasize positive organizational characteristics of their school in which could boost their performance.

National policy makers, federal and state departments of education, elementary teacher preparation programs, and regional and local education units can use the results of the study to evaluate school organizational themes of schools through identifying the school organization themes of each school. There have been many education reforms in the past years; however, none of these reforms seems to help school leaders, principals, teachers, and students in terms of improving academic performance. The results of the study could help policymakers in making informed decisions about education reforms; specifically, they could use the relationship between school organizational themes and school performance as a basis for educational reforms and not rely solely on student academic performance measures.

Limitations of the Study

In this section, the limitations to generalizability and/or trustworthiness that arose from the execution of the study will be addressed. Limitations pertain to methodological factors affecting the validity of the study. One limitation of the study was the research design, which is comparative and correlational in nature. Comparative and correlational research design focuses on determining significant differences between study groups and significant relationships between variables (Creswell, 2013). As a result, the study was limited because cause and effect conclusions cannot be made regarding school organization themes and school performance.

I examined selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. This single geographical setting also served as a limitation to the current study. Even though the results may be generalized to elementary schools in Georgia, the results may not be applicable to all elementary schools in the United States.

Moreover, the School Culture Survey (Edward et al., 1996) was used to measure school culture themes. The first part of the instrument focused on school norms. The second part of the instrument focused on the shared beliefs about how the school should be operated. The third part of the instrument focused on core values, especially what educators wanted for the students. However, the instrument served as a limitation because it limited the responses of the participants. The participants may have wanted to give explanations to their answers.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this section, recommendations for further research are grounded in the strengths and limitations of the current study, as well as the literature reviewed in Chapter II, will be described. I employed a research design that was comparative and correlational in nature; therefore, there was no cause and effect conclusions that could be made about organization themes and school performance. Future researchers could conduct a quantitative study that is cause and effect in nature to determine whether such a relationship existed between school organization themes and school performance.

Another research design element narrowed the study to Georgia. This means the results may only be applicable to elementary schools in Georgia. Future researchers could conduct similar studies in different geographical locations. In addition, future researchers could also add low and high performing secondary schools in Georgia since this study focused on elementary schools.

Furthermore, this study was quantitative in nature, using an instrument as part of the data collection procedures. Future researchers could conduct qualitative studies that

could lead to the development of a measure for school organizational themes. The participants will also be freer to provide explanations to their answers.

Finally, only one high performing elementary school was included in this study. Future researchers who would conduct a similar study could ensure the participation of more than one high performing elementary school. Moreover, future researchers could also focus on only exploring school organizational themes in high performing and low performing elementary schools and influence on student performance.

Summary and Conclusions

Georgia elementary schools have not made adequate gains in school performance as measured by their scores in the CCRPI. The purpose of the quantitative comparative correlational study was to examine if there was significant difference in the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia and if there was a significant relationship between the influence of school organization on school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant correlation between school organization themes as measured by the School Culture Survey and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia?

Quantitative methodology was used to examine whether there was significant difference in the school organization themes of low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia and whether there was a significant relationship between the school organization themes and school performance in elementary schools in Georgia. The rationale for using a quantitative research method was to compare how two study groups differ based on school organization themes and to examine how variables are related with each other using numerical data. The research design of the study was comparative and correlational in nature, utilizing *t*-test analysis and Pearson's correlational analysis. *T*-test analysis was used to compare whether there was a significant difference between two groups based on a given variable (Slavin, 1992). In this study, the two groups were high performing schools and low performing schools, and the variables were school organization themes. Pearson's correlational analysis using the correlation coefficient (*r*) is a common statistical technique utilized to examine how two variables are related with each other (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005).

The conceptual framework of the study was rooted on organizational structure of schools and its role on reforms and school improvement (Bryk, 2010; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Danielson (2002) defined school organization as "how schools arrange the resources of time, space, and personnel for maximum effect on student learning" (p. 1). Given the conceptual framework, I expected that school organizations might vary and influence the learning of students, even more than the role of school leaders and administrators.

Based on the literature reviewed, school climate is an important aspect of a school's success as it has been seen to positively influence student outcomes

academically, psychologically, and emotionally (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2014; Calik et al., 2012; Espelage et al., 2014; Steffgen et al., 2013; Waasdorp et al., 2012). A positive school climate has been seen to lead to improved academic outcomes (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Calik et al., 2012; O'Malley et al., 2015

) and less bullying and violence (Benbenishty et al., 2016; Cornell et al., 2015). Moreover, a positive school climate also helps teachers do their jobs in a more effective manner by reducing student aggression against teachers, reducing teacher stress, and improving teacher job satisfaction (Berg & Cornell, 2016; Collie et al., 2012; Pogodzinski et al., 2012). In the literature review, school organization was related to school climate. Given these previous findings from scholars, I expected there would be a significant difference in school organization themes between low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia.

Results of the independent sample *t*-test showed there was a statistically significant difference in the measure of school organization themes based on the School Culture Survey between selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. Results of the Pearson correlation analyses showed there was a statistically significant positive correlation between school organization themes, as measured by the School Culture Survey and school performance in selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia.

I addressed the lack of improvement in Georgia's elementary schools by examining the school organization themes of low and high performing elementary schools and determining if school organization themes and school performance were significantly related. The findings provided insights to determine the presence of specific

school organization themes influencing school performance at selected low and high performing elementary schools in Georgia. The findings in this study can provide support to policy makers at the state and federal levels, university and college teacher preparation program developers, and regional and local education leaders on how to better structure schools, using specific school organization themes to improve school performance.

Chapter 5 provided a discussion on the results of the study. The results were interpreted with the theoretical framework and findings from previous studies. The implications and recommendations for future research were also presented. Chapter 5 was the conclusion of the study.

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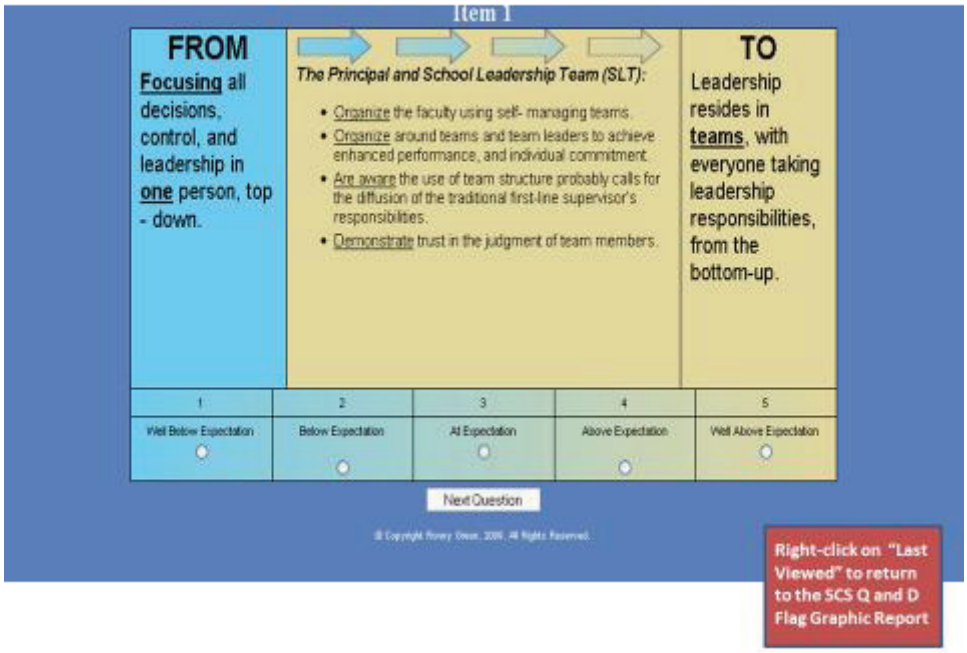
Appendix A

SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY


Item 1
FROM
Focusing all decisions, control, and leadership in one person, top - down.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Organize the faculty using self- managing teams.
• Organize around teams and team leaders to achieve enhanced performance, and individual commitment.
• Are aware the use of team structure probably calls for the diffusion of the traditional first-line supervisor's responsibilities.
• Demonstrate trust in the judgment of team members.
TO
Leadership resides in teams, with everyone taking leadership responsibilities, from the bottom-up.
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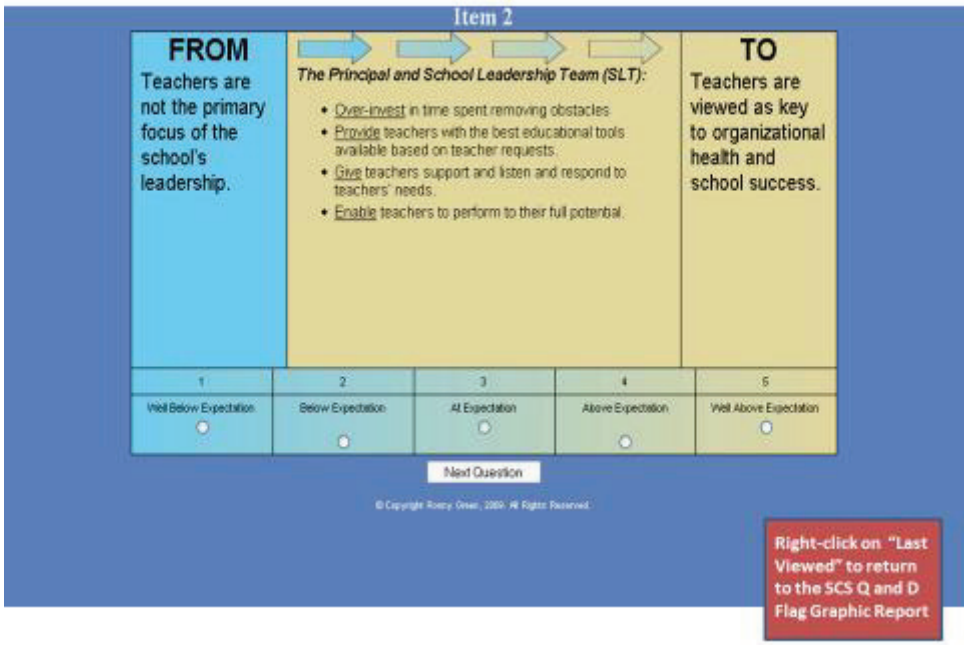
Item 2
FROM
Teachers are not the primary focus of the school's leadership.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Over-invest in time spent removing obstacles.
• Provide teachers with the best educational tools available based on teacher requests.
• Give teachers support and listen and respond to teachers' needs.
• Enable teachers to perform to their full potential.
TO
Teachers are viewed as key to organizational health and school success.
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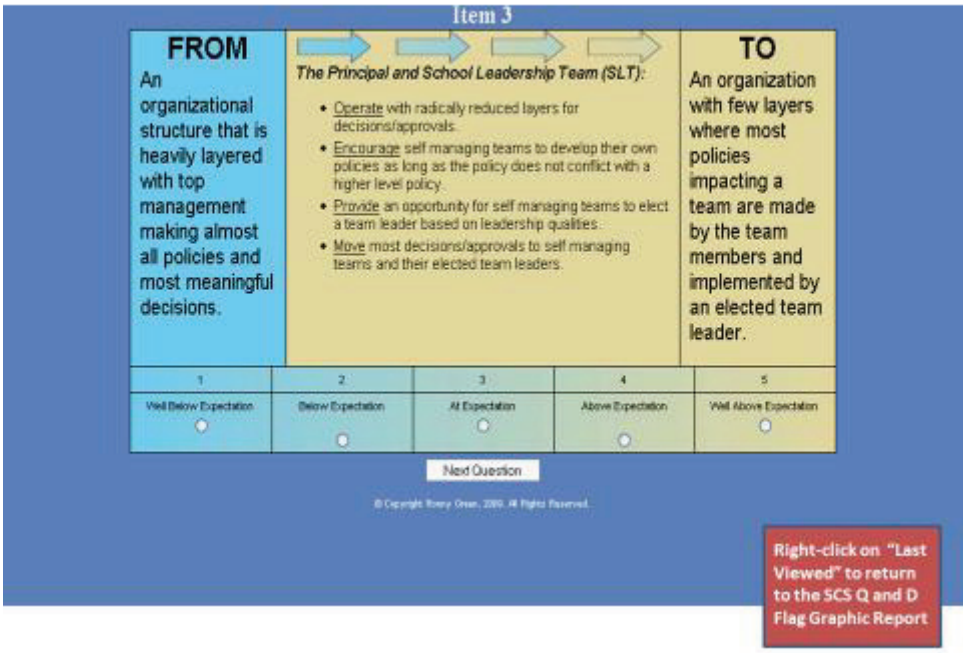
Item 3
FROM
An organizational structure that is heavily layered with top management making almost all policies and most meaningful decisions.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Operate with radically reduced layers for decisions/approvals.
• Encourage self managing teams to develop their own policies as long as the policy does not conflict with a higher level policy.
• Provide an opportunity for self managing teams to elect a team leader based on leadership qualities.
• Move most decisions/approvals to self managing teams and their elected team leaders.
TO
An organization with few layers where most policies impacting a team are made by the team members and implemented by an elected team leader.
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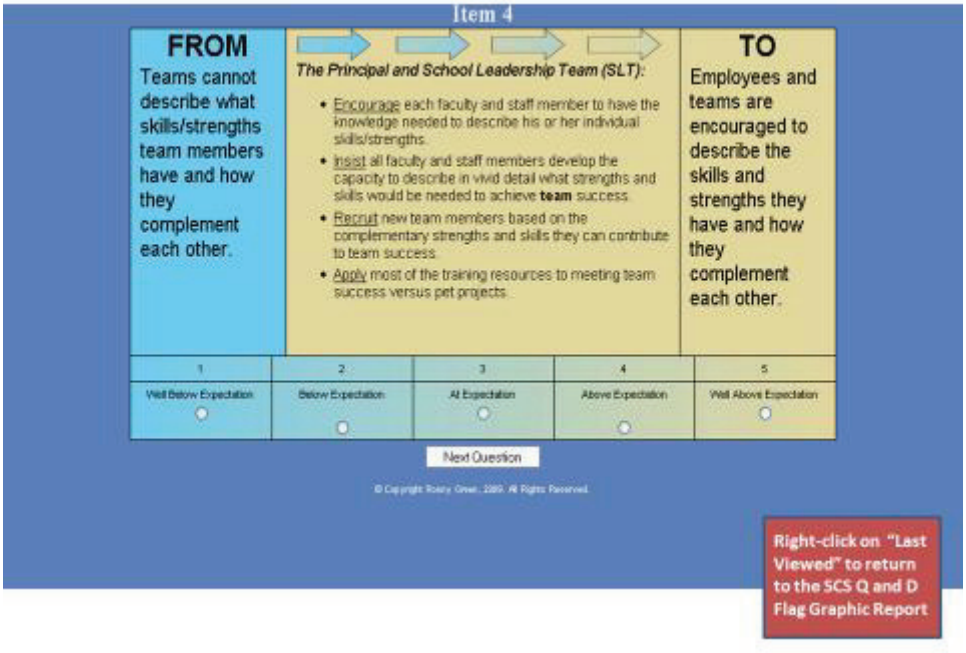
Item 4
FROM
Teams cannot describe what skills/strengths team members have and how they complement each other.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Encourage each faculty and staff member to have the knowledge needed to describe his or her individual skills/strengths.
• Insist all faculty and staff members develop the capacity to describe in vivid detail what strengths and skills would be needed to achieve team success.
• Recruit new team members based on the complementary strengths and skills they can contribute to team success.
• Apply most of the training resources to meeting team success versus pet projects.
TO
Employees and teams are encouraged to describe the skills and strengths they have and how they complement each other.
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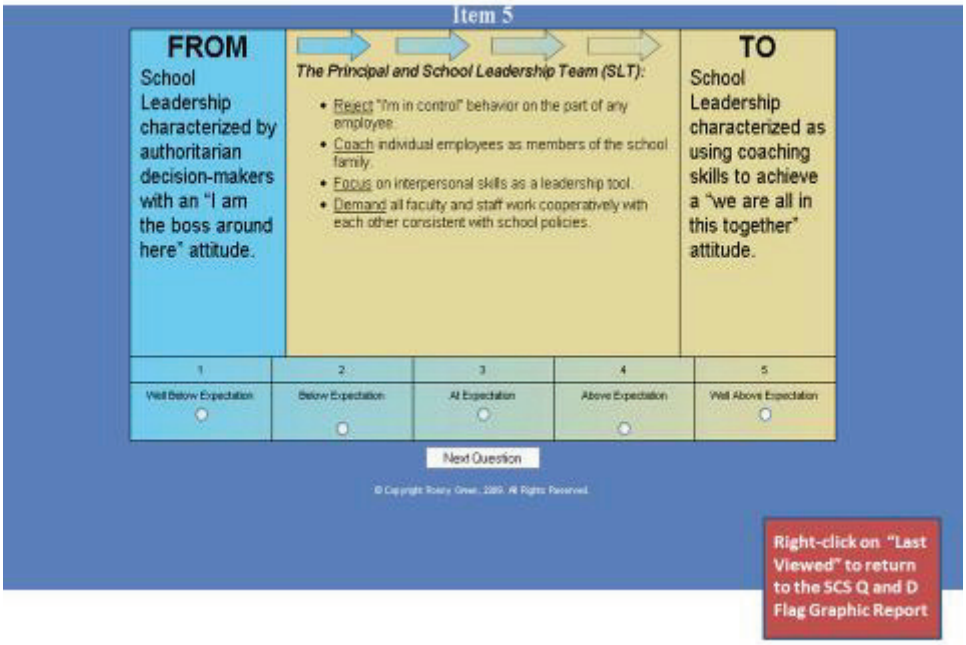
Item 5
FROM
School Leadership characterized by authoritarian decision-makers with an "I am the boss around here" attitude.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Reject "I'm in control" behavior on the part of any employee.
• Coach individual employees as members of the school family.
• Focus on interpersonal skills as a leadership tool.
• Demand all faculty and staff work cooperatively with each other consistent with school policies.
TO
School Leadership characterized as using coaching skills to achieve a "we are all in this together" attitude.
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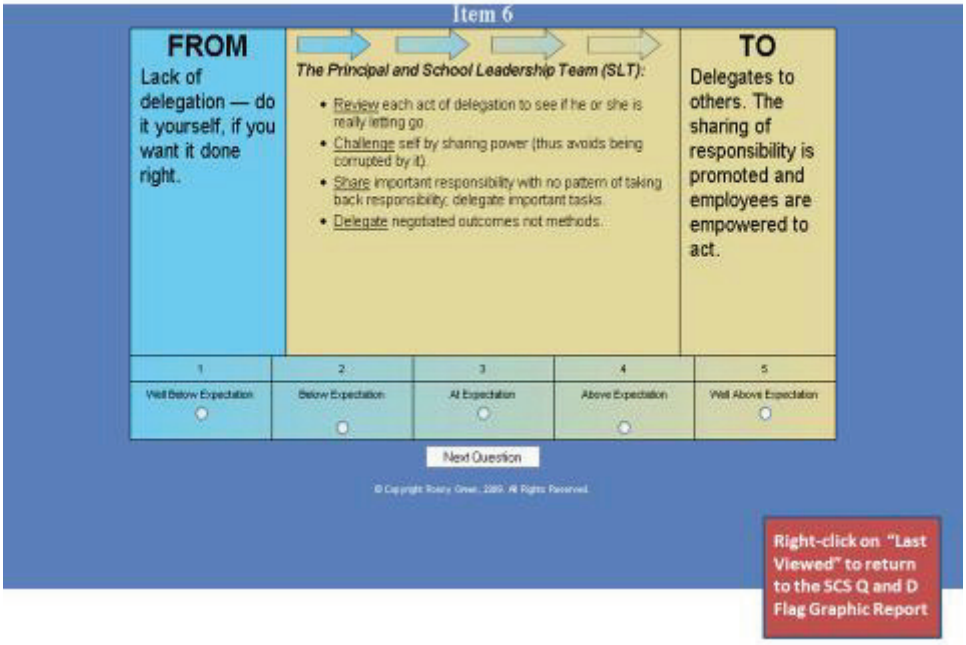
Item 6
FROM
Lack of delegation — do it yourself, if you want it done right.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Review each act of delegation to see if he or she is really letting go.
• Challenge self by sharing power (thus avoids being corrupted by it).
• Share important responsibility with no pattern of taking back responsibility; delegate important tasks.
• Delegate negotiated outcomes not methods.
TO
Delegates to others. The sharing of responsibility is promoted and employees are empowered to act.
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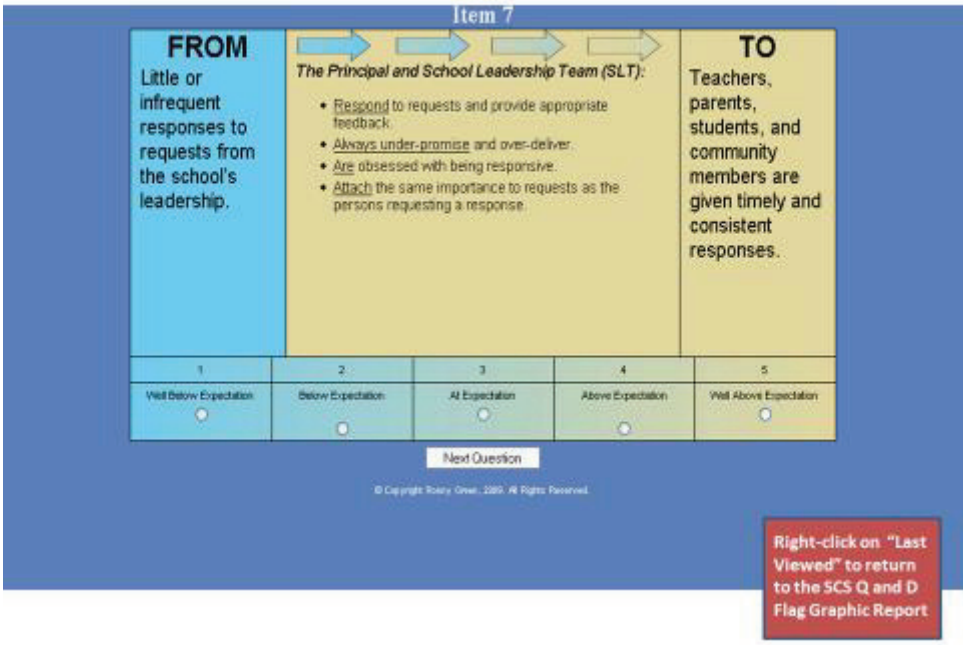
Item 7
FROM
Little or infrequent responses to requests from the school's leadership.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Respond to requests and provide appropriate feedback.
• Always under-promise and over-deliver.
• Are obsessed with being responsive.
• Attach the same importance to requests as the persons requesting a response.
TO
Teachers, parents, students, and community members are given timely and consistent responses.
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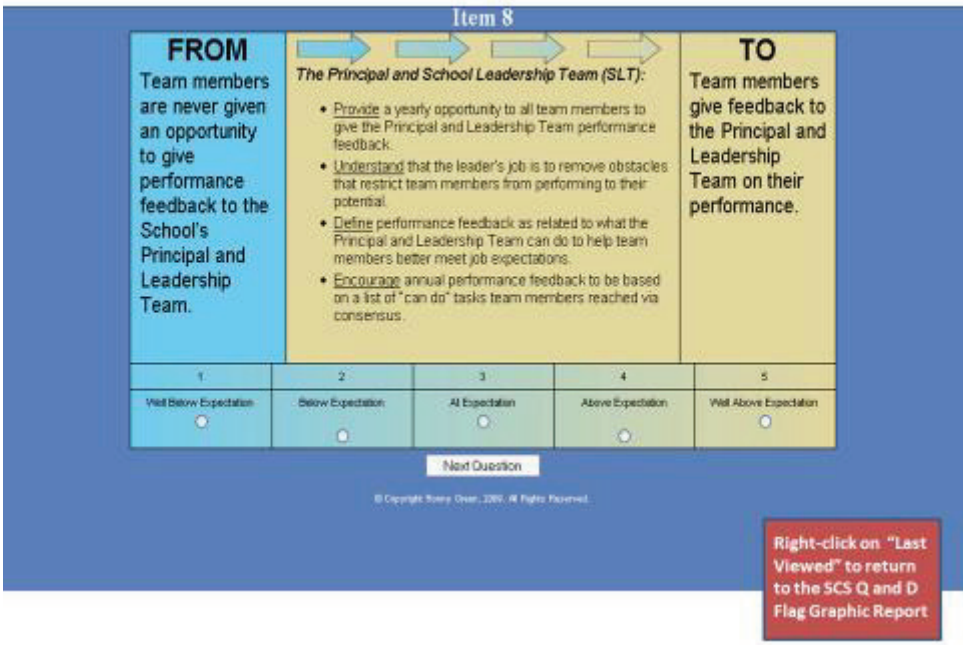
Item 8
FROM
Team members are never given an opportunity to give performance feedback to the School's Principal and Leadership Team.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Provide a yearly opportunity to all team members to give the Principal and Leadership Team performance feedback.
• Understand that the leader's job is to remove obstacles that restrict team members from performing to their potential.
• Define performance feedback as related to what the Principal and Leadership Team can do to help team members better meet job expectations.
• Encourage annual performance feedback to be based on a list of "can do" tasks team members reached via consensus.
TO
Team members give feedback to the Principal and Leadership Team on their performance.
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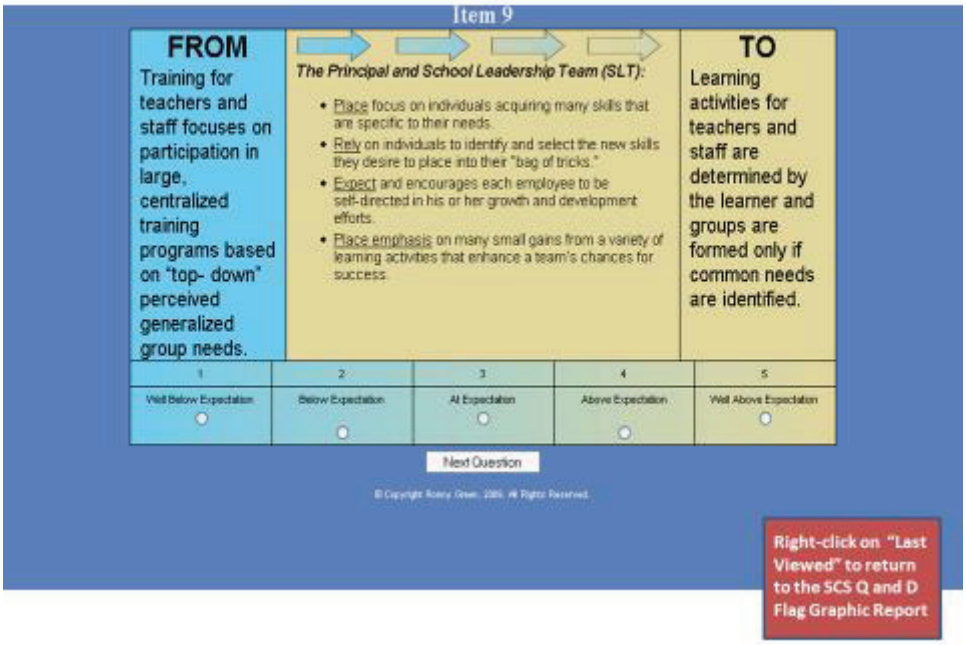
Item 9
FROM
Training for teachers and staff focuses on participation in large, centralized training programs based on "top- down" perceived generalized group needs.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Place focus on individuals acquiring many skills that are specific to their needs.
• Rely on individuals to identify and select the new skills they desire to place into their "bag of tricks."
• Expect and encourages each employee to be self-directed in his or her growth and development efforts.
• Place emphasis on many small gains from a variety of learning activities that enhance a team's chances for success.
TO
Learning activities for teachers and staff are determined by the learner and groups are formed only if common needs are identified.
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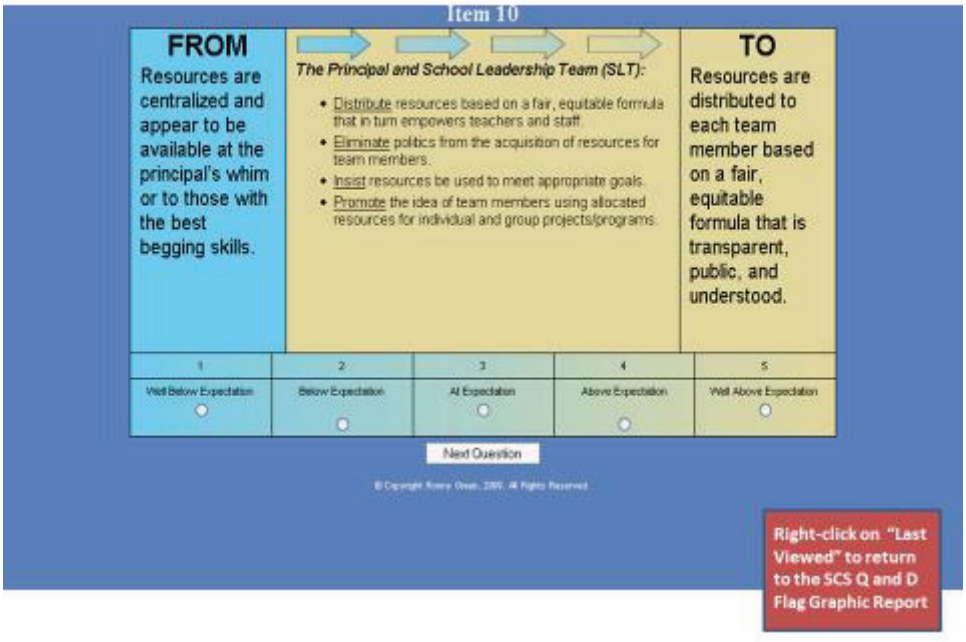
Item 10
FROM
Resources are centralized and appear to be available at the principal's whim or to those with the best begging skills.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Distribute resources based on a fair, equitable formula that in turn empowers teachers and staff.
• Eliminate politics from the acquisition of resources for team members.
• Insist resources be used to meet appropriate goals.
• Promote the idea of team members using allocated resources for individual and group projects/programs.
TO
Resources are distributed to each team member based on a fair, equitable formula that is transparent, public, and understood.
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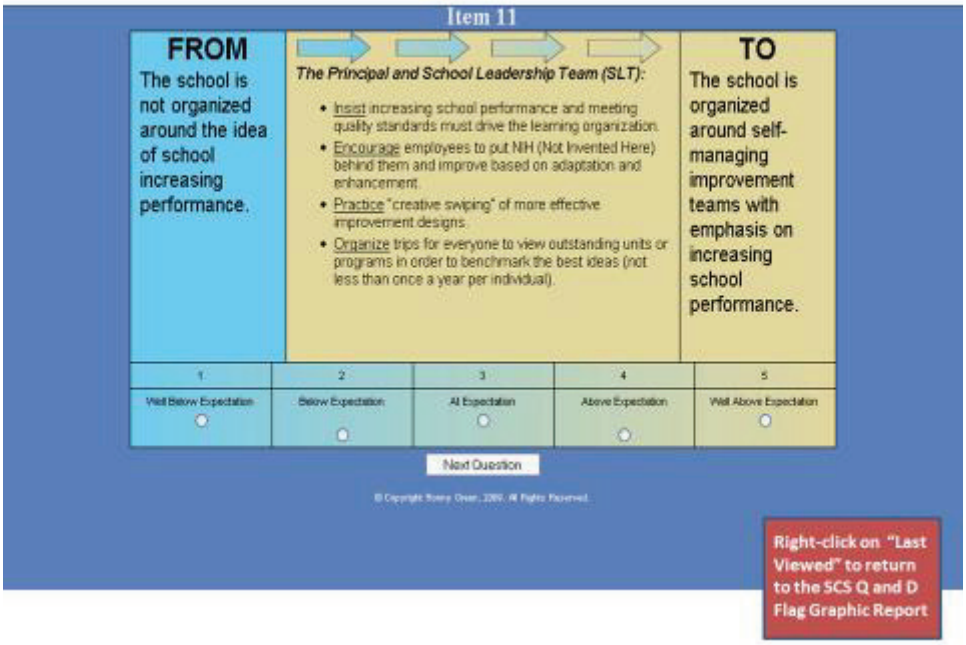
Item 11
FROM
The school is not organized around the idea of school increasing performance.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Insist increasing school performance and meeting quality standards must drive the learning organization.
• Encourage employees to put NIH (Not Invented Here) behind them and improve based on adaptation and enhancement.
• Practice "creative swiping" of more effective improvement designs.
• Organize trips for everyone to view outstanding units or programs in order to benchmark the best ideas (not less than once a year per individual).
TO
The school is organized around self-managing improvement teams with emphasis on increasing school performance.
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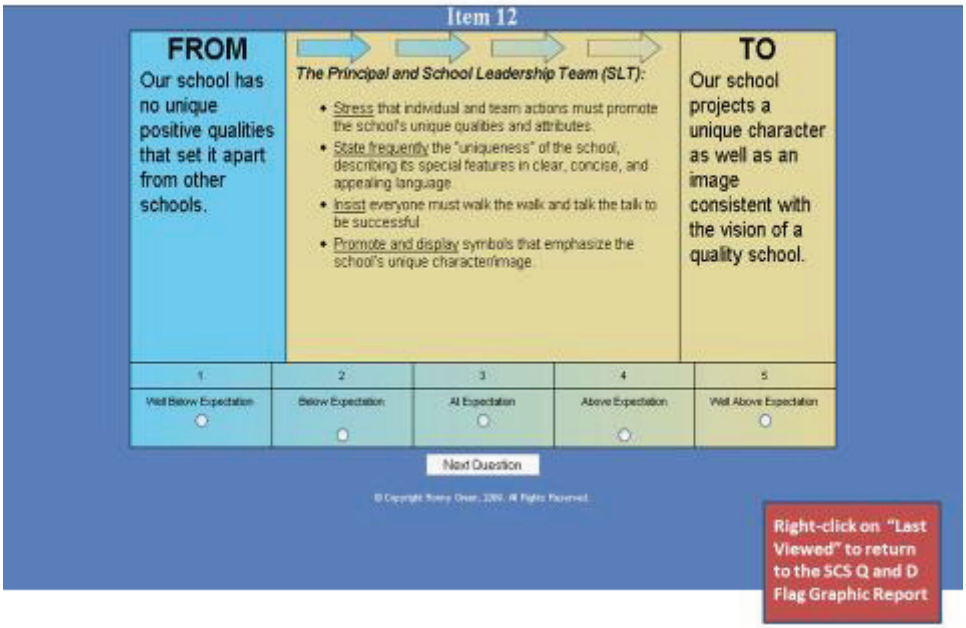
Item 12
FROM
Our school has no unique positive qualities that set it apart from other schools.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Stress that individual and team actions must promote the school's unique qualities and attributes.
• State frequently the "uniqueness" of the school, describing its special features in clear, concise, and appealing language.
• Insist everyone must walk the walk and talk the talk to be successful.
• Promote and display symbols that emphasize the school's unique character/image.
TO
Our school projects a unique character as well as an image consistent with the vision of a quality school.
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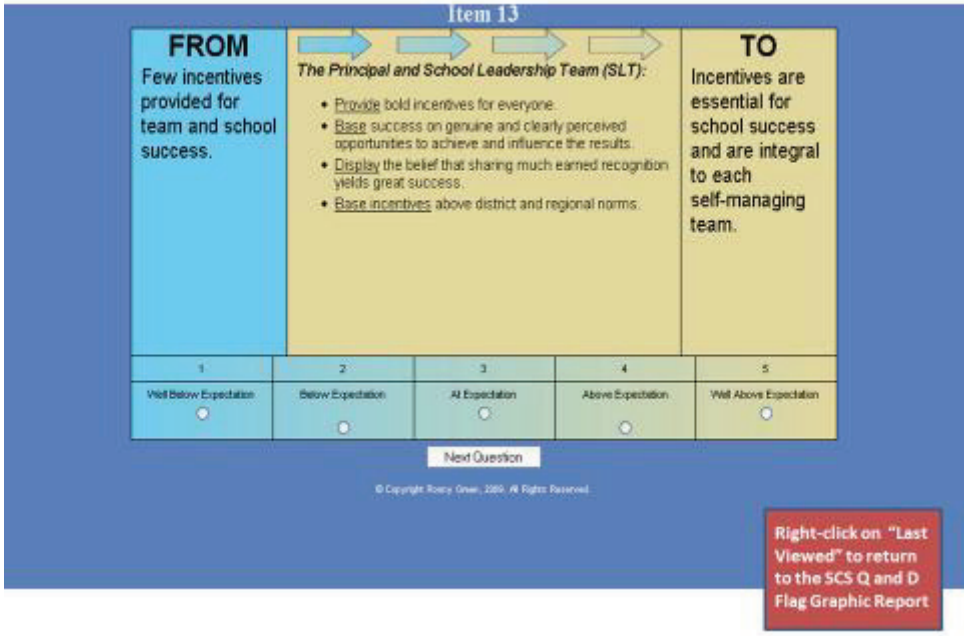
Item 13
FROM
Few incentives provided for team and school success.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Provide bold incentives for everyone.
Base success on genuine and clearly perceived opportunities to achieve and influence the results.
Display the belief that sharing much earned recognition yields great success.
Base incentives above district and regional norms.
TO
Incentives are essential for school success and are integral to each self-managing team.
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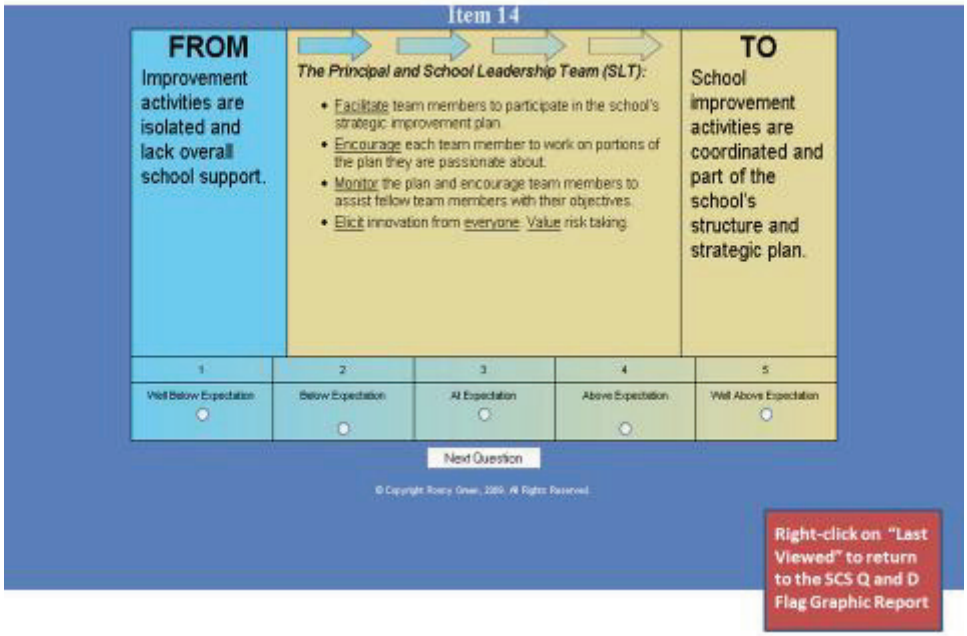
Item 14
FROM
Improvement activities are isolated and lack overall school support.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Facilitate team members to participate in the school's strategic improvement plan.
Encourage each team member to work on portions of the plan they are passionate about.
Monitor the plan and encourage team members to assist fellow team members with their objectives.
Elicit innovation from everyone. Value risk taking.
TO
School improvement activities are coordinated and part of the school's structure and strategic plan.
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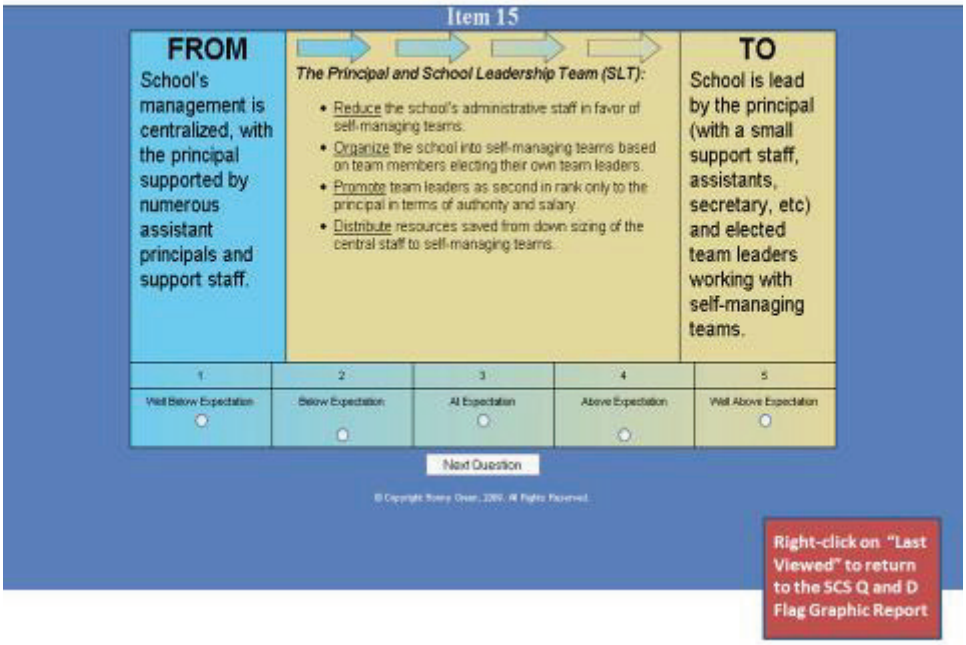
Item 15
FROM
School's management is centralized, with the principal supported by numerous assistant principals and support staff.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Reduce the school's administrative staff in favor of self-managing teams.
Organize the school into self-managing teams based on team members electing their own team leaders.
Promote team leaders as second in rank only to the principal in terms of authority and salary.
Distribute resources saved from down sizing of the central staff to self-managing teams.
TO
School is lead by the principal (with a small support staff, assistants, secretary, etc) and elected team leaders working with self-managing teams.
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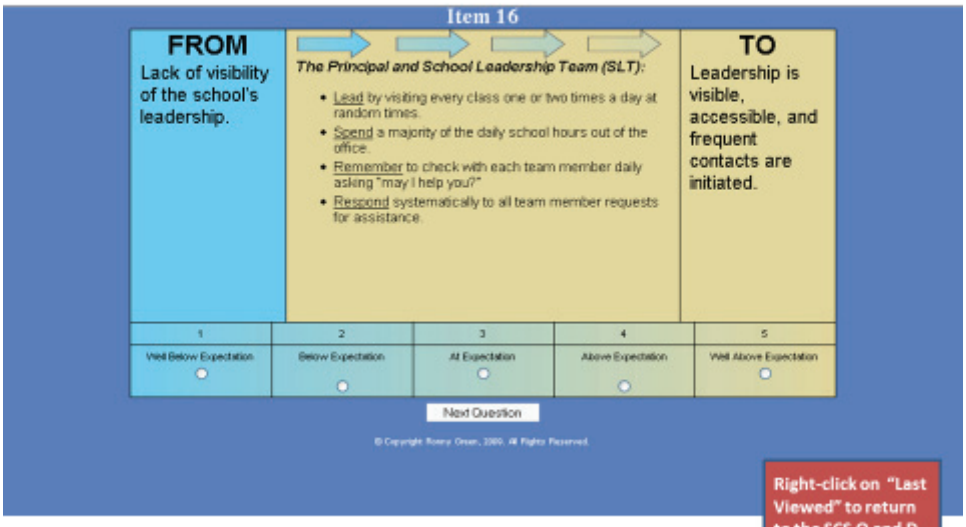
Item 16
FROM
Lack of visibility of the school's leadership.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Lead by visiting every class one or two times a day at random times.
Spend a majority of the daily school hours out of the office.
Remember to check with each team member daily asking "may I help you?"
Respond systematically to all team member requests for assistance.
TO
Leadership is visible, accessible, and frequent contacts are initiated.
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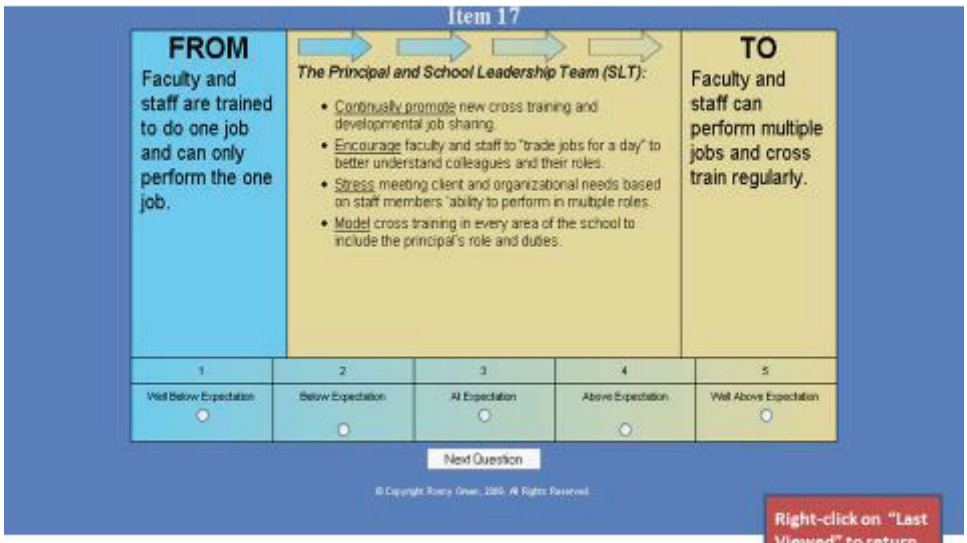

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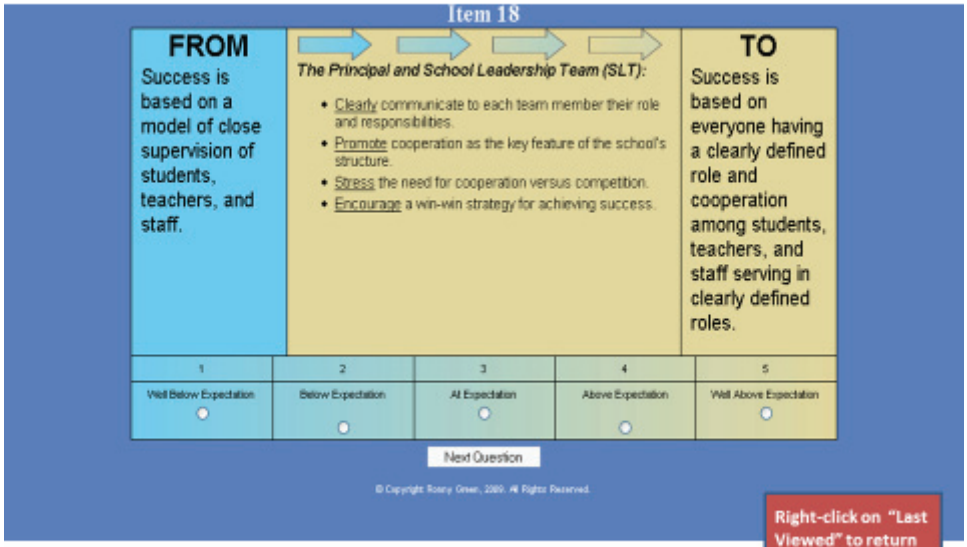

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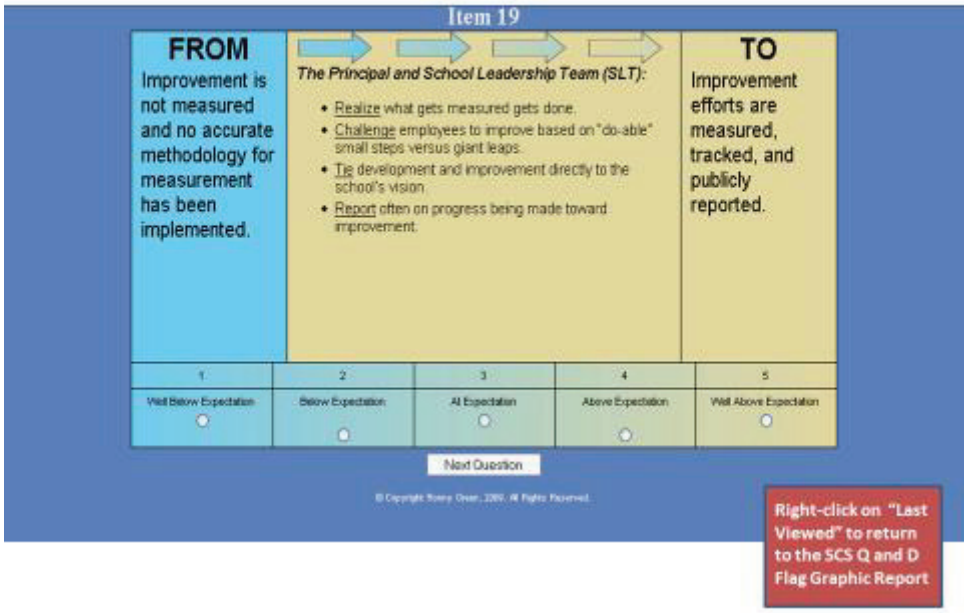
Item 19
FROM
Improvement is not measured and no accurate methodology for measurement has been implemented.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Realize what gets measured gets done.
• Challenge employees to improve based on "do-able" small steps versus giant leaps.
• Tie development and improvement directly to the school's vision.
• Report often on progress being made toward improvement.
TO
Improvement efforts are measured, tracked, and publicly reported.
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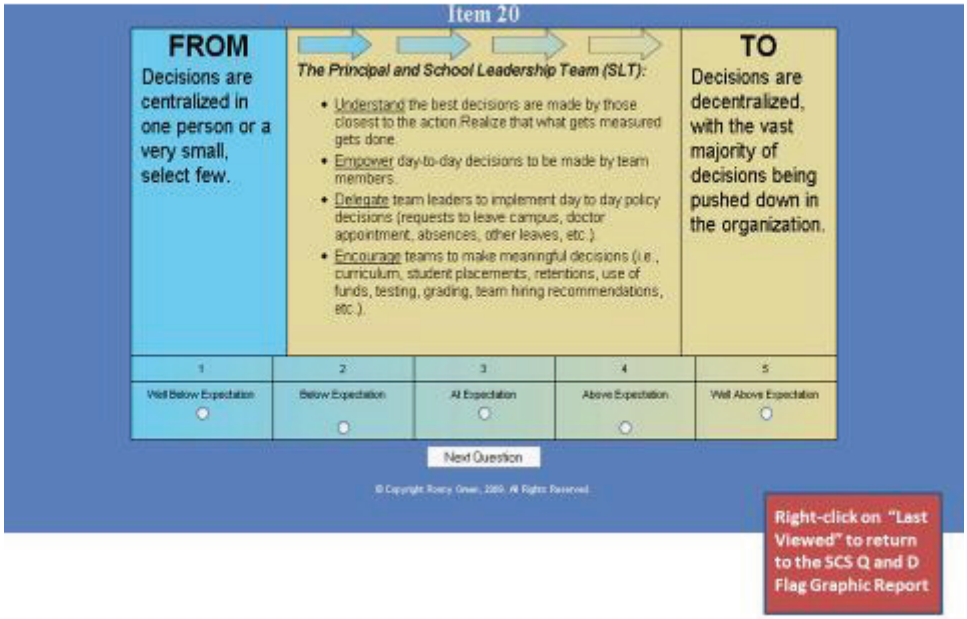
Item 20
FROM
Decisions are centralized in one person or a very small, select few.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Understand the best decisions are made by those closest to the action.Realize that what gets measured gets done.
• Empower day-to-day decisions to be made by team members.
• Delegate team leaders to implement day to day policy decisions (requests to leave campus, doctor appointment, absences, other leaves, etc.).
• Encourage teams to make meaningful decisions (i.e., curriculum, student placements, retentions, use of funds, testing, grading, team hiring recommendations, etc.).
TO
Decisions are decentralized, with the vast majority of decisions being pushed down in the organization.
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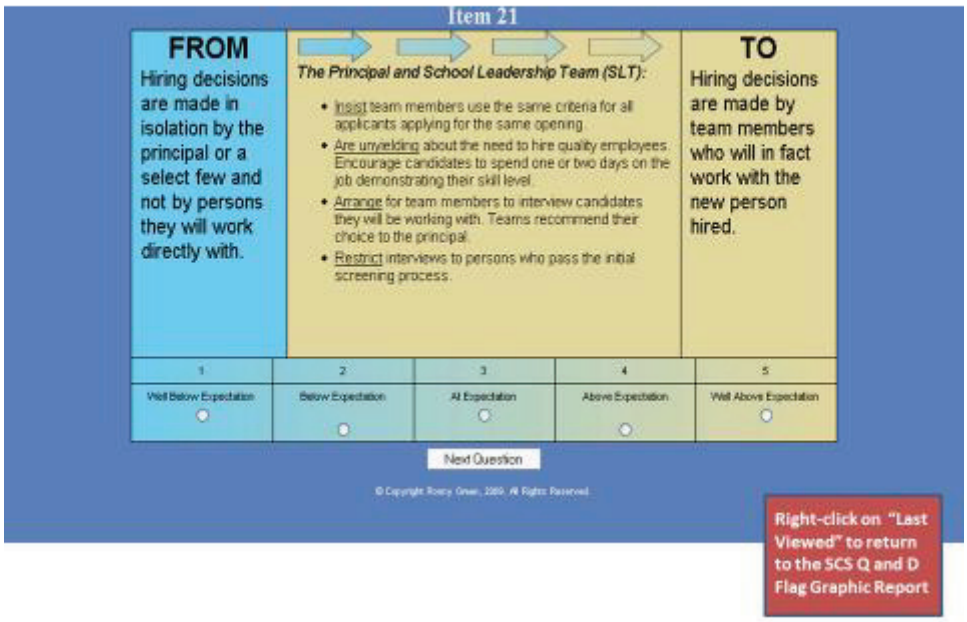
Item 21
FROM
Hiring decisions are made in isolation by the principal or a select few and not by persons they will work directly with.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Insist team members use the same criteria for all applicants applying for the same opening.
• Are unyielding about the need to hire quality employees. Encourage candidates to spend one or two days on the job demonstrating their skill level.
• Arrange for team members to interview candidates they will be working with. Teams recommend their choice to the principal.
• Restrict interviews to persons who pass the initial screening process.
TO
Hiring decisions are made by team members who will in fact work with the new person hired.
1 Well Below Expectation
2 Below Expectation
3 At Expectation
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Next Question
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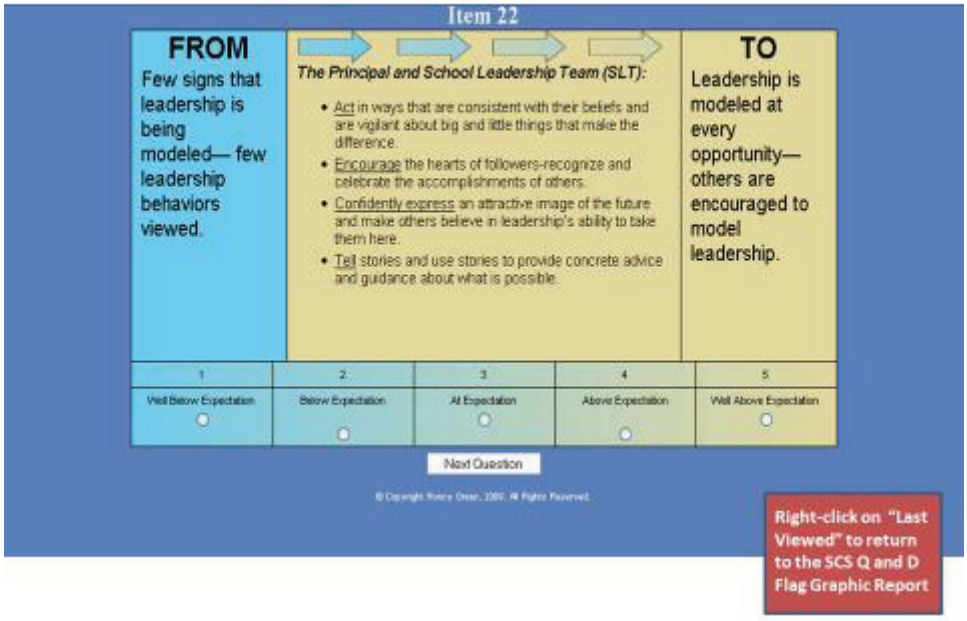
Item 22
FROM
Few signs that leadership is being modeled— few leadership behaviors viewed.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Act in ways that are consistent with their beliefs and are vigilant about big and little things that make the difference.
• Encourage the hearts of followers-recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of others.
• Confidently express an attractive image of the future and make others believe in leadership's ability to take them here.
• Tell stories and use stories to provide concrete advice and guidance about what is possible.
TO
Leadership is modeled at every opportunity— others are encouraged to model leadership.
1 Well Below Expectation
2 Below Expectation
3 At Expectation
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5 Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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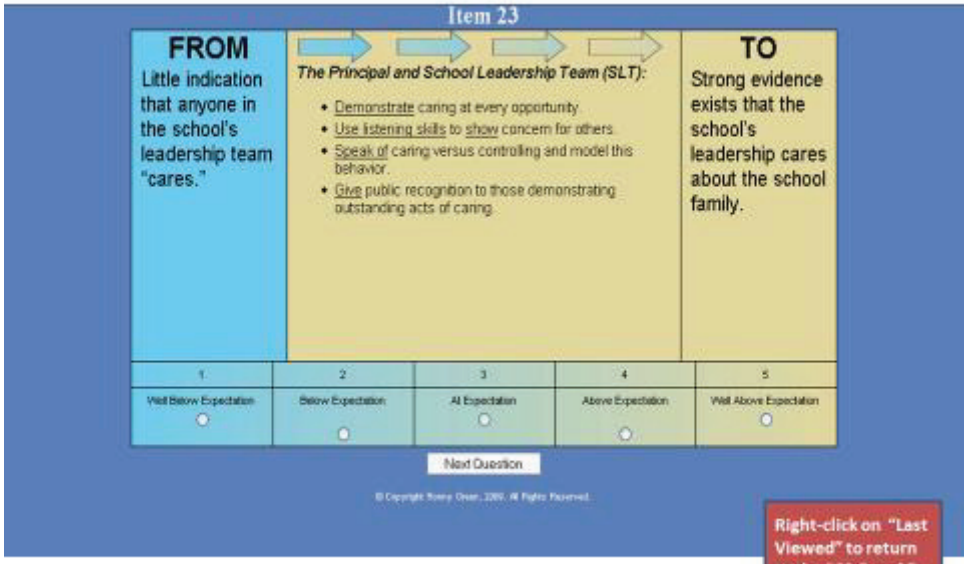
Item 23
FROM
Little indication that anyone in the school's leadership team "cares."
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Demonstrate caring at every opportunity
Use listening skills to show concern for others
Speak of caring versus controlling and model this behavior.
Give public recognition to those demonstrating outstanding acts of caring
TO
Strong evidence exists that the school's leadership cares about the school family.
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Next Question
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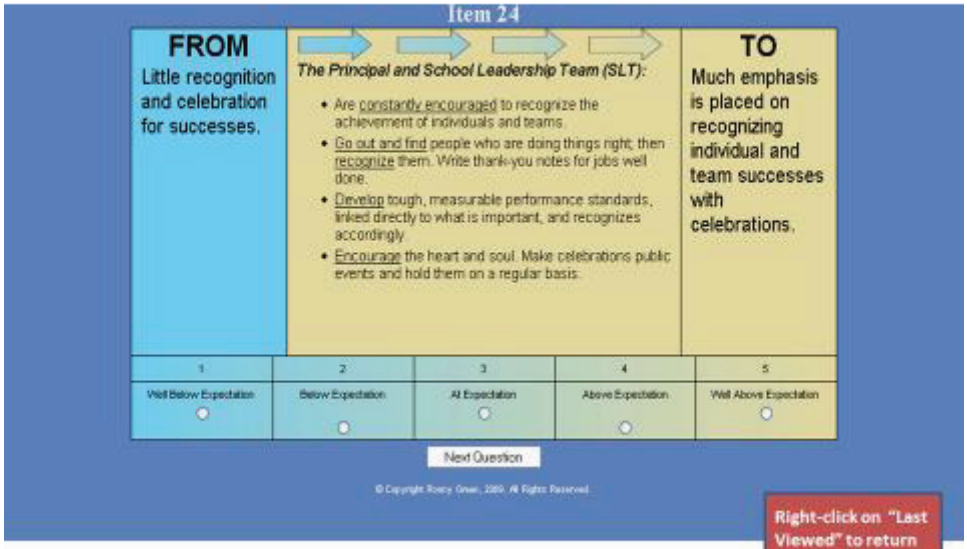
Item 24
FROM
Little recognition and celebration for successes.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Are constantly encouraged to recognize the achievement of individuals and teams.
Go out and find people who are doing things right; then recognize them. Write thank-you notes for jobs well done.
Develop tough, measurable performance standards, linked directly to what is important, and recognizes accordingly
Encourage the heart and soul. Make celebrations public events and hold them on a regular basis.
TO
Much emphasis is placed on recognizing individual and team successes with celebrations.
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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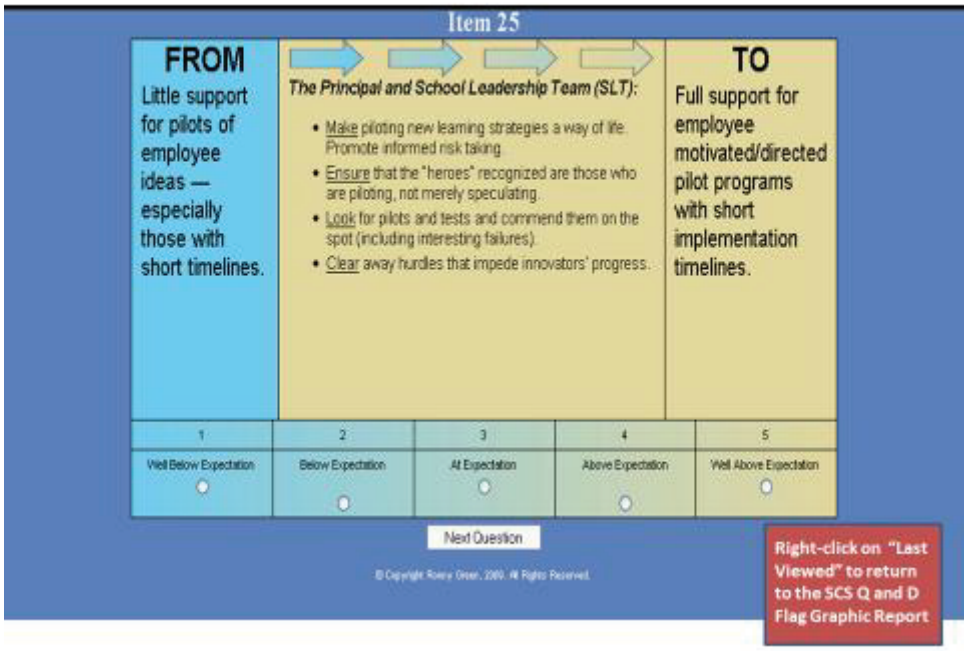
Item 25
FROM
Little support for pilots of employee ideas — especially those with short timelines.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Make piloting new learning strategies a way of life. Promote informed risk taking.
• Ensure that the "heroes" recognized are those who are piloting, not merely speculating.
• Look for pilots and tests and commend them on the spot (including interesting failures).
• Clear away hurdles that impede innovators' progress.
TO
Full support for employee motivated/directed pilot programs with short implementation timelines.
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Well Below Expectation
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At Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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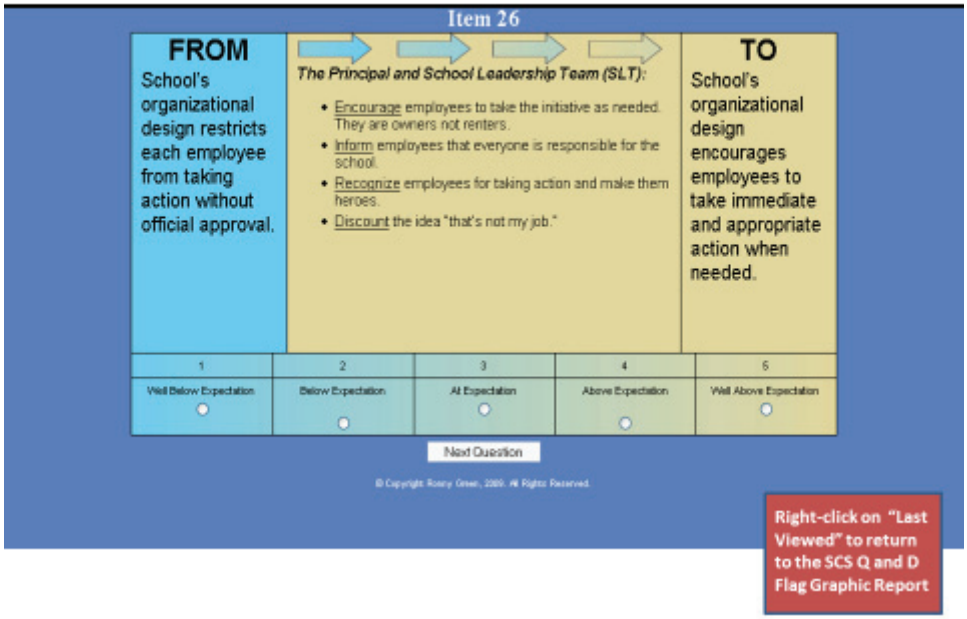
Item 26
FROM
School's organizational design restricts each employee from taking action without official approval.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Encourage employees to take the initiative as needed. They are owners not renters.
• Inform employees that everyone is responsible for the school.
• Recognize employees for taking action and make them heroes.
• Discount the idea "that's not my job."
TO
School's organizational design encourages employees to take immediate and appropriate action when needed.
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Well Below Expectation
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Below Expectation
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At Expectation
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Above Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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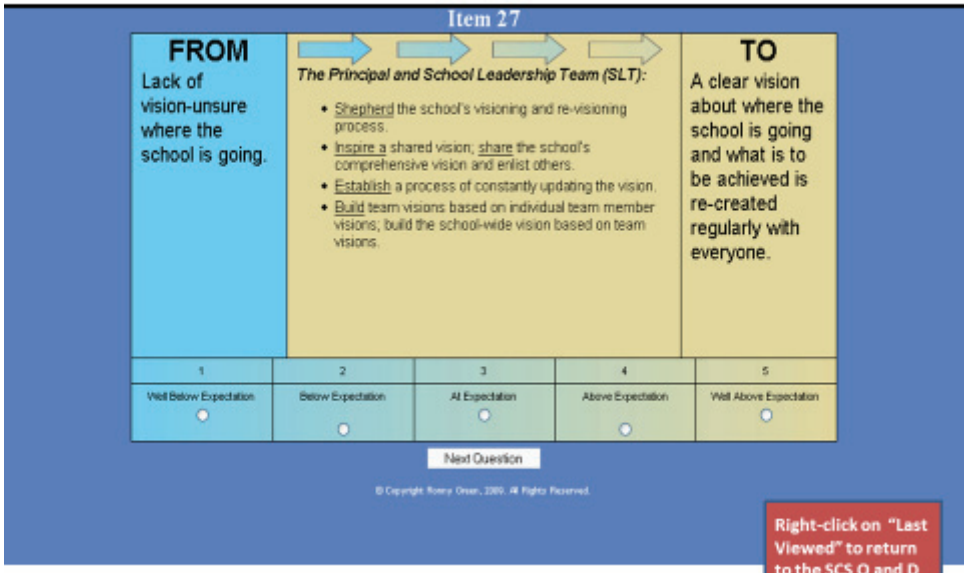
Item 27
FROM
Lack of vision-unsure where the school is going.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Shepherd the school's visioning and re-visioning process.
Inspire a shared vision; share the school's comprehensive vision and enlist others.
Establish a process of constantly updating the vision.
Build team visions based on individual team member visions; build the school-wide vision based on team visions.
TO
A clear vision about where the school is going and what is to be achieved is re-created regularly with everyone.
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Well Below Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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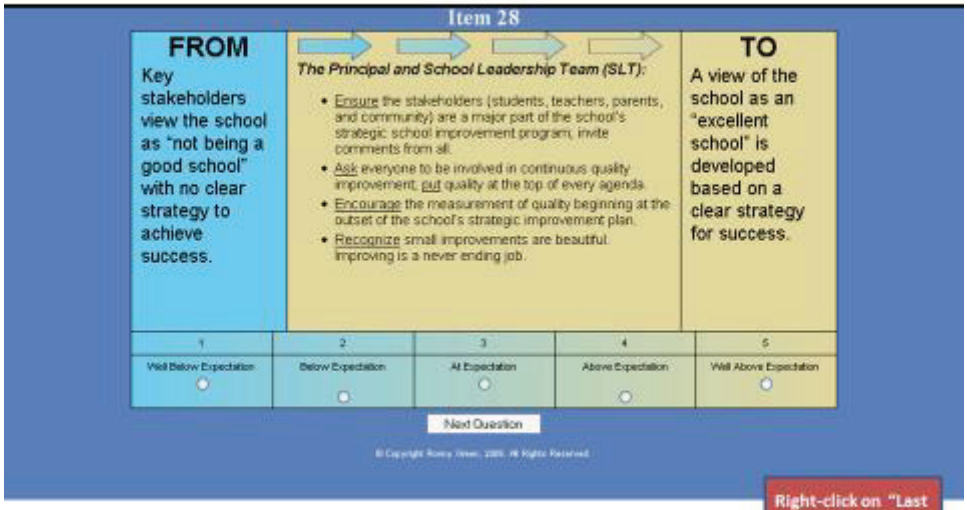
Item 28
FROM
Key stakeholders view the school as "not being a good school" with no clear strategy to achieve success.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Ensure the stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, and community) are a major part of the school's strategic school improvement program; invite comments from all.
Ask everyone to be involved in continuous quality improvement; put quality at the top of every agenda.
Encourage the measurement of quality beginning at the outset of the school's strategic improvement plan.
Recognize small improvements are beautiful. Improving is a never ending job.
TO
A view of the school as an "excellent school" is developed based on a clear strategy for success.
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Well Below Expectation
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Next Question
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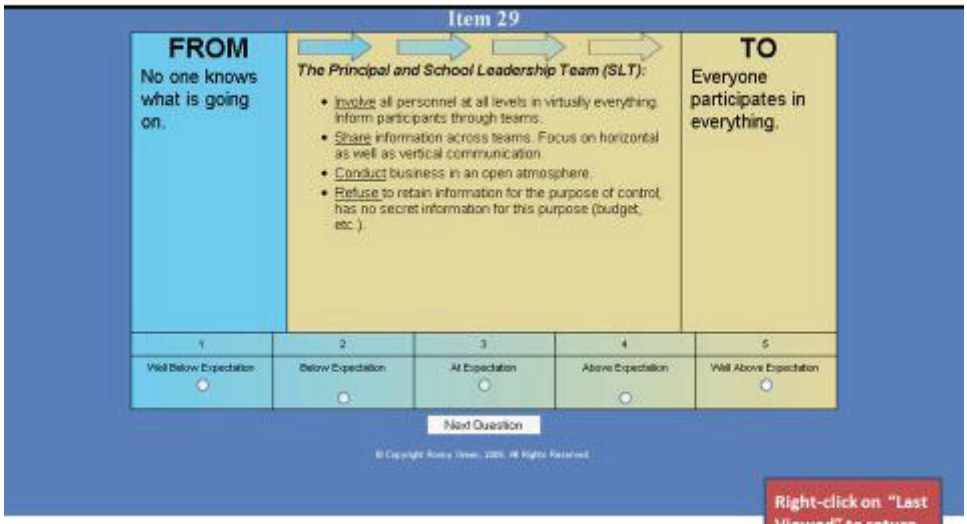
Item 29
FROM
No one knows what is going on.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Involve all personnel at all levels in virtually everything. Inform participants through teams.
Share information across teams. Focus on horizontal as well as vertical communication.
Conduct business in an open atmosphere.
Refuse to retain information for the purpose of control; has no secret information for this purpose (budget, etc.).
TO
Everyone participates in everything.
1
Well Below Expectation
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Next Question
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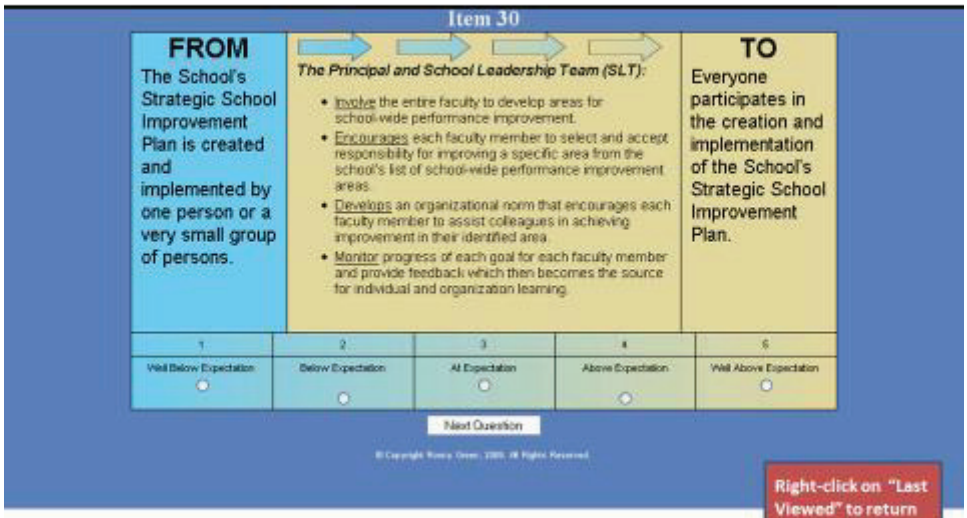
Item 30
FROM
The School's Strategic School Improvement Plan is created and implemented by one person or a very small group of persons.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Involve the entire faculty to develop areas for school-wide performance improvement.
Encourages each faculty member to select and accept responsibility for improving a specific area from the school's list of school-wide performance improvement areas.
Develops an organizational norm that encourages each faculty member to assist colleagues in achieving improvement in their identified area.
Monitor progress of each goal for each faculty member and provide feedback which then becomes the source for individual and organization learning.
TO
Everyone participates in the creation and implementation of the School's Strategic School Improvement Plan.
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Well Below Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
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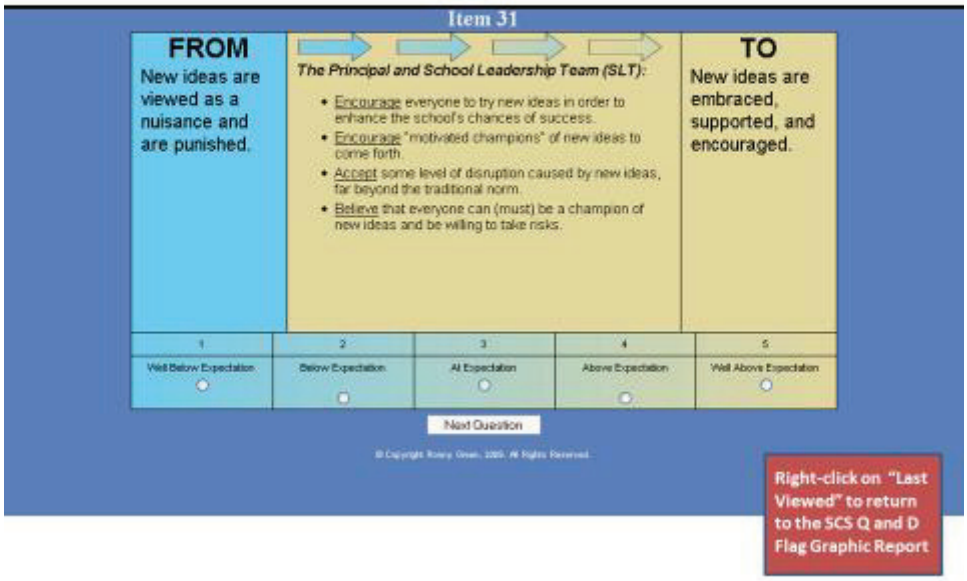
Item 31
FROM
New ideas are viewed as a nuisance and are punished.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Encourage everyone to try new ideas in order to enhance the school's chances of success.
• Encourage "motivated champions" of new ideas to come forth.
• Accept some level of disruption caused by new ideas, far beyond the traditional norm.
• Believe that everyone can (must) be a champion of new ideas and be willing to take risks.
TO
New ideas are embraced, supported, and encouraged.
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Well Below Expectation
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Below Expectation
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Next Question
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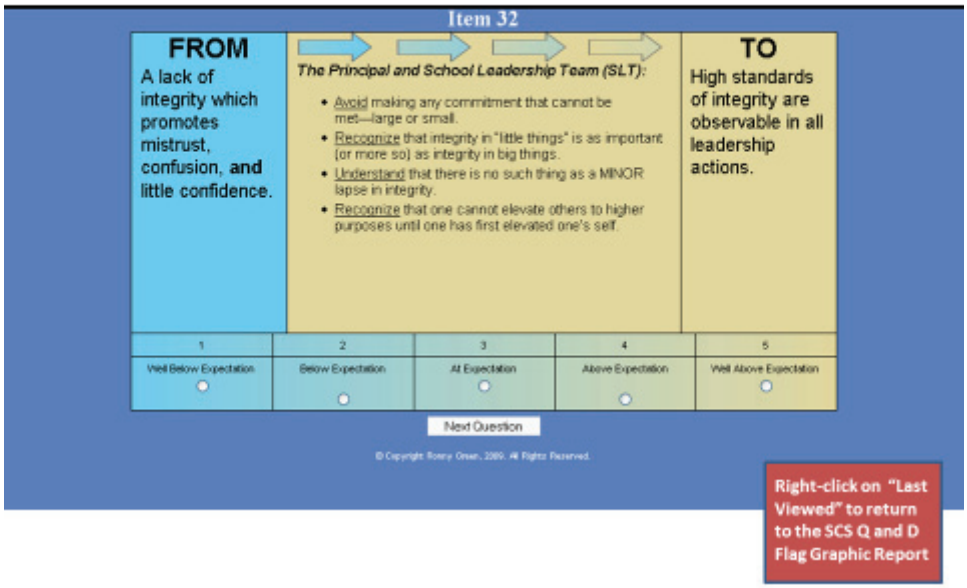
Item 32
FROM
A lack of integrity which promotes mistrust, confusion, and little confidence.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Avoid making any commitment that cannot be met—large or small.
• Recognize that integrity in "little things" is as important (or more so) as integrity in big things.
• Understand that there is no such thing as a MINOR lapse in integrity.
• Recognize that one cannot elevate others to higher purposes until one has first elevated one's self.
TO
High standards of integrity are observable in all leadership actions.
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Well Below Expectation
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Next Question
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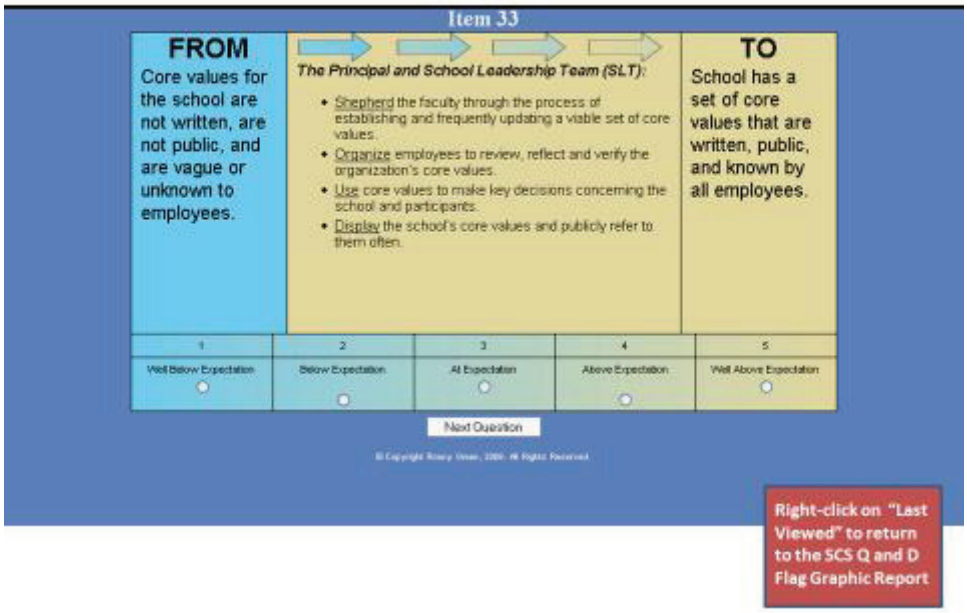
Item 33
FROM
Core values for the school are not written, are not public, and are vague or unknown to employees.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Shepherd the faculty through the process of establishing and frequently updating a viable set of core values.
Organize employees to review, reflect and verify the organization's core values.
Use core values to make key decisions concerning the school and participants.
Display the school's core values and publicly refer to them often.
TO
School has a set of core values that are written, public, and known by all employees.
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Well Below Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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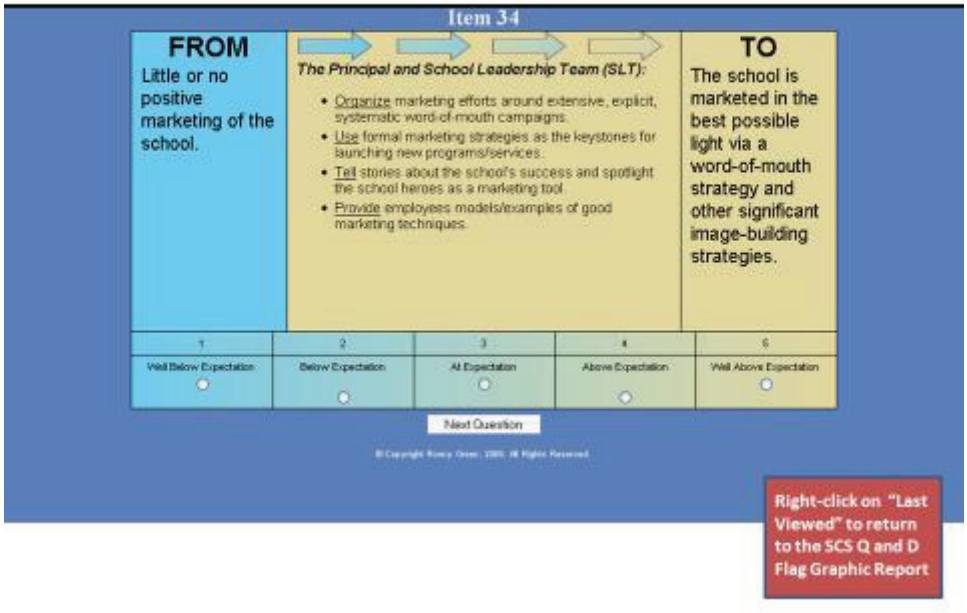
Item 34
FROM
Little or no positive marketing of the school.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Organize marketing efforts around extensive, explicit, systematic word-of-mouth campaigns.
Use formal marketing strategies as the keystones for launching new programs/services.
Tell stories about the school's success and spotlight the school heroes as a marketing tool.
Provide employees models/examples of good marketing techniques.
TO
The school is marketed in the best possible light via a word-of-mouth strategy and other significant image-building strategies.
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Well Below Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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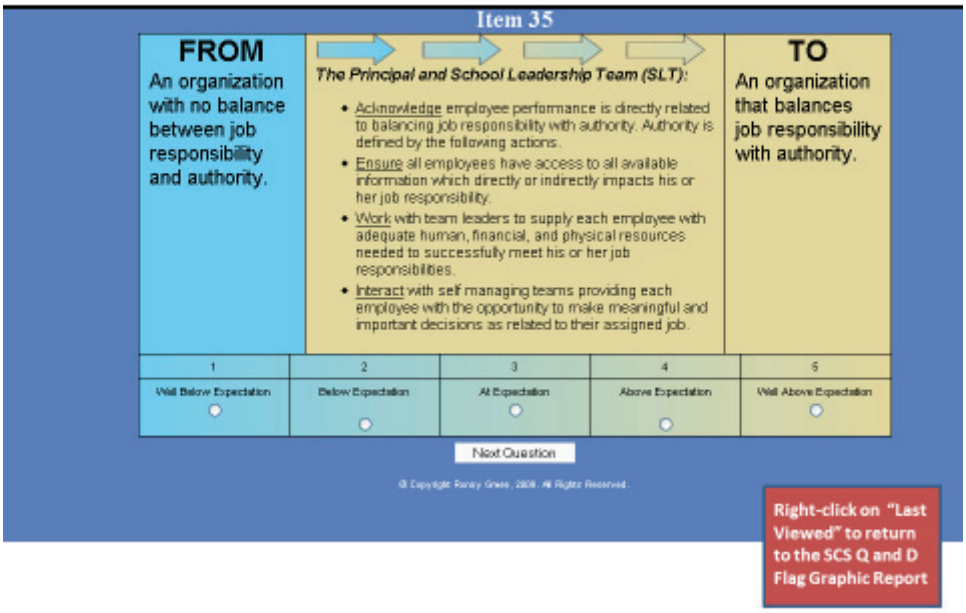
Item 35
FROM
An organization with no balance between job responsibility and authority.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Acknowledge employee performance is directly related to balancing job responsibility with authority. Authority is defined by the following actions.
• Ensure all employees have access to all available information which directly or indirectly impacts his or her job responsibility.
• Work with team leaders to supply each employee with adequate human, financial, and physical resources needed to successfully meet his or her job responsibilities.
• Interact with self managing teams providing each employee with the opportunity to make meaningful and important decisions as related to their assigned job.
TO
An organization that balances job responsibility with authority.
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Well Below Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
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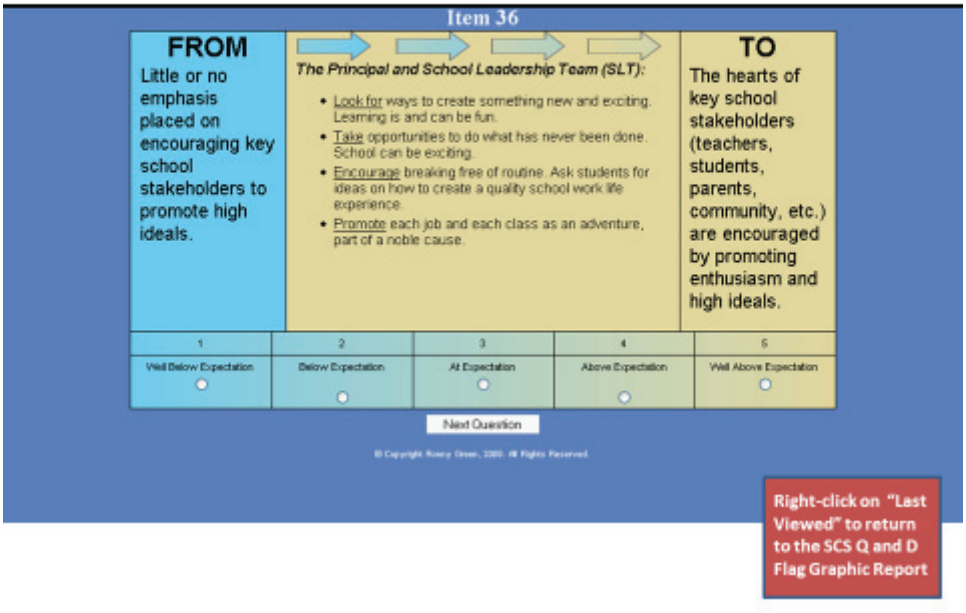
Item 36
FROM
Little or no emphasis placed on encouraging key school stakeholders to promote high ideals.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
• Look for ways to create something new and exciting. Learning is and can be fun.
• Take opportunities to do what has never been done. School can be exciting.
• Encourage breaking free of routine. Ask students for ideas on how to create a quality school work life experience.
• Promote each job and each class as an adventure, part of a noble cause.
TO
The hearts of key school stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, community, etc.) are encouraged by promoting enthusiasm and high ideals.
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Well Below Expectation
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At Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
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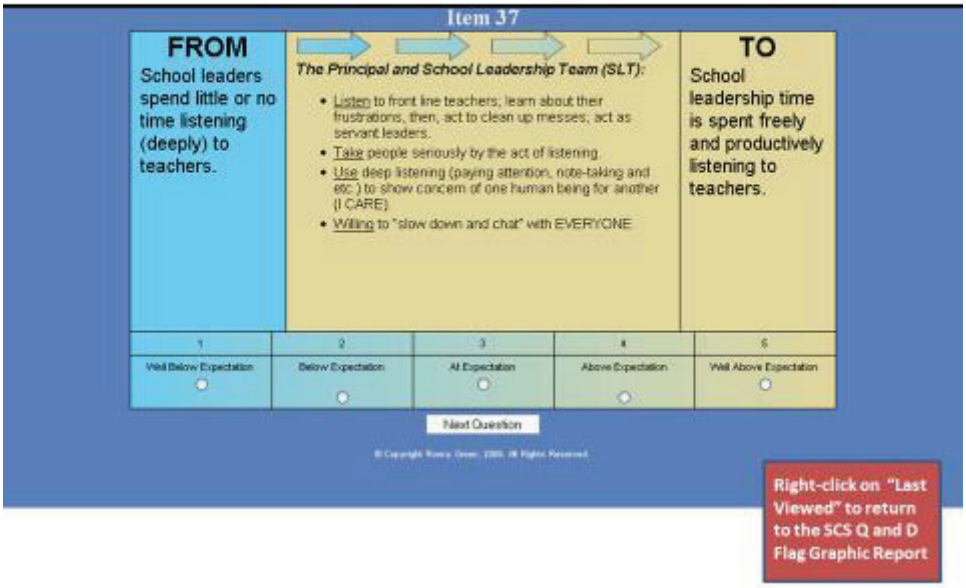
Item 37
FROM
School leaders spend little or no time listening (deeply) to teachers.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Listen to front line teachers; learn about their frustrations, then, act to clean up messes; act as servant leaders.
Take people seriously by the act of listening.
Use deep listening (paying attention, note-taking and etc.) to show concern of one human being for another (I CARE).
Willing to "slow down and chat" with EVERYONE.
TO
School leadership time is spent freely and productively listening to teachers.
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Well Below Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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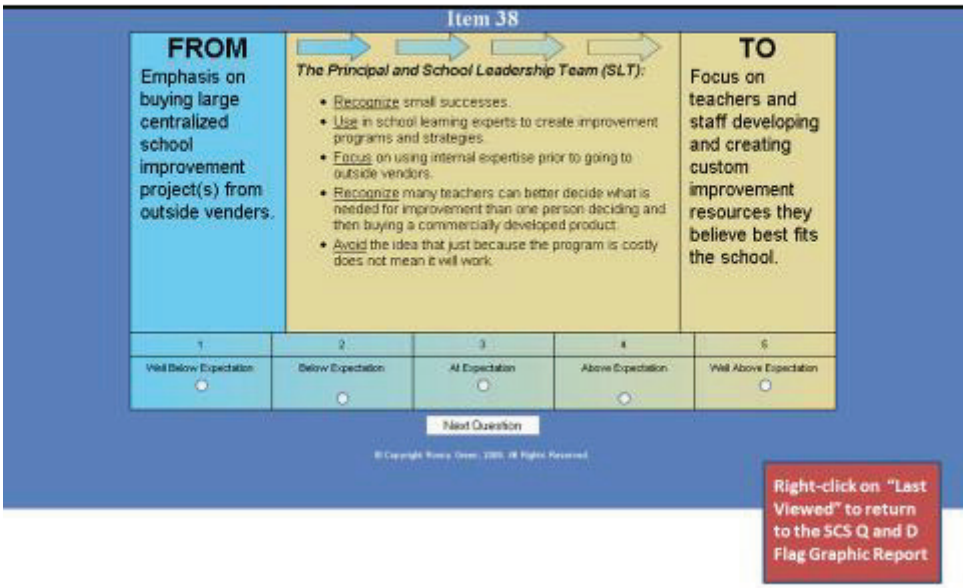
Item 38
FROM
Emphasis on buying large centralized school improvement project(s) from outside venders.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Recognize small successes.
Use in school learning experts to create improvement programs and strategies.
Focus on using internal expertise prior to going to outside vendors.
Recognize many teachers can better decide what is needed for improvement than one person deciding and then buying a commercially developed product.
Avoid the idea that just because the program is costly does not mean it will work.
TO
Focus on teachers and staff developing and creating custom improvement resources they believe best fits the school.
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Well Below Expectation
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Next Question
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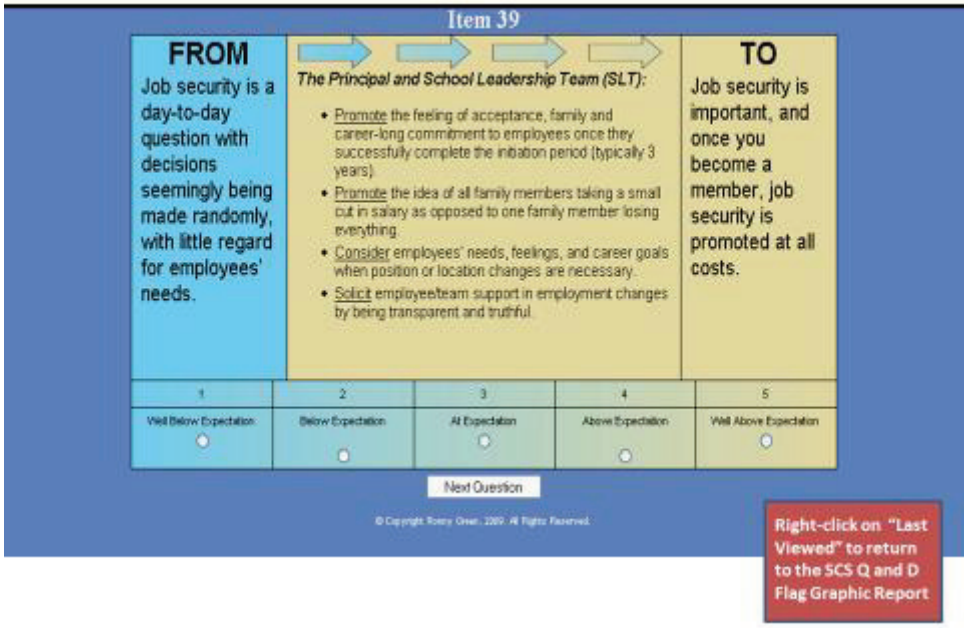
Item 39
FROM
Job security is a day-to-day question with decisions seemingly being made randomly, with little regard for employees' needs.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Promote the feeling of acceptance, family and career-long commitment to employees once they successfully complete the initiation period (typically 3 years)
Promote the idea of all family members taking a small cut in salary as opposed to one family member losing everything.
Consider employees' needs, feelings, and career goals when position or location changes are necessary.
Solicit employee/team support in employment changes by being transparent and truthful.
TO
Job security is important, and once you become a member, job security is promoted at all costs.
1
Well Below Expectation
2
Below Expectation
3
At Expectation
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Above Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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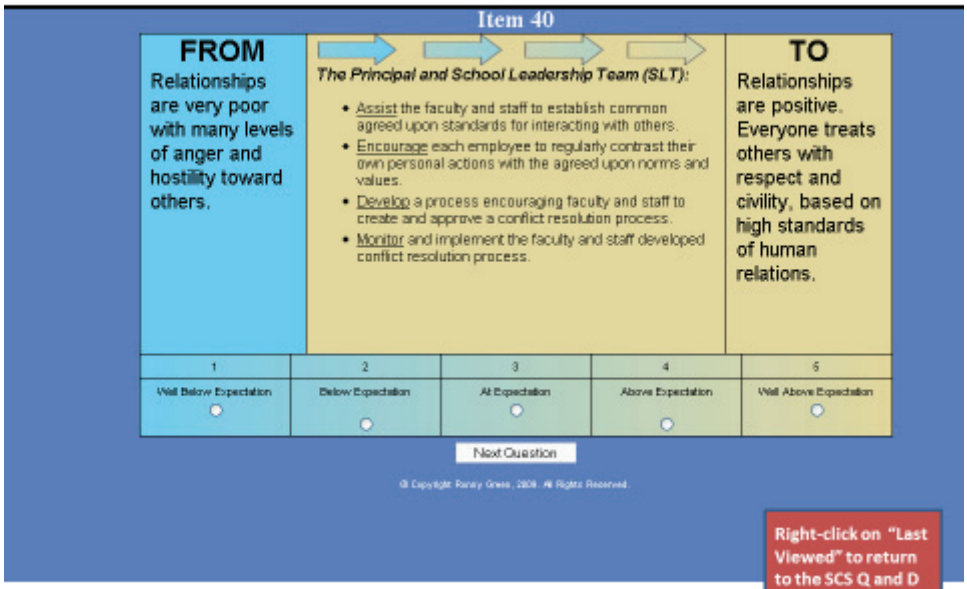
Item 40
FROM
Relationships are very poor with many levels of anger and hostility toward others.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Assist the faculty and staff to establish common agreed upon standards for interacting with others.
Encourage each employee to regularly contrast their own personal actions with the agreed upon norms and values.
Develop a process encouraging faculty and staff to create and approve a conflict resolution process.
Monitor and implement the faculty and staff developed conflict resolution process.
TO
Relationships are positive. Everyone treats others with respect and civility, based on high standards of human relations.
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Well Below Expectation
2
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3
At Expectation
4
Above Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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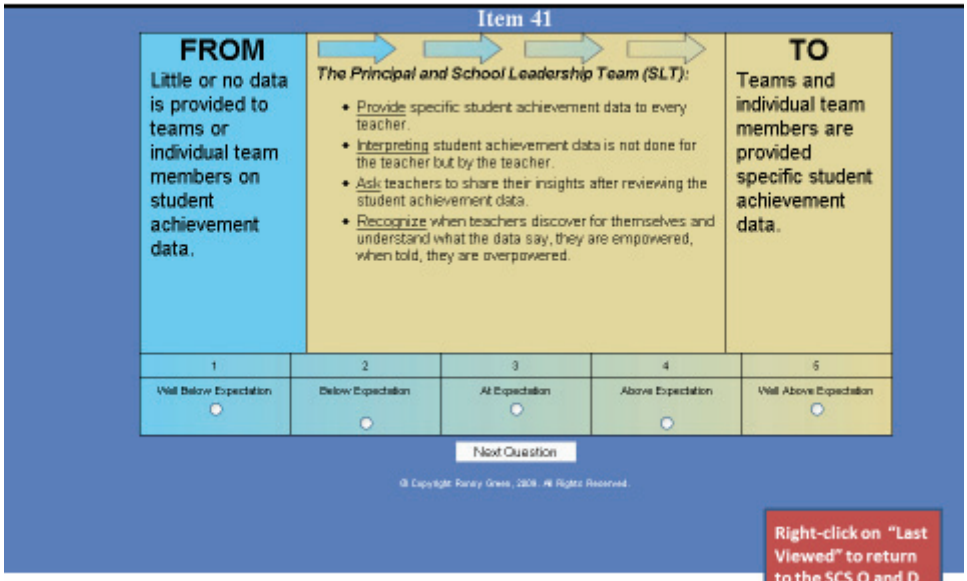
Item 41
FROM
Little or no data is provided to teams or individual team members on student achievement data.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Provide specific student achievement data to every teacher.
Interpreting student achievement data is not done for the teacher but by the teacher.
Ask teachers to share their insights after reviewing the student achievement data.
Recognize when teachers discover for themselves and understand what the data say, they are empowered, when told, they are overpowered.
TO
Teams and individual team members are provided specific student achievement data.
1
Well Below Expectation
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Above Expectation
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Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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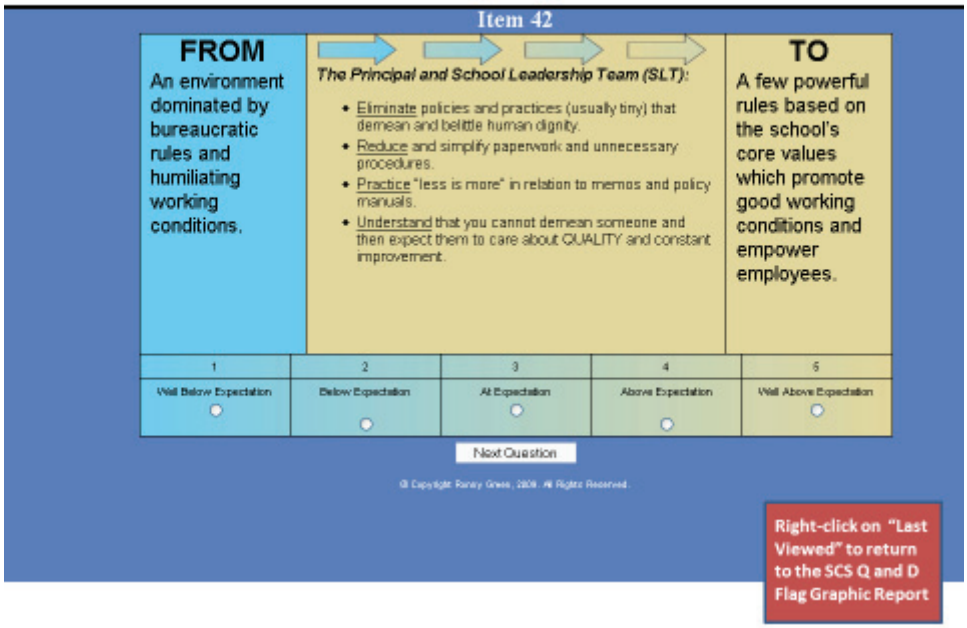
Item 42
FROM
An environment dominated by bureaucratic rules and humiliating working conditions.
The Principal and School Leadership Team (SLT):
Eliminate policies and practices (usually tiny) that demean and belittle human dignity.
Reduce and simplify paperwork and unnecessary procedures.
Practice "less is more" in relation to memos and policy manuals.
Understand that you cannot demean someone and then expect them to care about QUALITY and constant improvement.
TO
A few powerful rules based on the school's core values which promote good working conditions and empower employees.
1
Well Below Expectation
2
Below Expectation
3
At Expectation
4
Above Expectation
5
Well Above Expectation
Next Question
Right-click on "Last Viewed" to return to the SCS Q and D Flag Graphic Report


Item 43
How do you grade the quality of work life at your school?
F
Well Below Expectation
D
Below Expectation
C
At Expectation
B
Above Expectation
A
Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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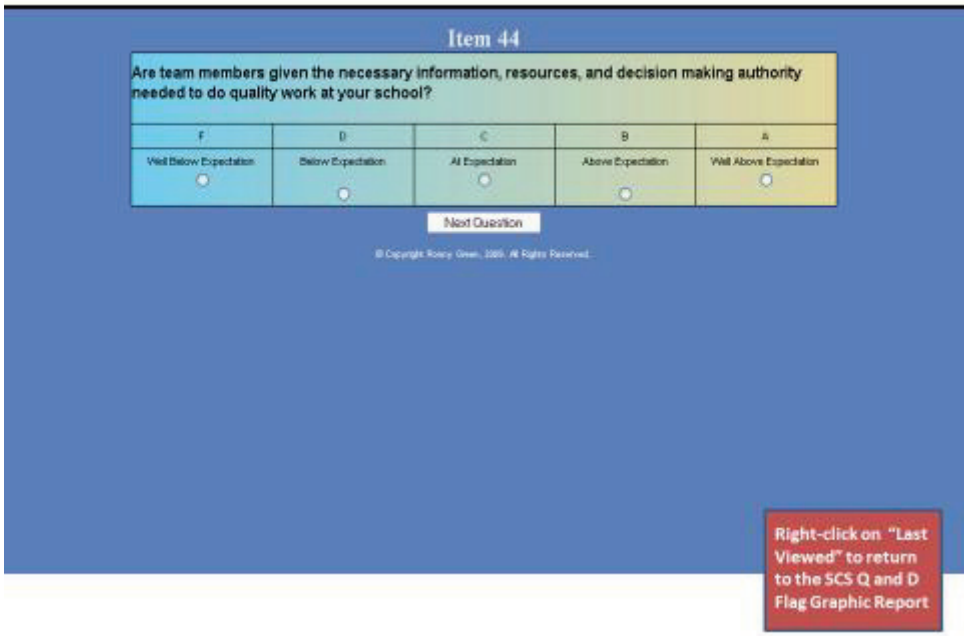
Item 44
Are team members given the necessary information, resources, and decision making authority needed to do quality work at your school?
F
Well Below Expectation
D
Below Expectation
C
At Expectation
B
Above Expectation
A
Well Above Expectation
Next Question
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Appendix B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION REPORT

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

For the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 03509-2017 **INVESTIGATOR: Mr. Willie Batts**

SUPERVISING FACULTY: Dr. Robert Ronny Green

PROJECT TITLE: ***The Impact of School Organization on School Performance at Selected Low and High Performing Elementary Schools in Georgia.***

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **Exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption **Category 2**. If the nature of the research project changes in such a way that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before making changes and/or continuing your research.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of your research study all compiled data (data lists, email addresses, etc.) must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years.*
- *It is **mandatory** that The Research Statement of Consent is the first screen that participants read. The statement must be read and acknowledged by participants before entering the survey.*
- *The IRB statement (last paragraph of Research Statement) **must** be included when sending correspondence, recruiting participants, etc.*

☒ ***If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.***