A CASE STUDY OF THE ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS WHICH MAKE UP THE FRAMEWORK OF A TURNAROUND SCHOOL

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By

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DEDICATION

I remember my advisor saying, “life happens.” How true. Just before beginning this doctorate program, I unexpectedly lost my mother, Evelyn Horn (September 12, 1929-February 17, 2008). Her love of learning was instilled in me and so I began the quest to further my education.

Less than one year into the coursework of my doctorate program, Steve, my husband and best friend, underwent emergency brain surgery to remove a massive tumor from behind his right eye. While still hospitalized he encouraged me to continue pursing my degree. Your vision for impossible dreams and your ability to think outside the box has helped us both persevere. Thank you for sacrificing time together while I studied. Thank you for your incredible love for me.

A year later, during the last semester of my classes, my dear father, Theron Horn slipped away (October 24, 1929-April 28, 2011). His fierce but gentle spirit of unwavering determination helped me believe I could accomplish anything.

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Life *does* happen and those whom we love walk with us. I dedicate this to Jesus Christ, whom I serve and who gives me strength. I dedicate this to the four men in my life, Steve, Josh, Jordan, and Bryant, whom I love and who have championed me through this effort. I dedicate this to my dad and mom, who would have been proud.

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A CASE STUDY OF THE ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS WHICH MAKE UP THE FRAMEWORK OF A TURNAROUND SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

States have been given flexibility under No Child Left Behind to create need-driven comprehensive school improvement plans with an approved accountability system, however those unable to show increased student learning will be deemed as failing. Schools labeled as failing require a comprehensive framework for improvement. Research has identified a framework of essential supports to turn failing schools around; strong leadership, increased staff capacity, instructional guidance, a learning centered climate, and parent/community involvement. The purpose of this study was to investigate the essential supports one failing school used to improve the student's academic achievement. This turnaround school, located in California, was in Program Improvement status for five years prior to new leadership. Data from the study revealed a strong leader is at the core of a turnaround, modeling values, establishing a clear vision for improvement, and leading instruction. The staff was found to first commit to the leader's vision and capacity was increased through coalescing into a professional community, sharing curricular processes, and professional learning. Finally the climate was learning centered where a positive culture was established along with a supportive community. These themes are then related to the theories of distributive and transformational leadership. Although there is no panacea for failing schools, the data and findings from this study provide a glimpse of the essential supports needed for turnaround.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Since the 1983 report from the National Commission on Excellence in Education entitled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, which outlined a need for America's public schools to have higher standards and expectations, increase the time of school days, build capacity in teachers, and provide leadership and finances to U.S. schools, there has been an unrelenting focus to turn around failing schools (Goldberg & Harvey, 1983). Eleven years later the Improving America's Schools Act, a 1994 federal Title I law, reiterated the need for higher academic standards and increased teacher capacity while adding assessments to reform education and ensure accountability of American schools (Borman et al., 2000). Eight years following this law, failing U.S. public schools were still on the forefront of lawmakers and in 2002, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiated yearly formalized student assessments to determine academic adequate yearly progress, classifying schools as achieving or failing. This federal level of expected academic standards was aimed at closing the achievement gap between various ethnic, language, and poverty levels of student populations in the United States (Meyers & Murphy, 2007).

As the stakes rise for what constitutes an achieving school, more schools plummet into a failing status with a goal of 100 percent student proficiency by 2014 (McNeil & Klein, 2011). According to the most recent report from the Mass Insight Education and Research Institute (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007) about 4,900 schools were projected to be failing by the 2009-2010 school year. Leaders and staff at failing schools

are charged with raising student achievement to bring ever increasing numbers of schools out of failing status. And then on September 23, 2011, President Obama offered states waivers from the current federal NCLB requirement, through a plan to support existing successful reforms underway in many states and school districts and to encourage local innovation for increasing student achievement and instructional quality (McNeil & Klein, 2011). Under this plan principal and teacher performance will be measured through the growth of student test scores and a state will be required to submit standards for student performance such as the Common Core Standards (Crotty, 2011). The lowest five percent of schools, however, will continue to face the consequences of the requirements of NCLB and will still be deemed as failing (Crotty, 2011).

Two years prior to the NCLB waivers, the Obama administration allocated federal monies for educational reform through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA); part of which provided funding for turnaround efforts through grants including "Race to the Top", "School Improvement", and "Investing in Innovation" (Katash, Nic, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant, 2010, p. 2). As states clamored for this federal education funding, it created a national focus on turning around failing schools through the dramatic efforts established by four turnaround models: turnaround, restart, transformation, or school closure (Katash et al., 2010). According to *The School Turnaround Field Guide* published by FSG Social Impact Advisors, the distinctive features of these models are (a) turnaround model—replacing the principal and half of the school staff, (b) restart model—closing and reopening the school under an approved school leader, (c) transformation model—supplant only the principal, or (d) school closure model—closing the school and enrolling students in schools with proven student academic gains

(Katash et al., 2010). These drastic measures for improving schools are often applicable to failing high poverty, Title I schools (Hess & Gift, 2009).

Many of the failing schools today serve disadvantaged ethnic and high poverty neighborhoods (Jensen, 2009; Payne, 2008; Price, 2010). Studies of turnaround schools indicate the population of these schools is made up of low socioeconomic at-risk students, many of whom are English language learners from large ethnic minority groups (Keaton, 2011; Manwaring, 2011; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; O'Brien, 2010; Paletta, Stillings Candal, & Vidoni, 2009).

Poverty creates a plethora of issues for children. Often children living in poverty struggle to survive in contrast to children living in homes with adequate resources (Jensen, 2009). According to Jensen (2009), poverty damages children physically, emotionally, and cognitively. In a study of the risk factors for young children living in poverty, van Ijzendoorn, Vereijken, Bakermans-Kranenburg, and Riksen Walraven, (2004) found academic success in children is correlated to a family's income level. In addition to a high-poverty student population, many failing schools are often faced with problems of inadequate facilities, lack of resources, high teacher turnover, soaring mobility rates, and lack of parent support (Harris, Chapman, Muijs, Russ, & Stoll, 2006; Meyers & Murphy, 2007). Kahlenberg (2009) suggested that "the reason high-poverty schools fail so often is that economic segregation drives failure: it congregates the kids with the smallest dreams, the parents who are most pressed, and burnt-out teachers who often cannot get hired elsewhere" (p. 28). When the school is labeled as a failing school it must not only increase the academic level of students, but must also overcome barriers

produced by poverty. It seems a daunting task, but schools are overcoming these obstacles.

Today many schools serving high poverty, at risk populations are experiencing "turnaround" by increasing student achievement through frameworks for school improvement. These frameworks address *how* to implement standards for improvement rather than suggesting *what* to implement (Payne, 2008). Even prior to the turnaround models, frameworks for reform have been identified in many studies of school improvement (Borman et al., 2000; Chance & Segura, 2009; Cianca & Lampe, 2010; Keaton, 2011; Mai, 2004; O'Brien, 2010; Price, 2010; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). These frameworks address how to engage leadership, clarify the vision, increase capacity, meet professional development needs, provide teacher support, and inform instruction through assessment (Payne, 2008).

One framework for school improvement was identified in a study of over 200 Chicago public elementary schools from 1990 through 2005 by Bryk, Seebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010). Bryk et al. identified five factors for school improvement: school leadership, the professional capacity of the teaching staff, instructional guidance, the school learning climate, and parent-school-community ties. Payne (2008) called these five factors the "five fundamentals for school improvement," suggesting they are non-negotiable and cited the reading, math, and attendance improvement made in Chicago Public Schools as a result of the implementation of the essential supports to turn around failing schools (p. 46). This framework will serve to guide the study of an elementary school which turned around over a four-year period.

Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study

The turnaround label signifies a school's *about face* from limited student achievement to increased academic performance. Education has borrowed the concept of turnaround schools from corporate strategies for turning around underperforming businesses (David, 2010). The foundation of corporate transformations began in the 1950's when W. Edwards Deming helped Japanese business leaders create a process to examine their company from a systems perspective and use a statistical method to determine if business variations were significant (Leonard, 1996). Deming's process for turning around failing businesses helped management focus on significant "improvement of quality and productivity" (Leonard, 1996, p. 175). Organizational reform continued in 1990 with Michael Hammer and James Campy's Business Process Reengineering (BPR) concept of completely rebuilding business processes rather than viewing existing processes through systems and significance (Hess & Gift, 2008). BPR concentrated on tearing down and building business processes anew, much like the current educational turnaround models which are designed for failing schools.

Underperforming schools are labeled as failing if they have not made adequate progress on the state standards for student learning. When a failing school transforms from a low-achieving learning environment to an environment demonstrating significant student learning the school is labeled as a *turnaround school*. In the corporate world and in education, turnaround strategies pivot around leadership. Raising test scores and narrowing the achievement gap to turn a school around is more than one leader can accomplish alone (Connelly, 2010). Turning around the lowest-performing schools includes multiple variations such as a "comprehensive strategy of readying all children to

learn, preparing teachers to teach, restructuring outdated curriculum, and involving as much of the community as possible in the education system" (Paletta, Stillings Candal, & Vidoni, 2009, p. 473). The leader generates the framework for improvement and distributes leadership to teachers to impact instruction, capacity, school climate, and parent/community involvement to turn the school around academically.

Bryk et al. (2010) suggested a framework for school improvement which includes school leadership, building the professional capacity of the teaching staff, instructional guidance, improving the school learning climate, and establishing partnerships with parents and the community. The principal is the leader charged with implementing school improvement and the force to drive academic performance (Murphy, 2009). Leadership, according to Yukl (2007), is a collective effort to attain goals and is defined as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish a shared objective" (p. 26). The leader casts vision to establish and implement a framework for school improvement with a goal of raising student achievement (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Mai, 2004; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). For the framework to be implemented seamlessly the principal begins with a capable teaching staff.

In schools where improvement is mandatory, it is important to have "a deep bench of talent ready to tackle the complex challenges of reversing its academic fortunes" (Kelleher, 2010, p. 8). Capacity is "the ability to do something" or "the maximum or optimum amount of production" (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995, p. 27). The vision for a framework of improvement is led by the principal, yet the school staff must have the

capacity to attain the improvement goals. Corcoran and Goertz (1995) define instructional capacity as the knowledge and skill of teachers: the quantity and quality of available resources for teaching, such as the match of teachers to grade levels and available instructional minutes; and the instructional culture within the building. Professional capacity encompasses not only the instruction, but also quality professional development, continuous improvement, and professional community (Bryk et al., 2010).

The capacity of teachers improves through instructional guidance. Bryk et al. (2010) suggested three components of instructional guidance; seamless subject matter content and pacing over the grades, guidance in teaching for higher level thinking, and professional development for teachers to learn inquiry based teaching methods. Preserving and honoring instructional time with an urgency to use every instructional minute is also an aspect of instructional guidance as is a focus on literacy (Blase & Blase, 1999; Fullan, 2005; Murphy, 2009; Salmonowicz, 2009; Walters et al., 2003). Staff guidance in these areas assures curriculum is covered and teaches students how to problem solve which establishes a student centered learning climate.

According to Murphy (2009), learning climates associated with achievement contain: high academic and behavioral expectations, student cooperation and accountability, avoidance of negative practices, and established classroom structures and routines. Safety within the school is also included in a student centered learning climate where children, teachers, parents, and community members feel safe to be involved in learning (Bryk et al., 2010).

Engaging parents and community in the school benefits students (Kahlenberg, 2009). High performing schools “build positive and productive relationships with

students' families and the broader neighborhood and community" (Parrett & Budge, 2009, p. 27). According to Bryk et al. (2010), parent school community ties are created through opportunities for parents to learn and support their child's learning, an understanding of the student's home life, and school-community partnerships.

Turnaround schools need leaders who provide vision for the school to turn student achievement from failure to success. Talented teachers with instructional guidance align with the vision and provide a positive climate accompanied with high expectations. Parents and community relationships are established to share the vision for student learning. These concepts will be used to guide a case study of the turnaround process at Yosemite View Elementary School.

Statement of the Problem

States will be given NCLB waivers and autonomy only through a bona fide commitment to undertake a change process using a rigorous comprehensive plan to adopt college and career readiness standards, concentrate improvement efforts on 15 percent of their lowest schools, and create principal and teacher evaluations based partly on student performance (Crotty, 2011; McNeil, 2011). According to a recent report from the U.S. Department of Education, over 5,000 schools or approximately five percent are currently considered under-performing schools in the United States (Katash et al., 2010). "The number of failing schools has doubled over the last two years, and without successful interventions, could double again over the next five years" (Katash et al., 2010, p. 1). A report from the Mass Insight Education and Research Institute also predicted an increase in failing schools (Calkins et al., 2007). Founder and president of the Institute, William E.

Guenther, cited cumulative research behind what has not worked and what successful schools look like (Viadero, 2009).

Bryan C. Hassel, co-director of Public Impact, who has studied turnarounds in the corporate field as well as education, stated that as the number of failing schools increase there remains a lack of adequate turnaround research and exemplary models of turnaround schools (as cited in Viadero, 2009). In education, according to Hassel and Hassel (2009), "turnarounds have been tried rarely and studied even less" (p. 22). Many states and districts have focused on policy change and planning while maintaining a fragmented understanding of initiating action (Katash et al., 2010). While understanding what does not work or what an achieving school looks like may help some leaders of failing schools, a clear understanding of how to implement frameworks for improvement is needed. In addition to the lack of understanding of how to implement a framework for improvement, the essential supports in frameworks for turning a school around vary from study to study (Blase & Blase, 1999; Fullan, 2005; Gordon, Stiegelbauer, & Diehl, 2006; Leithwood, 2005; Levine, 1991; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Walters, Marzan, & McNulty, 2003). A gap in literature exists for the essential supports of a framework to turn around low-performing schools and how to implement such a framework.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide understanding of how a framework for improvement can be implemented in a failing school in spite of the effects of poverty and language barriers. This single case study will investigate the essential supports one high-poverty school, with numerous English language learners, implemented over a four-year period to create a framework for improvement.

Yosemite View Elementary School is located in the central valley of California. (The name Yosemite View Elementary is a pseudonym replacing the actual name of the school and will be used throughout this study.) It has been labeled a turnaround school. When the current principal became the leader of the school in 2006, the school was the lowest performing in the district and was considered a failing school according to state standards. Over a four-year period the staff and leadership at Yosemite View Elementary have raised student achievement beyond failing status.

The researcher will seek to understand how the framework of improved student achievement was implemented through conversations with and observations of the school leader, staff, students, and parents. The purpose of this case study is to describe the essential supports for the turnaround and how these supports were implemented during a four-year school improvement process at a central valley California elementary school formerly in academic failure and now achieving adequate yearly progress (Creswell, 2007). The study will only begin to address the increasing need of turning around failing schools.

Research Questions

The question which will guide this study is: What essential supports were implemented and how were they implemented over a four-year period for the academic turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School in the central valley of California as perceived by the school leadership, teachers, and parents? Specifically, the study will examine:

1. What was the role and support of leadership in the turnaround of the school?
2. How did the staff influence the student achievement gains?

3. How did the school climate impact student achievement?
4. What was the role of the parents and the community in the turnaround of the school?

Limitations and Assumptions

This study is of the turnaround process of a high-poverty elementary school which serves many English language learners. Limitations of this study lie in the single case design of the transformation of student learning at merely one elementary school. Other limitations of time, context, approaches, and data collection will be addressed.

The researcher will attempt to discover how a framework for improvement was applied at this school. This study was chosen because the researcher believes a case study will "provide an in-depth understanding of a case" (Creswell, 2007, p. 78). The deep understanding of the turnaround process gained from this study may help leaders and staff at other failing schools.

Limitations

According to Heck and Hallinger (2010), "…school improvement is, by definition, a process that involves change in the state of the organization over time" (p. 230). Justin Cohen, president of the School Turnaround Group, a division of the Mass Insight Education and Research Institute stated, "Transformation may be the easiest thing to do politically, but it's the hardest to do technically" (Maxwell, 2010, p. 30). A complete understanding of the technicality of this transformation may be a limitation of this study, but will be attempted through a qualitative single case study design. This design helps the researcher deeply understand the solution to a problem such as transforming failing schools (Creswell, 2007).

The foremost limitation of this study is that it is bounded by a single case over a specific time frame, because of this it will provide insight but is unlikely to be conclusive. The context of the case is narrowly conceptualized to a single school in the central valley of California, over a four-year period (Creswell, 2007). Multiple approaches could be used for this study such as examining only the leadership of the school through an embedded analysis; however, the study will be limited to an instrumental case study.

Various sources of information will be used to collect data for the study including emailing an open-ended survey which, because of the time required to complete, could limit the number of responses. The remaining data will be collected during a one week period when the researcher will be at the site for collection of data. Absences of participants or schedule conflicts could impact data collection and serve to further limit the study (Creswell, 2007). In addition, four years of data and artifacts will contribute to the reliability and validity of this study but, limitations may arise from a lack of available data and artifacts.

Assumptions

The researcher has made the assumption that a single instrumental case study will provide a deep understanding of the process of a turnaround school and thick description of "time, place, context, and culture" for transferability to other schools (Mertens, 2005, p. 256). Yosemite View Elementary School was pursued by the researcher because of the researcher's previous employment in the school district. Although the researcher does not know any of the staff at the school, the principal and the researcher were colleagues during two years when the researcher worked in the district. Due to this familiarity, the

researcher will control for bias by Mertens (2005) established protocol which addresses familiarity of an interviewer and interviewee by standardizing how the interviewer presents the study, asks the questions, probes and records answers, and handles interpersonal aspects. The researcher will follow Martens' suggestions for interviews by standardizing (a) the presentation of the study and researcher, (b) how questions are asked, (c) how the researcher probes for responses, and (d) interpersonal aspects. These standardizations should reduce potential problems of bias.

Unexpected absences of participants will be addressed through establishing an adequately-sized focus group. Krueger and Casey (2009) suggest five to ten participants, to meet minimal size requirements if several participants were absent. By inviting nine participants it is assumed that at least five will participate thereby meeting the suggested requirement of focus group size.

Finally, the researcher's assumption that transformational leadership theory is the most valuable leadership for a turnaround school will be addressed. Transformational leadership theory suggests that influential leaders can move followers to greater levels of commitment and capacity resulting in increased effort from the followers in achieving the vision of the organization (Bush, 2003; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). The research will be examined through the lens of transformational leadership in a turnaround school.

Definitions of Key Terms

No Child Left Behind captured the notion of improving schools through the means of measuring yearly academic student progress. An increasing number of schools in failing status have been identified as a result. A sense of urgency exists to turn these underperforming schools around. This study will attempt to uncover how one school

turned around over a four-year period. To clarify the reader's understanding of this research on a turnaround school, the terms associated with the research questions and the framework for improvement will be defined.

Achievement gains. The increase of student academic performance measured in proficiency levels of "at or above grade level" on yearly assessments, according to state adopted/approved testing requirements (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 31).

Essential supports. The framework to influence school improvement which is implemented by the school principal and staff is made up of essential supports. This framework of essential supports could include any aspect to increase academic improvement, leadership, instructional parent-community relationships, professional capacity, learning environment, and instructional guidance (Bryk et al., 2010).

School leadership. The school leader is the principal, who acts in a leadership capacity, to create vision for the turnaround effort. According to Bryk et al. (2010), "these school-based leaders build agency for change at the community level, nurture the leadership of others through a shared vision for local reform, and provide the necessary guidance over time to sustain a coherent program of school wide improvement" (pp. 45-46).

Student achievement. The academic learning of student which takes place mainly in classrooms, is subject centered, and occurs through the interaction of teachers with students (Bryk, 2010).

Support. The notion of support refers to the principal's effort to assist staff, students, parents, and the community for school improvement through transmitting vision, allocating resources, providing instructional guidance, distributing leadership,

establishing a learning climate, and through communication (Bryk et al., 2010; Cianca & Lampe, 2010; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Payne, 2008; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

Turnaround. The concept of turnaround is applicable to schools which are identified as failing through Adequate Yearly Progress of student achievement. Yearly assessments in language arts and math provide schools with percentages of student proficiency levels according to state standards. Each school must attain the increasing state proficiency standard to be considered a performing school. Schools falling below state standard proficiency levels are considered failing and need improvement. Hence, the concept of turning the school around from an underperforming school to one which generates ongoing significant increases in student achievement (Katash et al., 2010; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009).

Framework for Improvement

Frameworks are "a style of work, a more intensive and robust way of intervening" to increase student achievement in failing schools rather than implementing a purchased curriculum or program (Payne, 2008, p. 46). They are the fundamental aspects each failing school must put into action for school improvement. The five fundamentals for school improvement from the work of Bryk et al. (2010) are school leadership, professional capacity, instructional guidance, learning climate, and parent-school community ties.

Professional capacity. The concept of professional capacity refers to the leader's ability to recruit and retain high quality teachers. Teachers with high levels of professional capacity are willing to learn and collaborate professionally for improved

instructional practices and share responsibility for student learning and continuous improvement (Bryk et al., 2010; Borman et al., 2000).

Instructional guidance. The idea of guiding instruction is embedded in aligning and pacing the curriculum to state standards and a seamless instructional plan. Instructional guidance is also provided through readying resources for pedagogy which includes problem solving, teamwork, and higher-level thinking with tools for assessment and improvement (Bryk et al. 2010).

Learning climate. A learning climate is a school environment which is safe and has established routines, where teachers hold high expectations for student learning yet provide personal support, and students share highly accepted academic and behavioral norms (Bryk et al., 2010).

Parent-school community ties. The relationships the principal and teachers have with students' families, the neighborhood, and the community are referred to as parent-school-community ties. These relationships communicate a positive vision and goals of school improvement to parents and the surrounding community (Parrett & Budge, 2009).

Significance of the Study

This study is of a single high poverty school with multi-ethnic and language barriers located on the west coast of the United States. Ten schools in California turned around during the 2009-2010 school year by achieving Adequate Yearly Progress. This study will describe one of those 10 schools. The study will contribute to literature by revealing how key factors of the school's turnaround were implemented.

According to Viadero (2009), recommendations for transforming schools are taken from case studies of turnaround schools. As the number of failing schools

increases, leadership and staff will need to understand how to implement frameworks for improvement. This study will provide leaders with key factors of leadership and a framework for turning around underperforming schools. The contributions this study could offer teachers and staff are suggestions for advancing pedagogy practices as well as a framework to serve as a guide for school improvement. The study will prove to be transferrable as results are applied in other schools.

The school district the researcher will study and the researcher's own school district are similar in that both have schools classified as middle and high income, non-Title I schools and high-poverty Title I schools. Twenty-one of the 36 elementary schools in the researcher's school district did not achieve adequate yearly progress during 2009-2010 in communication arts, math, or both. Many of these low performing schools are characterized by similar demographics as the school in California. The turnaround factors and how they were implemented at Yosemite View Elementary will provide a framework for improvement and understanding to leaders and staff of the 21 failing schools in the researcher's school district.

Summary

Increasingly more schools are labeled as failing schools through the yearly measurement of Adequate Yearly Progress instituted by No Child Left Behind. These schools are in need of turning around from underperforming schools to organizations that exhibit high performance in student achievement. This study will attempt to provide a basis for understanding the essential supports needed to create a framework for school improvement and how these supports are implemented.

Turnaround schools are schools that have come out of the failing status. These schools have implemented a framework consisting of supports such as school leadership, professional capacity, instructional guidance, learning climate, and parent-school-community relationships. The study will attempt to uncover how one failing school implemented a framework for improvement through school leadership, staff, and parents. Limitations of this study are in the single case design of the transformation in student learning at one elementary school; however, recommendations for transforming schools can be made from the results of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

There is no panacea for failing schools. Schools have been labeled as failing since the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on January 8, 2002 which became the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB). According to U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2012), the goal of NCLB was to expose achievement gaps and hold schools accountable for all students learning. Through yearly standardized testing to determine student proficiency levels, school were deemed as performing or failing. McNeil and Klein (2011) imply that failing schools have been on the increase since the initiation of NCLB and without changes an estimated 80 percent of our nation's public schools will be labeled as failing by 2013-2014.

Recently President Obama gave states flexibility under NCLB to create need-driven comprehensive school improvement plans, an accountability system that is focused, flexible, and fair, and teacher/principal evaluations that are supportive and focus on improvement (Duncan, 2012). Schools which continue to be unable to measure up to the state improvement plans, as evidenced through the approved accountability system, will still be deemed as failing.

School Failure

Several reasons explain why schools fail. According to Calkins et al. (2007), schools fail because of the challenges they face such as high-poverty, urban or rural locations, and diverse student populations. Schools also fail because the education model used to educate students for the 21st century in the United States has been unchanged

from the original model used at the beginning of the 20th century (Calkins et al., 2007). In their comprehensive seven year study of turning around failing schools, Bryk et al. (2010) suggested that teaching is more demanding than ever as children must be prepared for jobs of the 21st century which require problem solving and high level thinking skills.

Need for study

Demands on teachers, schools, and school districts to raise academic standards so children are college and career ready necessitate an understanding of a framework for school success in spite of the effects of poverty, language barriers, and school locations. Kahlenberg (2009) proposed that many districts have turned a blind eye to failing schools for many years even while change is still needed in the failing schools in our country. Murphy (2009), in his analysis of educational research on organizational turnarounds, reminded readers of the little empirical evidence to guide educators and policymakers on how to turn around failing schools; the misunderstandings and confusion about the framework used for school turnarounds; and the broad, unspecific ideas circulated to improve failing schools which lack evidence of effectiveness.

Meyers and Murphy (2007) stated that current turnaround efforts have been anchored in five beliefs: (a) success can be achieved by all schools, (b) there are missing factors from the turnaround framework which hinder school success, (c) a comprehensive framework can provide missing links for school success, (d) increasing capacity in school leaders and teachers is a component of school improvement, and (e) commitment for improvement efforts must be gained from the school staff to be successful. Although, according the Heck and Hallinger (2010), research has shown a bias for attributing leadership as the sole change agent in organizational turnarounds, this literature review

will attempt to unpack a more comprehensive framework for improvement. First, school improvement frameworks in literature will be analyzed to reveal researched turnaround frameworks. The body of the literature review will cover what research has found about specifics in leadership, capacity development, instructional guidance, school climate, and parent-school-community connections in successful school turnarounds. Although every specific cannot be covered, an attempt to uncover a comprehensive framework to provide schools with missing links for academic success will be made.

This study is guided by the belief that all students can learn and all schools can be successful. A belief must be grounded in knowledge. Although there is significant research and theory about turning around low performing private organizations, relatively little deals with turning around student academic achievement in schools (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009). Meyers and Murphy (2007) stated, "The process through which previously ineffective schools become effective [still] remains mysterious" (p. 633). According to Smarick (2010), "Despite years of experience and great expenditures of time, money, and energy, we still lack basic information about which tactics will make a struggling school excellent" (p. 22). Rigorous studies and research on turnaround schools do not reveal a specific turnaround framework which consistently improves academic performances (Smarick, 2010).

Turnaround Frameworks

There are numerous studies which suggest frameworks for improvement and factors needed to turn around a low-performing school (Blase & Blase, 1999; Connelly, 2010; Davila, 2009; Fullan, 2005; Gordon et al., 2006; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Hess & Gift, 2008; Leithwood, 2005; Levine, 1991; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009;

McCollum, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Walters et al., 2003). The literature on schools needing improvement reveal leadership is the most predominant factor for turning around low-performing schools; with nearly all literature citing leadership as a necessity for the turnaround framework. The literature states the leader must have a challenging sharply focused vision which is communicated to stakeholders through influential relationships (Blase & Blase, 1999; Connelly, 2010; Levine, 1991; Walters et al., 2003). Other leadership attributes which surfaced in literature are distributing leadership, managing, modeling values, and the leader as a learner (Blase & Blase, 1999; Gordon et al., 2006; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Leithwood, 2005; McCollum, 2010).

One of the key responsibilities of the leader is to continually increase the capacity of the staff (Blase & Blase, 1999; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Leithwood, 2005). The reviewed literature suggests this is accomplished through a staff of strong supportive teachers who are committed to the change process and provide quality instruction (Leithwood, 2005; McCollum, 2010; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Silins & Mulford, 2002; Walters et al., 2003). According to research, ongoing professional development including collaboration, dialogue, and collective inquiry should be offered to enable teachers to monitor student progress and continually refine pedagogy skills for continuous improvement (Blase & Blase, 1999; Gordon et al., 2006; Heck & Hallinger, 2010). Recent literature on school turnaround appears to be stressing capacity development yet not all frameworks address this area of improvement.

Most turnaround literature agrees that leaders of schools should provide instructional guidance to the teachers for student learning and establish a school-wide

seamless curriculum (Blase & Blase, 1999; Davila, 2009; Levine, 1991; Walters et al., 2003). Instructional guidance is provided through coordinating the curriculum to minimize instructional gaps and ensure student achievement (Blase & Blasé, 1999; Davila, 2009; Walters et al., 2003) Blase and Blasé (1999) also suggest the principal should maintain high visibility and protect instructional time. Other instructional guidance suggested in literature is to provide autonomy for the use of best instructional practices (Levine, 1991). Instructional guidance develops a culture within the building focused on learning.

According to Schein (1993) the history of an organization determines the culture through shared learning which forms "a set of shared assumptions" (p. 364). Organizational cultures are created through the history of the organization and by the leader (Schein, 1993). Leaders of effective school climates create a safe supportive learning culture for students and teachers, with established routines, and high expectations (Davila, 2009; Gordon et al., 2006; Leithwood, 2005; Parrett & Budge, 2009). The high expectations create a demanding culture of continuous improvement (Fullan, 2005). The essential support of creating a learning climate was incorporated in only half of the turnaround frameworks reviewed in literature. If leaders "do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them (Schein, 1993, p. 366). Turnaround schools need leaders who are conscious of the need to establish cultures with the shared assumption of improvement not only for student learning but for parent and community involvement as well.

Although parent and community involvement was mentioned in literature, it was found infrequently. Partnerships with parents for the benefit of their child's learning and

supportive community involvement to share the responsibility for school and student success were encouraged for academic improvement (Connelly, 2010; Davila, 2009; Hess & Gift, 2008; McCollum, 2010; Walters el al., 2003). Literature on school turnaround conveys various frameworks for school improvement. Leadership is almost always a necessary component in the literature for low-performing school turnaround frameworks as is capacity development and instructional guidance. School climate and parent/community involvement are often missing factors for turnaround frameworks along with the need to improve leadership and pedagogy skills or secure a commitment for the change efforts.

Bryk et al. (2010) completed a 15-year study in Chicago public elementary schools which outlines a framework for turning under-performing schools around. In an interview by Viadero (2010) for *Education Week*, Bryk stated that often schools have a single focus on one strand of the improvement framework and leaving out only one component of the framework would likely ensure failure of school improvement. Bryk and his colleague's study took place from1990-1996 and then was replicated from 1997-2005. It compared attendance and achievement data, and used surveys from parents and teachers from 100 plus neighborhood schools that improved in reading, math, and attendance to over 100 schools that performed poorly (Bryk et al., 2010). The five ingredients for improvement which Bryk (2010) and his colleagues found are (a) strong leadership, (b) development of professional capacity, (c) instructional guidance, (d) a safe learning environment, and (e) parent-school-community ties.

Leadership

State educational departments and school districts measure successful schools through student learning. In all organizations, from corporations to public education institutions, leadership has been found to be the central variable of success (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Murphy, 2009; Yukl, 2006). “In times of significant change and in periods of crisis, the saliency of leadership is dramatically increased” (Murphy, p. 803). This is true in schools as well, where studies have found that influential leaders are needed to accomplish the goal of improving student learning. According to Cuban (1988), leaders are “people who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieve certain goals” (p. 193). Although there are many definitions of leadership, a shared definition states that leadership is the action between two or more people in which the leader attempts to influence the behavior of another to accomplish a shared goal (Burns, 1978; Owens, 2004; Yukl, 2006). The effects of leadership have been seen as the principal influences the teachers to accomplish the goal of improved student learning.

In studies on leadership and school improvement, leadership is the essential element for turnaround schools and student learning (Murphy, 2009; Williams, 2009). One study on the effect of the principal to school performance underscored this by finding the principal to be pivotal for the effectiveness of the school (Griffith, 2004). Walters et al. (2003) examined school leadership and the effects on student achievement through performing a meta-analysis from 30 years of research; they found leadership had a substantial impact on student achievement and could account for nearly one fourth of the discrepancies in student performances. This comprehensive study underscores the necessity for an effective leader in the role as principal. According to Griffith (2004),

effective principals are described as those who establish understandable goals, provide support to teachers, and distribute leadership through dispersing responsibilities, decision-making, and problem-solving. Studies have uncovered a leadership framework to assist the principal in changing the direction of student achievement.

Turning a school around requires change and the change agent within the school is most often referred to as the leader, given the role as principal (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Wallace, 2002). According to Bryk et al. (2010), the change agent of a school begins with leadership. “The effective leader not only triggers change, he changes the climate of the company, its vision, and gives it new direction” (Grinyer, Mayes, & McKiernan, 1988, p. 59). The leader is the conduit for asking teachers to change methods of instruction, curriculum, and time allocations (Davila, 2009). Leadership studies have found the willingness to change occurs as the leader influences people; an influence aimed for specific outcomes (Cuban, 1988; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009).

Miramontes, Nadeau, and Commins (1997) remind us that effective leaders give up the need for control and focus on influencing people around them; they set high expectations and establish an unmistakable vision for achievement.

> Motivation and inspiration energize people, not by pushing them in the right direction as control mechanisms do but by satisfying basic human needs for achievement, a sense of belonging, recognition, self-esteem, a feeling of control over one’s life, and the ability to live up to one’s ideals. (Kotter, 2011, p. 49)

Influence is said to be permeated through interpersonal relationships, promoting cooperation, and establishing a sense of belonging with followers (Dinham, 2005; Walters et al., 2003). Studies have found turnaround schools require influential leaders

who use leadership principles to guide them as they change the school's level of student achievement.

Leadership Framework

According to Yukl (2006), leadership and management are necessary in organizations. Principals of effective schools are not only managers of the school, but they also employ decisive leadership practices for change to occur. Multiple studies unveil a leadership framework used for necessary academic achievement in low performing schools. According to these studies, the framework is assembled as the leader (a) establishes a clear focused vision, (b) models values, (c) manages, (d) creates a climate of learning, and (e) distributes leadership (Bryk, et al., 2010; King-Rice, 2010; Lambert, 2006; Parrett & Budge, 2009). Leithwood and Strauss (2009) studied eight Ontario turnaround schools and found similar successful foundational leadership practices of shared goal setting, building capacity, collaboration, and management of the instructional program. These leadership practices, though labeled differently, mirror the aforementioned framework of leadership. A framework which encapsulates the leader's role in turnaround efforts and begins as the leader establishes a clear focused vision.

Vision

First and foremost research agrees outstanding school leaders have a vision of increased student learning, a picture of what the future can hold which sets the direction for school improvement (Bush, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). Effective and sustainable turnaround measures found capable strong leaders had a strategic focus, inspired change, and drove decisions (Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). Research from Walters et al. (2003) found that "having the right focus

of change is a key to improving schools and increasing student achievement" (p. 7). In one turnaround school, the principal testified the crux of improvement began through the clear vision for student learning which helped change teachers, students, and parents' way of thinking (O'Brien, 2010). Another turnaround school leader began by creating a vision that all students could learn, given the tools and instruction and, although some staff initially resisted the change, positive student improvement convinced resistant staff to buy in to the vision (Keaton, 2011).

A clear unmistakable vision for change, according to Murphy (2009), is communicated with a sense of urgency and purpose to gain commitment from all school stakeholders to initiate the change process. Principals from turnaround schools are found to be "relentless in their quest for enhanced student achievement" (Dinham, 2005, p. 354). First and foremost research agrees outstanding school leaders have a vision of increased student learning, a picture of what the future can hold which sets the direction for school improvement (Bush, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). Once the vision is established the principal helps the staff understand the purpose for school improvement through shared dialogue (Walters et al., 2003).

Visions are owned through collaboration. One study of multiple turnaround schools found there to be a regular shared staff activity of goal setting, led by the principal (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009). Walters et al. (2003) suggested that an important component of turnarounds is shared visions of possibilities and agreement about the purposes of change. These change possibilities and purposes are spelled out through long-term and short-term goals. Dinham (2005) defined the long-term goals as the vision and agenda while short-term goals are meaningful and achievable, not random targets of

improvement. Teams of teachers, parents, and other staff dialogue about student performance and raise questions about practices to create achievable goals congruent with the vision for student improvement (Lambert, 2006). According to Liethwood and Riehl (2005), it is the role of the leader to build consensus for goals which are achievable and to exhibit high expectations for fulfillment.

Values

In studies on school improvement, vision was communicated as the leader modeled values of high expectations personally and for the staff (Dinham, 2005; Hess & Gift, 2009). Values are tacit knowledge, or are difficult to "formalize and communicate" (Nonaka, 1994, p. 16). Tacit knowledge of values can be made explicit through modeling (Nonaka, 1994). According to Sanchez (2008), from his work on brain-based learning, nonverbal modeling is called isopraxism and is defined as a modeled behavior which influences the behavior of another. Bush (2003) stated that modeling best practices and values of the organization is one of the ways leaders teach followers. The values displayed by the leader communicate the purpose for the vision which translates into commitment from the staff, thus institutionalizing the vision (Bush, 2003). Lambert (2006) wrote that when the vision became a core value of the members of the school community and values were modeled by the principal, they provided guidance for the development of initiatives to accomplish the challenging task of improving student performance.

Leithwood (2005) found an enthusiasm and passion for educating children is vital for school success. Research has indicated the leader must value the belief that all students can learn; "the moral purpose for education" (Bush, 2003, p. 172). Educational

leadership principles remind us that the leader's core value of believing all students can learn precedes this shared value from the staff. Gold, Evans, Earley, Halpin, and Collarbone (2003) found other values such commitment, cooperation, inclusivity, equal opportunities, and understanding displayed through the actions and speech of outstanding principals. Leaders of turnaround schools were found to value colleagues' ideas and challenge their thinking intellectually (Leithwood, 2005). They promoted cooperation among the staff through listening, open mindedness, problem solving, and through support of other initiatives (Leithwood, 2005; Walters et al., 2003). Values such as these convey the purpose for improving low performing schools; a purpose guided by leadership and management.

Management

According to Bush (2003), leadership and management both deserve equal attention for schools to not only fulfill the purpose of education but to function effectively. Turnaround literature addresses leadership and stresses the importance of good management (King-Rice, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Successful turnarounds have highlighted purposeful management styles which sustain ongoing steady improvements (Bush, 2003; Murphy, 2009). These purposeful management styles include managing procedures and resources.

A key role of the principal has been identified as managing teaching and learning (Bush, 2003; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Spending time on management has been associated with positive school results (King-Rice, 2010). According to Rowan, Chiang, & Miller (1997), teaching is best managed through support, staff collegiality, and shared decision making. This does not delineate the need for order however. The research of

Walters et al. (2003) underscored the need for the principal-manager to establish rules, structures, and procedures for the school to operate smoothly. Yet in a study on principal leadership, Dinham (2005) found principals from improved schools managed by using rules and established boundaries creatively and with flexibility as they applied policies. These studies suggest procedures create order for people within the school yet should be managed flexibly. Bush (2003) implied that managing procedures for the purpose of managing teaching and learning is purposeful management and helps the leader avoid managerialism.

Purposeful management includes managing the school's resources to enable optimal teaching and learning (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009). Research of corporate turnarounds found one of four components of improvement in establishing high goals for subordinates while providing the flexibility and resources needed to be successful (Hess & Gift, 2009). According to Parrett and Budge (2009), "the budget in a high-performing, high-poverty school is a moral document, reflective of the school's beliefs about the conditions necessary to sustain success for all students and the adults who serve them" (p. 23). In early studies of Chicago Public school turnarounds, Bryk, Camburn, and Louis (1999) found it is the role of the principal to provide resources to uphold the learning community within the school. Salmonowicz (2009) suggested the turnaround school be flooded with personal, technological, and discretionary resource. These findings propose the leader's commitment to school improvement is reflected in the value of allocating resources for students and teachers to thrive. An important value of the turnaround leader is recognized in the management of resources and procedures for teaching and learning, with another value being reflected in the principal as a learner.

Learning

The central purpose of school is both teaching and learning (Dinham, 2005). Research suggested that school improvement occurs as a leader establishes a clear vision, models values, manages, and creates a climate of learning. Fullan (2010), who has written on school reform, stated the one primary factor for school improvement is for the principal to be a learner. Connelly (2010) found turnaround principals were lifelong learners with the core value and belief that all students can learn and all schools can improve. International research on the connection between leadership and school improvement found the importance for the leader to not only foster the learning of students but of the staff as well (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). This relationship between leadership and learning is not only exemplified in the leader's erudition but is also manifested as the leader develops the learning of others (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009).

In studies of turnaround schools, Leithwood and Strauss (2009) discovered the principal constructed a culture of learning and collaboration. According to Rhodes and Brundrett (2009), learning is cultivated by establishing mores of knowledge and inquiry through an intense focus on improvement, dialogue, accountability, and shared leadership. Mai (2004) suggested "a learning organization is one that actively works to improve itself by casting present practices under critical scrutiny and by seeking new and better ways of doing things" (p. 212). This is accomplished as the principal facilitates the teacher's reflection on their practice with a goal of developing new instructional approaches (Blase & Blase, 1999; Mai, 2004). Reflection often leads to dialogue about an individual's knowledge or lack thereof.

One challenge is found as the leader attempts to draw out the tacit knowledge of teachers for the benefit of enhancing the thinking and understanding in other teachers within the school to enable continuous improvement of instructional practices (Mai, 2004). Tacit knowledge is transferred and made explicit through interaction with colleagues which allows new learning to occur (Nonaka, 1994). Conditions for learning, collaboration, and growth are created within the school as the principal distributes leadership throughout the organization (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Williams, 2009).

Distributive Leadership

Dinham (2005) stated the "involvement of stakeholders, particularly teachers, is seen as a vital aspect of educational leadership" (p. 340). For school turnaround improvement and sustainability to occur, Fullan (2005) has uncovered the need for principals to focus on developing other leaders equally for the intentional focus of student achievement. Heck and Hallinger (2010), Rhodes and Brundrett (2009), and Williams (2009) cited the key to school improvement is distributing leadership. In a study of the effects of principal transformational leadership on school performance, Griffith (2004) found the benefits of sharing leadership lie not only in teacher learning and collaboration but also in an increased job satisfaction as teachers take on the role of leading change initiatives.

Heck and Hallinger (2010) define distributive or collaborative leadership as "strategic school wide actions directed toward improvement in student learning that are shared among teachers, administrators, and others" (p. 228). Distributive leadership practices have been found to include collaboration in staff planning, problem-solving, decision-making, and implementing and co-leading school programs (Griffith, 2004;

Leithwood, 2005: Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). In their study of leadership in turnaround schools, Leithwood and Strauss (2009) found as the school improved, leadership became progressively more collaborative or distributed through considerable staff involvement. Williams (2009) put it this way "leadership is what you do as a team to put things in place that works for kids" (p. 39).

Increased student learning has been revealed as a result of shared leadership in studies of turnaround schools (Heck & Hallinger, 2010). Lambert's (2006) findings from schools which she studied revealed that distributed leadership practices enhanced student academic performance to the point of the school no longer having the *failing* label. Student achievement is possibly due to teacher empowerment, according to Sweetland and Hoy (2000), where they found a positive effect on increased student learning from involving teachers in curriculum and instructional decisions. Study results showed "schools with higher levels of teacher empowerment are perceived by teachers as providing high-quality instruction and learning, effectively adapting to external demands, and efficiently functioning in day-to-day operations" (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000, p. 722). According to Rowan et al. (1997), "…organizational designs that feature decentralized decision making, high levels of staff cooperation and interaction, and supportive leadership allow skilled and motivated teachers to be more effective" (p. 263). As the leader distributes leadership, evidence of greater levels of teacher commitment resulting in increased student achievement attests transformational leadership is at the center of turning the school around (Bryk et al., 1999; Griffith, 2004).

Transformational Leadership

The concept of transformational leadership theory is embodied in the actions of

influential leaders moving followers to greater levels of commitment and capacity which result in increased effort from the followers to achieve the vision of the organization (Burns, 1978; Bush, 2003; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) describe transformational leadership characteristics as the ability to establish relationships, motivate, provide intellectual stimulation, and influence followers. Studies have shown the turnaround leader is transformative as they establish a clear focused vision, model values, manage, create a climate of learning, and distribute leadership (Bryk et al., 2010; King-Rice, 2010; Lambert, 2006; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Silins & Mulford, 2002). Characteristics of a transformational leader in schools are described as one who creates school vision and establishes goals for the fulfillment of the vision (Bass, 1985; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steibach, 1999). According to Bush (2003), transformational leaders modeled best practices and values of the organization to teach and support followers. Leithwood et al. (1999) claimed "transformational leadership contributes to such organization-level effects as organizational learning and the development of a productive school climate" (p.10). Finally transformational leadership has been found to create a team and as the leader distributes leadership responsibilities, the followers develop a personal commitment to fulfill shared organizational goals resulting in increased capacity and greater efforts with results of higher productivity (Bass, 1985; Leithwood et al., 1999).

Effective principals, according to Beteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2009), are transformational leaders who focus "on increasing the organization's capacity to innovate, or adapt to change successfully" (p. 3). Innovations to turn around Chicago Public Schools in the longitudinal study done by Bryk et al. (2010) revealed the inclusive

nature of transformational leadership to increase teacher capacity through cultivating opportunities for teachers to influence important school decisions and developing a robust professional community to support efforts of improving classroom instruction. Lambert (2006) found principals with high leadership capacity, or transformational leadership, "no longer had to facilitate the conversations, frame the problems, or challenge the assumptions in isolation. Principals and teachers began to share the same concerns and work together toward their resolution" (p. 249). Transformational leadership was found to improve student performance through distributed leadership, which shared a clear focused vision and modeled values; a professional learning culture of collaboration including reflection, inquiry, and dialogue; and through the increased capacity of stakeholders, the second essential support for improving student learning (Lambert, 2006).

Professional Capacity of the Staff

School improvement pivots around leadership which is an essential element in the framework of turnaround schools, as is the professional capacity of the staff. Research has suggested principals of turnaround schools influenced student achievement through leadership functions of articulating vision and goals, allocating resources for fulfillment of the vision, and developing school structures and procedures to support successful classroom instruction; however, expanding the capacity of the staff is a driving component in the framework of turning around schools (Fullan, 2005; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; King-Rice, 2010). Simply put, capacity is "the ability to do something" (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995, p. 27).

In the educational context, capacity building has been defined as conditions within the school which increase the knowledge and capabilities collectively of the staff; elevate teachers' motivation to work on student improvement; and secure additional resources of money, time, and expertise to achieve the goals for improvement (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995; Fullan, 2005; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Malen & King-Rice, 2004). These capacity indicators are mainly based on human and fiscal capital; however research suggests schools must also increase the capacity for collaboration and professional community and the capacity to build relationships to communicate with diverse populations that may make up the school (Malen & King-Rice, 2004; Spillane & Thompson, 1997).

In a study of how collaborative leadership effects school improvement, Heck and Hallinger (2010) found that building staff capacity and collaborative leadership are reciprocal processes. Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) concurred through their suggestion that principals who distribute leadership within their staff will build capacity to a greater extent for transformations within the school which improves student achievement. Studies on educational leadership found people are developed through influence; however, it is the role of the leader to coalesce accountability with capacity building (Bush, 2003; Fullan, 2005). Manwaring (2011) found an example of developing teacher capacity exhibited in the principal of a turnaround elementary school in California; the professional capacity of the staff increased through regular classroom walk-throughs, participating in grade-level collaborative meetings, analyzing data with teachers, dialoguing about instruction, and establishing and supporting instructional grade level leaders. This example of capacity building contains the aspects which Bryk et al. (2010)

and his colleagues suggested for developing professional capacity; which are (a) maintaining skilled quality teachers, (b) commitment to change, (c) professional development, and (d) establishing a collaborative professional community.

Maintaining Skilled Quality Teachers

In a study of high-performing poverty schools one contributor to school success was maintaining strong teachers and hiring those who share the philosophy for school improvement (Borman et al., 2000; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Robinson and Buntrock (2011) studied 43 districts through the School Turnaround Specialist Program at the University of Virginia and found "strong evidence indicates competent leadership is key to the recruitment, retention and development of effective teachers" (p. 22). Studies of principals who built professional capacity found the leaders hired teachers with pedagogy and subject knowledge, retained good teachers, recruited and hired others, and offered the necessary support for teachers to improve pedagogy (Beteille et al., 2009; King-Rice, 2010). In studies of the effect principals have on school performance, recruitment and retention of quality teachers is correlated to improved student achievement because of the teacher's intellect, knowledge, and pedagogy skills which impact student test scores (Harris & Sass, 2009; King-Rice, 2010; Rowan et al., 1997). Research has cited other quality teacher capacities which impact student achievement such as possessing problem solving capacities for issues related to the classroom, capacities to orchestrate seamless instruction, and the ability to be innovative (Bryk et al., 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2010).

The antithesis of quality teachers is poor teachers. Recent work from researchers at the Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research found that

effective principals were able to build professional capacity through removing inadequate teachers from the classroom (King-Rice, 2010). In one study of a turnaround school the teachers described the event of losing some colleagues as “a good thing” (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009, p. 13). Meyers and Murphy (2007) stated “poor and inadequate teaching is the most cited internal cause of school failure. Factors that contribute to poor-quality teaching include limited skills and knowledge, inexperience, and teaching out of specialty” (p. 639). Building capacity encompasses the development of teachers as well as removing incapable teachers.

Research has suggested that turnaround schools need quality teachers. “Teaching…requires deeper knowledge of subject matter, as well as pedagogical decision making that is more complex and contingent on changing, unpredictable classroom situations…” (Spillane & Thompson, 1997, p. 185). In a study of leadership in high-performing, high-poverty schools, the strength of the teachers was discovered as a key contributor to school success (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Rowan et al. (1997) underscored the effects of quality teachers on student achievement; suggesting areas which define the skilled quality teacher are “teaching ability, defined in terms of teachers’ knowledge of subject matter and teaching strategies; teachers’ motivation, usually defined by such constructs as teachers’ efficacy, locus of control, and outcome expectancies; and school and classroom situations in which teachers work” (p. 256). High capacity schools staff quality teachers who possess a commitment to the hard work of improving student learning (Bryk et al., 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2010).

Commitment to Change

Successful turnaround schools maintain a steady press for "constant meaningful change" (Murphy, 2009, p. 815). Bush (2003) found as leaders communicate the vision for school improvement it secures the commitment amongst the staff for change. According to Hess and Gift (2008), if the principal and staff are not committed to the work required for the turnaround, it is likely to fail. Bryk et al. (2010) stated, "Teachers who are unwilling to take on the hard work of change and align with colleagues in a common reform agenda must leave" (p. 208). Fullan (2005) stated,

> When teachers have the will to change and faculties begin to evaluate their schools' shortcomings, they raise their own expectations to the high demands of the system and agree on formal procedures of internal accountability, making the conditions ripe for teaching content and methods restructuring. (p. 175)

A commitment to the change efforts demonstrates professional capacity at turnaround schools through teacher accountability and a willingness to implement new instructional approaches learned from professional development opportunities (Bryk et al., 2010; Leithwood & Straus, 2009).

Trust must be developed to enable staff to be committed to change (Bryk et al., 2010). "A district where trust and norms for collaboration on matters of professional substance are high is a good learning environment" (Spillane & Thompson, 1997, p. 199). A four year study on schools as learning organizations and the effects they have on student learning found schools characterized by a climate of trust have an impact on learning (Silins & Mulford, 2002). Studies have found cooperative decision making is made in schools with high levels of trust which correlates to seamless reform initiatives

resulting in improved student learning (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Bryk (2010) and his colleagues found that in schools with high levels of trust, the school improvements occurred more rapidly through teacher innovation and commitment. One turnaround principal gave this advice, "Be willing to be the head risk taker and step out on that limb with your staff. …if the staff do not truly believe their leader will empower them to make decisions and then stand with them in the face of adversity, they will lose trust and probably never step out of the box again" (McCollum, 2010, p. 52). Becoming a learning organization not only requires professional development, but takes trust which is built through encouragement and support so teachers feel confident to take risks (Silins & Mulford, 2002).

Professional Development

A study concerning the impact of professional development on student learning found the prerequisite to increase student achievement through more rigorous academic work, was to expand the professional growth of teachers (Blase & Blase, 1999; Bryk et al., 1999). Academic issues in low-performing schools are complex. Large gaps exist in student learning. "Teachers must be trained to deal with the complexities of teaching more effectively" in order to close achievement gaps and address the needs of all student learning (Bryk et al.,1999, p. 752). Bryk et al. (2010) argued that professional development should be an anchor to increase the capacity of the staff so teachers stay current with new learning and continue their individual professional growth.

Salmonawicz (2009) suggested school staff focus on two or three professional development areas each year; one of which is literacy. Research on turnaround schools has found need assessments which identify instructional weaknesses should determine

professional areas of study (Bryk et al., 2010; O'Brien, 2010). Professional development can be incorporated into the school day in a variety of ways but should be made a priority (Dinham, 2005). Turnaround schools, such as the Chicago schools, scheduled time for professional development each week and set aside days for district mandated professional development (Salmonwicz, 2009). Mai (2004) and Parrett and Budge (2009) found achieving schools incorporated professional development into the faculty meetings, allowing teachers to share their professional knowledge. As principals empowered the teachers to share their knowledge, professional learning became insatiable and teachers became a resource and taught colleagues, which in turn influenced student learning (Dinham, 2005; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009). A central focus on learning for both students and staff denotes a learning centered school (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009).

Establishing a Collaborative Professional Community

Literature on school improvements has found a collaborative professional community exists in learning-centered schools (Bryk et al., 1999). Silins and Mulford (2002) discovered schools consisted of a profession of learners, who continually reflect, inquire, and problem solve, as leaders empower teachers. Professional communities are established through collaboration, data analysis, and joint planning. Bryk et al. (1999) defined a professional community as "schools in which interaction among teachers is frequent and teachers' actions are governed by shared norms focused on the practice and improvement of teaching and learning" (p. 753). One way which leaders help form collaborative professional communities is by making adjustments to instructional schedules to support collaboration so teachers have time to work together (Manwaring, 2011).

Common practices found in the staff of schools with professional communities are reflection and discourse regarding instruction and student learning, open door policies to observe colleagues teaching and to problem solve, and peer collaboration to address core instructional problems (Bryk et al., 1999). These practices promote reflection. Talking about lessons, asking questions, making suggestions, providing feedback, and praise lend to reflective practices (Blase & Blase, 1999). Lambert (2006) found as everyone participated in dialogue concerning instruction and student achievement, a "collective responsibility" was formed to accomplish the goals of school improvement (p. 243). According to Bryk et al. (1999), developing professional communities also helps teachers reflect on current instructional practices as they are exposed to other methods, it deepens their understanding of instruction, and provides mentors in areas of instructional expertise. To increase the professional capacity of the staff for the difficult task of improvement, a collaborative approach is a precursor to professional communities.

A professional community developed through collaboration. Collaboration began in manufacturing industries with idea teams for research and development (Mai, 2004). Idea teams are needed for rigorous collaboration to improve student achievement as well (Mai, 2004). Like leaders of manufacturing, turnaround school leaders were found to place value on collaboration by creating teams and committees (Lambert, 2006; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009). Good teaching spills over—a teacher's effectiveness improves through collaboration with colleagues (Sawchuck, 2011). A turnaround venture in two Boston low-performing schools discovered that even great individual teachers were inadequate for school-wide improvement and collaborative structures were needed to create shared beliefs and instructional practices for sustainable improvement

(Sawchuck, 2011). Successful schools were found to have collaborative teaching practices (Blase & Blase, 1999; McCollum, 2010). Lambert (2006) stressed the need for "a professional culture in which collaboration is critical and reflection, inquiry, and dialogue are used" (p. 251). A responsibility for school change and improvement was formed as teachers' increased their capacity to collaborate around innovative ideas of teaching and learning through study and practice (Bryk et al., 1999; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Sawchuck, 2011). Collaborating on teaching practices requires reflection which, according to Williams (2009), causes teachers to examine current pedagogy and try new methods of teaching using concrete data to improve.

A professional community developed through data analysis. Professional communities incorporate faculty collaboration to advance instructional practices and analyze student data to determine gaps in learning (Mai, 2004; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). According to Parrett and Budge (2009), "an ethos of professional accountability for learning is tangible in all turnaround schools" and it supports high expectations (p. 26). Williams (2009) stated that whether teaching in a high or low-achieving school, skilled quality teachers use data. The use of data has been found to provide accountability which transfers discussions from those filled with making excuses to those which are filled with problem solving (Keaton, 2011; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). Turnaround schools were found to be aggressive in collecting performance data and analyzing it to improve student learning (Mai, 2004; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). One principal in a turnaround school in Colorado released teachers during the work day to collaborate about student data (McCollum, 2010). Parrett and Budge studied improved schools and found a common explanation for success was the staff regularly analyzed data to make

instructional decisions and guide them with measurable goals and time lines; requiring collaborative planning.

A professional community developed through collaborative planning. Professional communities collaborate, analyze data, and plan instruction together. Leaders in schools achieving academic success promoted collaboration through scheduling grade level planning periods and creating cross-grade level planning teams (Newmann et al., 2001; Parrett & Budge, 2009). Forte (2010) stated "smart principals find strategies to build collaborative and planning time into the day, even if that means taking over a class themselves so that every teacher at the same grade level can meet regularly for an hour" (p. 2). Common planning times were found to increase teacher's skills through sharing a "deep knowledge of the subject being taught" and best strategies for teaching the subject (Rowan et al., 1997, p. 258).

Turnaround literature provides prolific examples of improved schools where staff set aside time to plan instruction together. The staff at a turnaround elementary school school in Minnesota analyzed student data, discussed instructional strategies, and planned for periods of six weeks together (Parrett & Budge, 2009). Another elementary school which showed improvement reserved a half-day for monthly collaborative planning (O'Brien, 2010). A middle school principal in New York scheduled daily collaborative planning time for teachers (Cianca & Lampe, 2010). These examples underscore the value of establishing professional communities through planning together, analyzing data, and problem solving collaboration.

Literature has suggested part of the framework for improving a low-performing school is to increase the capacity of the school staff. In a study on increasing the capacity

of the staff for the purpose of school improvement, Lambert (2006) found high capacity teams shared the responsibility for improvement and the roles of the principal and teachers were those of facilitation and team work, thus establishing a culture of continuous improvement. Heck and Hallinger's (2010) research on the reciprocal interactions between leadership and staff are consistent with this research when they found "leadership that increases the school's capacity for improving teachers' instructional expertise will affect student outcomes positively" (p. 228). As teachers process knowledge individually, and collectively solve problems, this "leads to changes in values, beliefs, and norms that result in a development of a unique learning culture" (Silins & Mulford, 2002). These aspects of high capacity staffs reveal professional communities with quality teachers who are committed to change and will invest the time in professional development for student learning to be transformed; however, high capacity staffs need instructional guidance, the third essential support for the framework of turnaround schools.

Instructional Guidance

Educational leadership hinges on placing and developing excellent teachers, continuous improvement of teacher's abilities, and an understanding of instructional needs to provide guidance for teachers to continually address the learning needs of the students (King-Rice, 2010). Newmann et al. (2001) defined instructional guidance as the coordination of curriculum, 'instructional strategies, student support programs, teaching assignments, expectations for teachers' performance, and in-service professional development" (p. 300).

Instructional guidance is coordinated by the principal and other leaders within the building and is often referred to as instructional leadership. The theory of instructional leadership focuses on the principal affecting teachers and teaching positively, to increase student performance (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Walters et al., 2003). Bryk et al. (2010) stated that "gaps in the curriculum, poor pacing of instruction and idiosyncratic expectations for student performance within and across grade levels, and incoherence between the regular and the supplemental instructional program can all weaken students' overall learning" (p. 51). Student academic performance was found to be impelled by instructional leadership as the principal positioned the direction for instruction and protected it (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Murphy, 2009).

An understanding of instruction is needed to provide instruction guidance. According to Wahlstrom and Louis (2008), "as an instructional leader in the building, the principal is expected to understand the tenets of quality instruction as well as have sufficient knowledge of curriculum to know that appropriate content is being delivered to all students" (p. 459). Principals of turnaround schools were found to spend more time with staff through observing instruction and coaching (Griffith, 2004). They were visible in classrooms and involved in the work of instruction with teachers which created high levels of trust (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

Guiding an instructional program demands shared leadership, knowledge, and understanding. The Knowledge Age requires educators to develop critical thinking, independent research, and problem solving skills (Nair, 2009). Bryk et al. (2010) recommended instructional guidance should be provided to ensure students gain basic skills along with the ability "to apply these skills and knowledge to novel and challenging

problems" (p. 54). Three areas principals of schools should focus on to provide instructional guidance are literacy, curriculum coherence, and honoring instructional time (Fullan, 2005; Payne, 2008). These are some of the characteristics of "high-impact instructional programs" which result from instructional guidance (Payne, 2008, p. 94).

Literacy Focus

Research has found literacy instruction should be a priority in low-performing schools (Fullan, 2005; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011; Salmonowicz, 2009; Williams, 2009). Allington (2001), an expert on reading instruction, suggested the reason for making literacy a priority:

> The information age places higher-order literacy demands on all of us…these demands include synthesizing and evaluating information from multiple sources. American schools need to enhance the ability of children to search and sort through information, to synthesize and analyze the information they encounter. (p. 7)

Salmonowicz (2009) and his research team studied 19 low-performing elementary and middle schools undergoing turnarounds in Virginia and found low reading achievement was the only common problem area in all schools.

Turnaround schools need instructional guidance and a seamless approach in teaching reading and writing for improvement (Parrett & Budge, 2009). According to Leithwood and Strauss (2009), it is the principal's responsibility to understand strategic literacy instruction and align schedules and curriculum in the school "with the overall goal of significantly improving student literacy" (p. 28). Not only should the principal understand the tenants of good literacy instruction, but teachers should also have training

in the adopted literacy framework and schools should employ trained literacy coordinators or join with an external partner to provide necessary literacy focused professional development (Keaton, 2011; Newmann et al., 2001). This enables all teachers to have the necessary common core skills to teach reading and writing (Parrett & Budge, 2009).

In 43 school districts, leadership of schools in the turnaround status increased the time dedicated to literacy instruction and analyzed related data (Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). In another large study on improving schools the principal scheduled a coordinated literacy time and established a "common framework of [literacy] instructional components" (Fullan, 2005, p. 179). One urban high-poverty, Title I exemplary turnaround school focused on literacy and demonstrated the results which attention to literacy instruction can bring; first grade students exceeded the grade level expectations in reading and 80 percent of the third grade students scored at or above the state expected standard for reading on the yearly standardized test (Keaton, 2011). These examples underscore a need for a literacy focus, however guidance to establish a seamless curriculum is also needed.

Curriculum Coherence

Payne (2008) discussed coherence in curriculum for school reform, not only in reading, but in all school instructional programs. He cited the need for "a common instructional framework [which] guides curriculum, teaching, assessment, and learning climate…[including] specific expectations for student learning with specific instructional strategies, materials, [and] assessments (Payne, 2008, p. 89). Without instructional program coherence a school may fail at improvement efforts (Newmann et al., 2001). A

seamless approach to curriculum ensures “a logical progression of material from grade to grade and within each grade” (Payne, 2008, p. 89). Teachers in a turnaround urban school district in Massachusetts aligned curriculum with state objectives to bring coherence to the curriculum and make sure all classrooms were taught what was expected (Paletta et al., 2009). This ensured that not only the district curriculum staff, but the teachers as well, were familiar with grade level teaching expectations and minimized curricular gaps (Paletta et al., 2009).

According to Newmann et al. (2001), curriculum coherence also necessitates allocating resources for professional development to implement the instructional framework school-wide. Instructional guidance incorporates professional development for teachers to enhance teaching specific strategies and to address complex learning issues (Blase & Blase, 1999; Walters et al., 2003). Research from 300 federally funded education initiatives found one time trainings before implementing new curriculum are ineffective; professional development should be extended, teacher-driven and include on-going meetings for problem solving (Payne, 2008).

The seamless alignment of curriculum along with professional development for pedagogical practices minimizes gaps in student learning. McCollum (2010) and Newmann et al. (2001) found a positive relationship between aligned curriculum coherence and improved student achievement. Parrett and Budge (2009) studied turnaround schools where leaders “credit much of their success to a high level of instructional program coherence” (p. 25).

Instructional Time

Leaders provide instructional guidance by preserving and honor instructional time in turnaround schools (Blase & Blase, 1999; Walters et al., 2003). Fifty years ago John Carroll (1963) correlated time as a major factor affecting student achievement. Time is a resource that should be guided by the leader and instructional time is honored through keeping interruptions out of the classroom (Walters et al., 2003). According to Myers (2010), research has shown student time on task is more important than extended school days; however, Forte (2010) and Salmonowicz (2009) both suggested a longer instructional day for turnaround schools because of the need to catch low-income children up who are far behind academically. High-performing schools where high-levels of poverty existed found ways to offer before and after school tutoring and additional instructional days on week-ends, vacations, and in the summer to help low-achieving students catch up to required standards of learning (Parrett & Budge, 2009). Instructional guidance, through honoring instructional time and developing a seamless framework of curriculum which focuses on literacy learning, establishes a climate focused on learning; another essential support for the framework for school improvement.

School Climate

As schools press for academic improvement, turnaround frameworks often include a focus on leadership, quality teachers, and instruction; however little attention has been given to improve culture and climate (Payne, 2008). According to Tagirui's (1968), seminal work on organizational climate, environment, settings, culture, and social structures comprise a climate just as various personal characteristics make up a personality. Climates are different from one organization to another, influencing how

employees in an organization behave (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Cultures are made up of people's beliefs and their behaviors, as a result of these beliefs, construct the climate (Strahan, 2003). In a study on school culture, Peterson and Deal (2002), noted that "teachers and students are more likely to succeed in a culture that fosters hard work, commitment to valued ends, an attention to problem solving, and a focus on learning for all students" (p. 11).

Turnaround schools need environments of shared visions and values that focus on student learning, the social structures should be collaborative with reflective dialogue, and professional communities should invade the culture to make up an effective school climate that enhances student achievement (Marks & Louis, 1997). Sweetland and Hoy (2000) suggested healthy school climates are comprised of four factors, which are leadership relationships, teacher professionalism, academic press, and environmental press. Bryk's et al. (2010) research of turnaround schools in Chicago found a healthy school climate needed order and safety first along with academic press and "supportive peer norms" (p. 60). Reoccurring factors of school climates in the literature of turnaround schools include a positive and safe climate and high expectations often called academic press (Davila, 2009; Leithwood, 2005; Walters et al., 2003).

Safety

Leaders from low-performing schools in the improvement status found the students and staff must feel safe, both physically and emotionally, before increased learning can happen (Bryk et al., 2010; Parrett & Budge, 2009). Bryk et al. (2010) reminded educators that without a safe and secure environment, student disruptions can interrupt learning and students who do not feel secure will lack a willingness to

participate and even attend school. In the Northwest and Midwest urban and rural turnaround schools studied by Parrett and Budge (2009), the staff agreed upon the expectation for appropriate behavior and then modeled it. This helped students see the expected behavior and advocate for these behaviors from their peers for physical safety within the school (Parrett & Budge, 2009). Bryk et al. refers to this as "supportive peer norms" where expectations for appropriate behavior stem from the students (p. 60). Physical safety is a basic human need and Bryk et al. found improved attendance at schools which addressed safety, both physically and emotionally.

Emotional security is another protective factor which establishes a positive and safe climate. Parrett and Budge (2009) found as teachers established caring relationships with students and their adult peers, a secure positive environment was formed. Research from over 40 years ago found an insecure environment filters down from teacher to student; finding to the degree a teacher interacts harshly with students is the degree to which students interact harshly with one another (Johnson, 1970). In a study of two successful urban schools in New York, part of the framework for improvement was the development of a culture filled with common language and traditions (Woodfin, 2009). Teachers at these turnaround schools developed a culture of security through using identical signals or words to get the attention of students and, in hallways and classrooms, consistent expectations and language were evident (Woodfin, 2009). Security is important between teachers also. Mai (2004) found in secure climates all teachers participated in reviewing their colleague's assessments and evaluating one another. This safe and secure professional culture of reflection, inquiry, and discussion were found to

be critical for turnaround schools and facilitated high expectations for learning (Lambert, 2006).

High Expectations for Learning

Climates in turnaround schools embrace high expectations for student learning (Hess & Gift, 2008). Researchers have cited the role of the principal to possess and model "academic press" or high expectations for student learning (Bryk et al., 2010; Hess & Gift, 2009; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Payne, 2008). "When teachers…believe that all students can learn, advancing the education of all students becomes the central concern" (Bryk et al., 1999, p. 755). A classic study on the correlation of student learning to teacher expectations found higher expectations resulted in higher student performance (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). In a study of school turnarounds, Hess and Gift (2009) stated "staging a successful turnaround entails setting high expectations and then being flexible with regard to how principals, teachers, and staff go about meeting them…" (p. 3). Turnaround schools with high expectations were found using research on student learning and student data to establish and support a culture of high expectations for students (Parrett & Budge, 2009). Academic press is displayed in turnaround schools as teachers create high yet achievable goals for student leaning, students take on the challenge to accomplish the learning goals, and the leader exercises influence and provides resources for students and staff to realize the goals (Keaton, 2011; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

A safe climate with structured routines and high expectations was displayed in one turnaround middle school in New York. Significant changes in the climate occurred as teachers' attitudes and beliefs shifted to those of high expectations for student learning,

an environment of safety and orderliness was established, and students felt secure by having regular routines and a caring environment within the school (Cianca & Lampe, 2010). A safe climate with high expectations for learning is the foundational aspect to encourage parents and community members to support the school, the final essential support in the framework of turnaround schools.

Parent and Community Involvement

According to Rhodes and Brundrett (2009), "there is a growing body of research to show that working more closely with local communities can have the potential for improving schools and learner outcomes through enhanced learner inclusion and engagement in education" (p. 363). In seven urban school districts, turnaround efforts have attributed "more robust parental involvement" as one of the factors to increase student achievement and attendance (Maxwell, 2008, p. 10). Studies have shown that a low opinion of the school is formed in communities with failing schools while successful schools build relationships with parents and the community to impact student learning (Leithwood, 2005; Meyers & Murphy, 2007). Gonzalez and Thomas (2011) stated, "We as leaders have to believe in what family and community and involvement can be…" (p. 20).

The need for schools to link with the community and parents are many; communities filled with crime negatively impact the school, high mobility and poor attendance rates are often seen in low-income families, and the parents' education level, economic status, and family structure cause disadvantages in student performance (Price, 2010). According to Sanders (2008), in a qualitative case study on bridging the home-school gap, school ties with parents and community partnerships promoted collaboration

and increased student achievement, improved attendance and behavior, and had a positive effect on the school climate. To bridge this gap, school staff should help parents understand how the school functions, should seek to know ethnicities and accommodate various cultures, and should consider time factors when asking parents to attend meetings (Gonzalez & Thomas, 2011). Parent and community involvement is essential for turning around low-performing schools.

Parent Participation

Failing schools often have little parent involvement (Bryk, 2010; Meyers & Murphy, 2007; Sanders, 2008). There are many ways which principals and staff can engage parents in their child's learning. Robinson and Buntrock (2011) studied 123 turnaround schools and found they engaged parents through phone calls, personal home visits, and through bringing parents into the school regularly for education or celebration opportunities. The staff from other turnaround schools established regular contact with each child's parent to build relationships, helped parents assist with homework, provided parent education classes and resources, conferred with parents about student data, and hosted frequent literacy, math, and science nights (Borman et al., 2000; Gonzalez & Thomas, 2011; Newmann et al., 2001; O'Brien, 2010; Parrett & Budge, 2009). Borman et al.(2000) and Parrett and Budge (2009) found a growing number of turnaround schools use the school as a community center and hire a liaison to communicate between the school, families, and community and offer adult mentoring and learning programs which increases parent involvement. These high performing poverty schools shared the similar component of parent involvement for school improvement as the leader and teachers built

positive relationships not only with parents and guardians but also with the neighborhood and community (Parrett & Budge, 2009).

Community Involvement

An increasing amount of research provides evidence of the benefits of connecting the school to the community for student learning (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) studied high performing/high poverty schools and found all the schools created relationships with the community and other outside sources to accomplish their mission and help students achieve academic success. Partnering with businesses and church groups for volunteers and resources are ways which schools can connect to the community (Borman et al., 2000; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; McCollum, 2010). According to Rhodes and Brundrett (2009), benefits of linking schools with the community, through additional adult relationships for the children and parents, are improved student behavior, improved attendance, and increased learning. A turnaround school in Colorado saw success with partnering with universities to provide students with additional instruction and churches to mentor at-risk students (McCollum, 2010). Payne (2008) proposed another benefit of linking schools with parents and the community; an increased satisfaction with the school resulting in a decreased mobility for families. These benefits underscore the importance of parent-school-community ties for turning around underachieving schools.

Conclusion

Thomas Jefferson said, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be” (as cited in Padover, 1939, p.

89). Education in the 21st century must equip children with complex thinking skills to prepare for college and careers; teaching skills of collaboration, interpersonal relationship skills, problem solving, and intellectual skills such as synthesizing, analysis, and application (Bryk, 2010). “Schools should form in every child the capacity to think and act well in an increasingly complex, pluralist, democratic society” (Bryk et al., 2010). All schools are charged with meeting the demands of educating children in the 21st century. The challenge of turning a failing school around academically to educate children for the knowledge economy is vast and a framework with essential supports is needed.

Bryk et al. (2010) uncovered a framework to turn around failing schools through a 15-year study conducted in Chicago Public Schools. The framework includes five essential supports which are strong leadership, increased professional capacity, instructional guidance, a safe learning climate, and strong parent-school-community ties (Bryk et al., 2010). Study findings revealed that schools which implemented the five supports of the turnaround framework “were ten times more likely to improve than schools with weak supports” (Bryk, 2010, p. 25). These improved schools made substantial gains in reading while the schools weak in the five essential supports showed little improvement and no improvement in math (Bryk, 2010). According to Bryk (2010), even one weak link in the turnaround framework undermines the ability of the school to improve. A meta-analysis of nearly 30 years of research on school improvement found that focusing on school and classroom practices, as revealed in the aforementioned turnaround framework, could account for an increase of 23 % in student achievement (Walters et al., 2003). Walters et al. (2003) stated

> …the message for leaders is that in order to have positive impact on student achievement, they need to not only focus improvement efforts on these key school and classroom practices, but also accurately understand the magnitude of change implied by these efforts. (p. 6)

The recent flexibility of NCLB has returned some autonomy to the states for structuring frameworks to improve failing schools and create district appropriate student achievement goals (McNeil & Klein, 2011). According to McNeil and Klein (2011), the purpose of the flexibility is not to exempt schools from accountability but to encourage innovation. Accountability creates a chain reaction of improved teacher motivation while holding schools as a whole accountable with the "eventual result in instructional change in classrooms" (Fullan, 2005, p. 175). Fullan (2005) adds "when teachers have the will to change and faculties begin to evaluate their schools' shortcomings, they raise their own expectations to the high demands of the system and agree on formal procedures of internal accountability, making the conditions ripe for teaching content and methods restructuring" (p. 175). In an op-ed piece for the Washington Post, Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2012) stated,

> We all need to work together so that ten years from now, America's children will have [schools] that challenge them to achieve to high standards, and provide them with the highly effective teachers and principals who can prepare them for success in college and the workforce. (p. 2)

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Four years ago Yosemite View Elementary School was the lowest performing school in the central California school district where it is located. Today it is one of the highest performing schools in the district. Approximately 86 % of the 500 children at the pre-kindergarten through fifth grade school receive free or reduced price lunch. Many families live in low cost apartments, rentals, or multi-family homes and more than one fourth of the children are English language learners. In addition to poverty and language barriers, families at Yosemite View Elementary experience drug use, ethnic gangs, and violence.

The educational reform effort of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) measures the yearly level of performance at Yosemite View Elementary and schools throughout the country through formalized student assessments to determine academic adequate yearly progress. Recently NCLB's federal level of measurement was repealed by President Obama, giving states the right to apply for waivers to allow for flexibility. Six years ago Yosemite View Elementary would have been under the NCLB sanctions and would have been classified as a failing school in need of improvement. Today this school is considered a turnaround school which overcame obstacles to raise student achievement and bring the school out of failing status.

Even with the exchange of federal NCLB requirements for flexibility, schools will still have to show accountability. Not just through yearly performance testing in reading and math, but also through college and career readiness, and teacher and principal

evaluations—tied in part to student achievement growth (McNeil & Klein, 2011). Still a large number of schools will join the ranks of failing schools. Research is needed on how to improve student achievement for failing schools to meet state standards of learning. Turnaround schools improve student academics through a framework of essential supports for school improvement. And a comprehensive framework is needed rather than implementing a pre-packaged curriculum model. These frameworks address how to implement standards to turn around low-performing schools (Payne, 2008). Frameworks address how to engage leadership, clarify the vision, increase capacity, meet professional development needs, provide teacher support, and inform instruction through assessment (Bryk et al., 2010; Payne, 2008). Understanding how to implement interventions through a framework for improvement is a critical need for leadership of failing schools.

This paper will begin by describing the design of this study. The design will be a qualitative in-depth instrumental case study of a single elementary school in the central valley of California which is considered a turnaround school. Yosemite View Elementary School was labeled as an underperforming school and over a four-year period transformed student achievement to meet state standards of student learning. The researcher will study how this school went through the process to implement a framework for improvement and the essential supports implemented. Access to this school will be gained through collegial relationships the researcher has with current employees in the district.

A description of the participants will follow the design section of the study. Participants will be from the Yosemite View Elementary school and will include the

principal, teachers, students, and parents. School district officials may also be included in the study through the snowball effect of interviews (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

Next methods used for data collection and analysis will be explained. Data will be collected through open-ended survey, interviews, observations, a focus group, documents, and artifacts. Field notes and observation protocols will be used to record data which will be stored in computers, digital recorders, and through hand written notes. Data will be analyzed through describing the case and themes of the case (Creswell, 2007). Categorical aggregation will attempt to reveal how the turnaround framework was implemented at Yosemite View Elementary School.

Finally, the role of the researcher and trustworthiness will be addressed in this paper. The researcher's biases regarding transformational leadership perspective, relationships with school staff, and familiarity with the school district will be discussed. Trustworthiness of data will be ensured through the use of various recording devices and audit trails. Internal and external validity will be address through the use of triangulation and through providing adequate detail of the case to allow for generalizations.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how one high-poverty school with many English language learners, implemented a framework for improvement over a four-year period. The study will add to current literature regarding reforming education practices. The study's results are intended to serve as an example for school leaders of the successful turnaround of a failing school.

Research Questions

This case study is intended to describe the essential supports of a turnaround framework and how they were put into practice during an elementary school's four-year

school improvement process located in the central valley of California. The school was in academic failure according to state standards and is now achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (Creswell, 2007). Within the context of this study, the following research question will be addressed:

What essential supports were implemented and how were they implemented over four-year period for the academic turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School in the central valley of California as perceived by the school leadership, teachers, and parents? The sub questions below have been developed to support the central question and frame the study:

1. What was the role and support of leadership in the turnaround of the school?
2. How did the staff influence the student achievement gains?
3. How did the school climate impact student achievement?
4. What was the role of the parents and community in the turnaround of the school?

Design for the Study

The design of this qualitative research will be an instrumental case study approach of a single elementary school in the central valley of California, which was a failing school according to state and federal standards and over a four-year period turned around to meet standards of Adequate Yearly Progress (Creswell, 2007). The instrumental case study approach was chosen because it illustrates how this transformation occurred at a single elementary school. According to Yin (2003), “You would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (p. 13). Studying the turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School will describe the process of how the the

school leadership and staff implemented a framework to go from a failing school to an achieving school (Creswell, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

The setting for this study is a single school, Yosemite View Elementary, in the central valley of California. Access will be gained through school district gatekeepers. The researcher's prior employment in the district and relationships with current employees will help gain access to these gatekeepers. A pre-approval letter to conduct the study in the school district has been obtained from the district's acting Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services.

Participants

Yosemite View Elementary School is in a school district which is located in the agriculturally rich central valley in the heart of California. The district serves thirteen kindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools, each housing state preschool classes, and four sixth through eighth grade middle schools. The school district percentage of students who receive free or reduced lunch and who are English language learners is higher than the state average. Yosemite View Elementary School serves a higher percentage of these students than the district average with 86.4 % of the students receiving free or reduced lunch and English language learners comprising 24.8 % of the student population. The ethnicity of the student population at Yosemite View Elementary is comprised of 62% Hispanic, 20% Caucasian, 10.4% Black, and 6.1% Asian; the remaining 1.8 % of the student population is comprised of other ethnic groups. The aforementioned demographics were reported to the California Department of Education in 2010.

Yosemite View Elementary would be considered a typical sample of a turnaround school as validated by the student academic data over a four-year period (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). A turnaround school is one that is not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress and shows an increase in student achievement to meet Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by NCLB. A purposive sampling of staff, parents, and community members at Yosemite View Elementary School will include participants such as the school principal, teachers, other staff, district officials, parents, and possibly some community members (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). These participants will provide an in-depth, holistic view of how the framework for turnaround was implemented.

Maximum variation participants will be selected to represent various grade level teachers and specialty teachers who characterize the diversity of the faculty, a sample of parents from the school's various ethnic and socio-economic population, the school principal and other school leaders, and district officials who support the leadership of Yosemite View School (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). These participants will be based on the recommendations of the school principal and other staff to include "the diversity of perspectives and characteristics" of key stakeholders involved in the turnaround process (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 440). Interviews with the principal and teacher leaders may lead to other participants impacting the school's academic achievement; therefore snowballing of other interviews may arise (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

The researcher will contact potential participants via email prior to the on-site visit to schedule the times for interviews, focus groups, and observations. If participants do not respond to email, the researcher will call to schedule the data collection.

Data Collection Instruments

Data for this study will be collected from a variety of sources. The researcher will collect perceptual data from staff members utilizing an open-ended survey; structured and unstructured open-ended interviews; and focus groups. Observation data will be collected during formal and informal walk throughs or at meetings. Data will also be collected from documents such as school data analysis samples, progress monitoring data, faculty meeting agendas, teacher planning meetings, and lesson plans.

Principal Recruitment Script to Introduce the Study

It is important for the researcher to remain objective during the study due to the researcher's prior relationship with the school leader. To assist in maintaining objectivity, a recruitment script to ask for voluntary participation in the study of the improvement of the school has been included for the principal at Yosemite View Elementary School as Appendix A.

Staff Survey Protocol

Goals of this study are to determine what and how essential supports were implemented to raise the student achievement at Yosemite View Elementary School. The role and support of the leader will be examined, how the staff influenced the achievement gains, the impact of the school climate on the turnaround, and the role of parents and community members in the school's improvement. The Turnaround School Survey was developed as an open-ended data collection instrument. The survey will be emailed to the staff at Yosemite View Elementary one week prior to the researcher's site visit to the school. The email will contain a cover letter describing the survey and informed consent will be gained through the initial question which will ask for consent to participate in the

survey. The letter describing the study along with the open-ended survey has been included as Appendix B.

Individual Interview Protocol

Because leadership is a key component in school improvement, conducting individual interviews with the principal and the learning director will be used to help determine the role of leadership and support in a turnaround school. These interviews will be semi-structured and open-ended. Interviews with leadership or the focus groups may lead to other interview, thus causing the snowball effect. Unstructured, impromptu interviews will be conducted as opportunity affords them, and follow-up interviews for the purpose of clarification will be conducted after the researcher's site visit if necessary. Participants for the unstructured interviews will be made aware their responses would be used as data to support the study.

Interviews will last approximately 30 to 40 minutes. Interviews will be audio recorded. Transcripts of the recordings will be prepared for analysis. When it is not possible to interview a staff member face-to-face due to absence or other inhibiting factors, the researcher will conduct the interview via email to ensure an accurate transcript of the interview.

An informed consent form will be collected from each participating staff member prior to interviews. Copies of the emails that will be sent to the interviewees inviting their participation, the script for a follow-up phone call to remind the principal or learning director of the interview date and time, and the informed consent form have been included as Appendix C. A copy of the informed consent for participating district leaders or community members to be interviewed as a result of the snowball effect has also been

included in Appendix C. A copy of the interview protocol that will be used to collect data is included as Appendix D.

Focus Group Protocol

A focus group session will be established to determine the essential supports of improvement which were implemented throughout the school; and the staffs' view of the support received from the leadership. In addition, questions for the focus group will help provide data regarding the commitment and capacity of the staff, how the staff affects the school climate, and the staff's involvement with parents and the community. Teachers represented from the various grade levels, an intervention teacher, a pre-school teacher, and a support teacher will be invited to serve in the focus group as well.

A second focus group session will be established to determine the role of the parents in the turnaround of the school. A select group of parents, as recommended by the principal, will be asked to participate in the focus group. Questions will provide insight into the role of parent involvement in the turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary.

Focus group meetings will last approximately one hour and will be audio recorded. Transcripts of the recordings will be prepared for analysis following the focus group sessions. Follow-up questions will be added to the focus group protocol as necessary to provide clarity during the focus group sessions.

An informed consent will be collected from each participating staff member prior to the focus group sessions. Copies of the recruitment email for the teacher focus group participation, the script for a phone call to remind participants of the teacher focus group session date and time, and the informed consent form have been included as Appendix E of this study. The teacher focus group protocol has been included as Appendix F. Copies

of the parent informed consent, the recruitment email script, and the script for the phone call have been included as Appendix G of this study. The parent focus group protocol has been included as Appendix H.

Formal and Informal Observation Protocol

Field observations will be made of a faculty meeting, a teacher group lesson planning meeting, a data analysis meeting, four classrooms, and the principal as she provides leadership, coaching, and modeling. Observations may vary due to the availability of the meetings. Time length for observations will be determined by the event observed. Additional observations will be conducted as the emerging design may indicate the need for them. Ethnographic field notes will be taken during observations. Audio recordings will supplement field notes. A copy of the observation protocol has been included as Appendix I of this study.

Examination of Public Documents and Document Analysis Guide

Data will be collected from informal artifacts at Yosemite View Elementary. Artifacts such as progress monitoring records, quarterly analysis records, faculty meeting agendas, notes from teacher planning meetings, and teacher lesson plans will comprise the informal artifacts collected. Public achievement data for the California Department of Education will be collected to validate the school improvement. Access to the informal artifacts will be gained through the school principal. The document analysis guide has been included as Appendix J.

Data Collection

Yosemite View Elementary is a single case study of a turnaround school over a four- year period. In the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) an

article by Stake gives recommendation for collecting the following types of data to study a case, (a) the nature of the case, (b) the historical background, (c) the physical setting, (d) the context, and (e) informants to help understand the case. The essential supports related to this turnaround effort and how leadership and staff influenced the improvement of the school will be described through qualitative data gathered from interviews, observations, a focus group, an open-ended survey, and through collecting documents, records, and artifacts.

Data Collection Procedures

An open-ended survey will be emailed to all staff at Yosemite View Elementary School who participated in the turnaround process (Fink, 2009). The open-ended survey will be collected via email from teachers and the principal, one week prior to the researcher's on-site arrival. The open-ended survey will be developed based on the conceptual framework, purpose, and research questions of the study. The five factors for school improvement which are school leadership, the professional capacity of the teaching staff, instructional guidance, the school learning climate, and parent-school community ties, gleaned from the study done by Bryk et al. (2010), will guide the development of survey questions. The survey will attempt to reveal the framework implemented for improvement and how each participant used this framework to influence student learning. The survey will be field tested by teachers in the researcher's school district who are working at schools similar to the case study school (Mertens, 2005).

The remaining data from people and artifacts will be collected during a one week period when the researcher will be at the site (Creswell, 2007). Two or three separate 20 minute interviews will be conducted with the principal, the learning director, and possibly

district officials. These interviews will focus on the role of leadership in the turnaround process and the support provided to the staff. Interviews will be recorded electronically, and transcripts of interviews will be prepared following the interviews (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Focus group transcripts will also be recorded and transcribed.

Two focus groups, comprised of similar participants, will be conducted to facilitate understanding of how the turnaround framework was implemented (Krueger & Casey, 2009). One focus group will consist of teachers intended to explain how they influenced the student achievement gains. The other focus group will consist of parents and community members to describe their role in the turnaround of student achievement at the school. Focus group questions will include opening, introductory, transition, key, and ending questions (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Each focus group will last approximately 30 minutes.

Three observations are planned. They will be a faculty meeting, a teacher group lesson planning meeting, and a data analysis meeting. Observations may be made of the principal in leadership, coaching, and modeling situations as well. Ethnographic field notes will be taken to document observations (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Protocols will be developed and used for observations of the teacher group lesson planning meeting, data analysis meeting, and the faculty meeting (Creswell, 2007). These protocols will guide the researcher in observing the specific framework for improvement. Ethnographic notes will be taken during the faculty meeting with attention given to observing the school climate and staff professional capacity (Emerson et al., 1995). These observations will contribute to understanding how teacher capacity, instructional guidance, and school climate were involved in the turnaround process.

Records of yearly testing results obtained from the California Department of Education and school leadership, will validate the turnaround of the school. Data from progress monitoring for interventions and quarterly analysis will be collected along with other artifacts such as planning meeting notes, lesson plans, staff communication, and faculty meeting agendas. These data sources will be analyzed to determine factors that led to the turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School. Data analysis will focus revealing leadership traits, the quality of the staff, instructional guidance, the learning climate, and parent-school connections.

Human Subjects Protection and Other Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations of the participants in this study will be protected through the approval from the institutional review board (IRB) from both the researcher's university and the school district where the research is taking place (Mertens, 2005). A preliminary approval to undertake the study has been granted from Yosemite View Elementary School's district IRB. A draft of the prospectus has been sent to the acting Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services and to the principal of Yosemite View School. Upon approval of the prospectus from the doctoral committee at the University of Missouri, a request will be submitted to the university's IRB to perform the research at Yosemite View Elementary School.

Participants will be provided with a consent form to complete prior to the on-site visit of the researcher (Fink, 2009). All consent forms will be obtained before data collection begins. Confidentiality will be protected through maintaining the anonymity of respondents (Mertens, 2005). Emailed surveys will be printed and coded and kept in "a separate file with the code linked to unique identifying information" (Mertens, 2005, p.

337). All data will be organized in folders which will be kept in locked files and shredded following a period of seven years after the completion of the research. Participants will be informed of the processes taken to respect privacy and confidentiality for their protection (Fink, 2009; Mertens, 2005).

Data Analysis

Content analysis is used in qualitative research. The data analysis will provide an in depth description of the case and context of the school studied (Creswell, 2007). The researcher will attempt to reveal how a framework was applied for the academic turnaround of a school through establishing themes or patterns of categorical aggregation (Creswell, 2007). The researcher will begin with a thorough description of the facts and the setting of the case study. Analysis for all data sources will use procedures from grounded theory analysis in which the framework categories are established through open coding followed by axial coding which reveals patterns between the multiple data sources to interconnect the categories (Creswell, 2007). Finally, selective coding will build the turnaround framework and describe how it is applied within the school (Creswell, 2007).

The open ended survey responses will be analyzed to infer meaning of how a framework for improvement was applied to Yosemite View Elementary (Fink, 2009). The researcher will look for reoccurring "words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters, or sentences in order to quantify them" (Fink, 2009, p. 89). The observations, interviews, and focus group data will be transcribed with notes of initial themes added to margins (Creswell, 2007). Analysis of the focus groups is based on the purpose of each of the two groups. The purpose of the teacher focus group is to determine professional capacity, instruction, and how this influenced student academic gains. The purpose of the

parent/community member focus group is to determine how parents and community members became involved in the turnaround process and supported it. As in the open survey analysis, the researcher will attempt to identify themes and categorize these through analyzing key concepts, critical incidents, looking for relationships between concepts, and identifying change in opinions (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

Explanation of the participants' contribution to the turnaround will be gained through categorical aggregation of open, axial, and selective coding (Creswell, 2007). Some direct interpretations may be made from single instances and from critical incidents the researcher may discover (Creswell, 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2009). The case study's in-depth picture and rich descriptions will allow readers to discover similarities in their own contexts providing generalizations from the data to other failing schools in need of a turnaround framework (Creswell, 2007).

Role of Researcher

Qualitative research often shares the epistemological view of constructivism (Creswell, 2007; Mertens, 2005). One role of the researcher will be to remain objective during interviews, focus groups, and observations. This objectivity can be followed to original data sources and will lend confirmability to the study. The use of protocols will also help the researcher remain objective.

Another role of the researcher is to maintain authenticity through recording views "of all perspectives, values, and beliefs" (Mertens, 2005, p. 257). Progressive subjectivity will facilitate the researcher's open-minded study of the data and will diminish any preconceived biases the researcher may bring into the study so all participants perspectives, values, and beliefs are noted (Mertens, 2005). Impact of the researcher's

biases will be diminished as the researcher strives to remain objective and authentic throughout the study.

Trustworthiness

The quality of data and data analysis will be ensured through the use of videos, audio recordings, ethnographic notes, and protocols. An audit trail of emails, initial transcriptions, coding, and ethnographic notes will be maintained throughout the study (Mertens, 2005). Mertens (2005) stated, "Confirmability means that the data and their interpretation are not figments of the researcher's imagination" (p. 257). In addition to the audit trail, the use of protocols for observations and interviews will maintain objectivity in the study. Using explicit logic to interpret the data and original sources of data will ensure confirmability in the study (Mertens, 2005).

Credibility for the study will be gained from multiple sources of data and strategies such as member checks which summarize the responses at the end of interviews and focus groups for clarity and accuracy (Mertens, 2005). Credibility will also be gained through triangulating data from interviews, observations, and focus groups persistent observations during the week long site visit; and through progressive subjectivity to avoid biases (Mertens, 2005). Dependability will be maintained through establishing a case study protocol to document the research process (Mertens, 2005). As changes occur in the process of collecting research, the case study protocol will document the changes. The external validity of the case will be made through the "thick description" of the "time, place, context and culture" (Mertens, 2005, p. 256). Case studies allow readers to transfer or generalize similarities of the study to their own

situations. Through rich detail from multiple data sources, the research will be transferrable to other failing schools.

Summary

This qualitative instrumental case study will be of a turnaround elementary school located in the heart of California. The study will attempt to uncover how the leadership and staff implemented a framework for improvement which transformed a failing school into a school achieving state standards of Adequate Yearly Progress established by No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. Participation will be obtained through a purposive sampling of staff, parents, and community members from Yosemite View Elementary School. Data will be collected in multiple forms such as an open-ended survey, interviews, observations, focus groups, documents, records, and artifacts. Ethical considerations of participants will be protected by obtaining participant consent and by obtaining permission to conduct the study from the IRB of the researcher's institution and the cooperating school district. Data will be analyzed through categorical aggregation and open, axial, and selective coding to reveal how the framework for improvement was implemented. Researcher bias will be diminished through objectivity and authenticity. The trustworthiness of the study will be maintained through addressing confirmability, credibility, dependability and transferability. The in-depth description of the study's focus school's turnaround will allow the process described to be applied to other failing schools seeking a framework for academic turnaround.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The ultimate goal of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is looming over American public education; one hundred percent student proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by the year 2013-2014. Stringent accountability of the nation's public schools began with the 2002 passing of the educational reform act NCLB. New measurements for classifying schools as achieving or failing were initiated. Under NCLB each year schools are required to meet an increasing percentage of annual measurable objectives (AMOs) to demonstrate student learning (Meyers, 2012). Yearly formalized student assessments determine the AMOs resulting in a score labeled as adequate yearly progress. If a school fails to meet one of the required AMOs for two repeated years they are in placed in program improvement (PI) status; after three years of program improvement status the school is stamped "failing" (Meyers, 2012).

In September of 2011, temporary waivers from NCLB's stringent accountability were offered to states. Over four billion dollars of competitive educational funding through Race to the Top grants were made available as states showed they were "adopting college and career readiness standards, crafting new teacher-evaluation systems, and taking an aggressive approach to turning around the lowest-performing schools" (Klein, 2012, p. 28). These comprehensive school improvement plans focus on growth in student learning to evaluate teacher quality and school success (Duncan, 2012). Schools which continue to be unable to measure up to the state improvement plans, as evidenced through the approved accountability system, will still be deemed as failing.

Turning around failing schools requires resolute work. Research to expose frameworks for improving failing schools and guiding school leaders to implement changes has been identified (Borman et al., 2000; Chance & Segura, 2009; Cianca & Lampe, 2010; Keaton, 2011; Mai, 2004; O'Brien, 2010; Price, 2010; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). These frameworks address how to engage leadership, clarify vision, increase capacity, meet professional development needs, provide teacher support, and inform instruction through assessment; they address *how* to implement standards for improvement rather than suggesting *what* to implement (Payne, 2008).

This study was designed to reveal an in-depth picture and rich descriptions of the framework one turnaround school implemented for improvement. Yosemite View Elementary School was considered a failing school in 2006 after being in program improvement status for five years. From 2006 through 2010, Yosemite View Elementary School turned around to become a school which demonstrated improved student learning through meeting the state's requirements of adequate yearly progress. The researcher's intent was to investigate the framework this school implemented to become a turnaround school including the impact of the leadership, staff, climate, and parents or community on student achievement.

The essential research question which led to the collection and analysis of data for this qualitative instrumental case study was: What essential supports were implemented and how were they implemented over a four-year period for the academic turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School in the central valley of California as perceived by the school leadership, teachers, and parents? Specifically, the study examined these questions:

1. What was the role and support of leadership in the turnaround of the school?
2. How did the staff influence the student achievement gains?
3. How did the school climate impact student achievement?
4. What was the role of the parents and the community in the turnaround of the school?

The collection and analysis of the data for this qualitative study is organized into three additional sections of Chapter Four. The Data Collection is first and will describe the study's setting, the participants involved, and the protocols used to collect the data. The Data Analysis section will follow, which will be organized by the specific questions examined in the study through interviews, focus groups, an open-ended survey, and observations. This section will present the major themes which reveal the framework used to turn around Yosemite View Elementary School. Chapter Four will conclude with a summary which will review the framework used at this school for improvement.

Data Collection

Setting

Yosemite View Elementary School is located in an ethnically diverse small city situated in the rich Central Valley of California. Originally built in the 1920s, the school lies in the center of the city and is now considered a high-poverty school serving approximately 500 students. The school, a Title I school with over 85% of its students qualifying for free or reduces lunch benefits, has a high minority population of over 60% Hispanic students and approximately 20% Black and Asian students. Since the 1920's the school has had several additions and currently houses portable classrooms to accommodate a state preschool class, as well as 23 kindergarten through fifth grade

classrooms, a special education classroom, a resource classroom, and a Title I reading classroom.

The state of California measures Adequate Yearly Progress through Academic Performance Indexes (API) ranging from 200 to1000, with an API target of 800. These scores are determined through the California Standards Tests (CSTs) of English Language Arts and Mathematics, administered to students in second through eleventh grades. Schools which do not meet the academic target of 800 are placed in Program Improvement (PI) status. Yosemite View Elementary School is considered a typical sample of a turnaround school. In 2006, when the principal took the helm, the Academic Performance Index fell short of meeting the expected target for California by 125 points. Although the staff, an experienced group of teachers, stayed much the same, Yosemite View School was in Program Improvement standing and on the brink of being taken over by the state. From 2006 to 2010 the API scores of Yosemite View Elementary grew from 675 to over 800 when it was declared out of PI status and labeled as a turnaround school.

Participants

Staff members of Yosemite View Elementary School were asked to participate in this study along with the school principal, the literacy coach, and one district official who supported the leadership of the school. A sample of parents from the school's various ethnic and socio-economic populations were also asked to participate. Interviews with the principal, the literacy coach from 2006 through 2010, and one district official were conducted. The interviews lasted from 16 to 50 minutes and are coded as I1, I2, and I3 throughout the transcripts and data analysis sections of this chapter.

The building administrator recommended the leadership team, representing preschool through fifth grade teachers along with the resource teacher and the literacy coach, participate in a teacher focus group interview. This select group of 10 female teachers represented the diverse perspectives and characteristics within the staff through varying grade level assignments and ethnic diversity. To protect their identity, they were coded as TFG1, TFG2, TFG3, TFG4, TFG5, TFG6, TFG7, TFG8, and TFG9; one teacher chose not to respond to any of the questions asked during the 50-minute focus group interview. The numbers in the coding do not represent the grade level taught by each teacher.

Six mothers of nine of the Yosemite View Elementary students, corresponding to the ethnic diversity within the school, participated in the parent focus group. These parents have been involved in various school activities such as the parent teacher club, the school site council, and fund raising efforts throughout the turnaround process. For confidentiality, the parent responses were coded as PFG1, PFG2, PFG3, PFG4, PFG5, and PFG6. Each one of the parents answered questions throughout the 36-minute focus group interview.

All teachers employed at the school from 2006-2010 were emailed a survey and given the opportunity to participate in the study through an open-ended survey. Of the 30 staff members who received the 15 question survey, 10 responded by completing the electronic survey and remain as anonymous participants. To indicate various participants' survey responses, coding is labeled S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, and S10.

Protocol

The 2010 spring results of the CST's qualified Yosemite View Elementary to be considered a turnaround school. The researcher made initial contact with the principal of the school in the spring of 2011 to discuss the study and obtain her approval to research the turnaround process at the school. The principal suggested the researcher send a rough draft outline of the prospectus to the school district's acting assistant superintendent for preliminary approval as well, which was given. Ethical considerations of the participants in the study were protected through obtaining approval from the institutional review board (IRB) at the researcher's university. After IRB consent was given to collect data, the researcher emailed a time line of key dates and milestones required for the project to the acting assistant superintendent along with the school administrator and permission to conduct research at Yosemite View Elementary School was obtained.

Initially the researcher emailed the principal a list of the desired interviews, focus groups, and observations that would be collected during the one week on-site visit. The principal responded through introducing the research project to the staff using the Principal's Recruitment Script for Participation in the Study which can be found in Appendix A. Teachers volunteered to participate in the study by providing their name and email on the Turnaround School Case Study Participation sheet (Appendix A). The school administrator used this list to suggest participants for observations, interviews, and focus groups.

Observations. Nine observations were made during the one week at the school site. Observations were made of the following: a fifth grade math class, a first grade writers workshop, a second grade intervention group in which the lesson was modeled by

the principal for the teacher, a coaching session with the second grade teacher and principal, a kindergarten writer's workshop, a fourth grade reading test preparation planning group, a third grade data analysis group, a faculty meeting, and a school site council meeting. An observation protocol was used to focus the researcher's observation on the physical setting, program activities, informal interactions, and nonverbal communication. The observation protocol also included *look fors* in each of the three research question areas: leadership, staff, and climate. Field notes were taken during each observation. The observation protocol has been included in Appendix I.

Interviews. The researcher contacted the interview participants by email to obtain initial permission to be interviewed. The interview times for the three school leaders were arranged by the principal. A follow up email reminder was sent rather than a phone call prior to each interview. Interviews were conducted in the offices of the district official and the principal. Participants were specifically chosen to give understanding and provide a rich description of the turnaround process from a leader's perspective. Interview questions were intended to reveal the framework created for school improvement. Permission was granted to be interviewed and audio-recorded as each participant signed an informed consent. Copies of the email inviting participants to be interviewed, the follow-up phone call script, and the informed consent letter have been included in Appendix C. The interview protocol used for guiding the interview and revealing various framework codes is included in Appendix D.

Focus groups. Two focus groups were conducted during the on site visit. The times and participants of the focus groups were arranged by the principal. The researcher sent a follow-up email to each participant of the focus groups to explain the purpose of

the research project and gain initial permission to serve in the focus group. The teacher focus group took place in a room off of the library before school in lieu of the weekly leadership team meeting. The purpose of the teacher focus group was to provide data and input from the teachers about the leader, the staff, and the climate's influence on the student achievement gains. Each participant gave permission to be interviewed and for the focus group to be audio-taped by signing an informed consent agreeing to participate.

The parent focus group was held in the library during the school day. The purpose of the parent focus group was to determine the depth of knowledge about the improvement of the school and the level of parent participation in the school and their child's learning. All parents signed informed consents agreeing to participate and acknowledging the audio-taping of the interview.

Copies of the informed consent for the teacher focus group and the email participant recruitment script are in Appendix E. The teacher focus group protocol can be found in Appendix F. Informed consent for the parent focus group and the recruitment email script have been included in Appendix G. A copy of the parent focus group protocol is located in Appendix H.

Surveys. Initially the survey was to be conducted prior to the researcher's site visit; however, the principal requested the survey be conducted following the on-site data collection period. An electronic survey was used through SurveyMonkey. A letter explaining the purpose of the survey was emailed to each staff member who provided their email address and gave permission to participate in the research. The letter also included a link to access the survey. The first question of the survey asked for consent to participate in the survey about the school improvement process. Upon consent,

respondents were electronically transferred to the remaining fifteen open-ended survey questions with the intent to collect data from individual teacher's perspectives about their role and the leader's role in the turnaround process. Copies of the letter emailed requesting participation in the open-ended survey and the survey questions are located in Appendix B.

Document analysis. Due to the limited availability of artifacts which portray the turnaround process of Yosemite View Elementary School, the document analysis originally planned for the data analysis is not included. The researcher is confident the data gained through the interviews, observations, surveys, and focus groups is sufficient to provide a clear picture of the framework used in the process of the academic improvement at the school.

Data Analysis

The purpose of the data analysis was to reveal the essential supports implemented by leadership and staff to cause the academic turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School. Data was collected during the researcher's on-site visit in a variety of forms. According to Mertens (2005), this is the first stage of qualitative data analysis. Reflections of observations and interviews were made during the time the researcher was in the field. Afterwards the data were transcribed from the audio recording with further reflections and analysis made. All survey responses were compiled into one response form also. Next observations, transcripts, and survey results were read and analyzed with notes of themes and emerging concepts added to the margins (Creswell, 2007). As these themes and concepts emerged, comparisons between the various data through

triangulation revealed patterns which were used to establish a potential framework the school used for improvement (Mertens, 2005).

Findings

The guiding research question for this study which led to the collection and analysis of data was: What essential supports were implemented and how were they implemented over a four-year period for the academic turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School as perceived by the school leadership, teachers, and parents? This question was formulated through uncovering the essential supports, or framework for academic improvement such as was found by Bryk, Seebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010), which includes school leadership, the professional capacity of the teaching staff, instructional guidance, the school learning climate, and parent-school-community ties. The relationship between the concepts of an academic school turnaround through establishing a framework for improvement, led to the four research questions which focused the study.

Research Question One

What was the role and support of leadership in the turnaround of the school?

To determine the leader's role and support in the turnaround process, data was collected from school and district leadership, staff, parents, and through observations. The questions for the interviews and focus groups were written to reveal the impact the principal had on school improvement through creating a clear focused vision, increasing staff capacity, providing instructional guidance, and establishing a learning climate. These leadership features were identified using the framework Bryk et al. (2010) established for school improvement. Strong leadership surfaced as a theme which was

paired with management and overarched the leader's values, vision, instructional guidance, and distributive leadership.

Strong Leadership

Strong leadership seemed to be at the center of school improvement. The leader was credited with much of the successful turnaround. As one survey participant stated:

> Without the principal's leadership I do not believe there would have been any turn-around or at best very little progress. This school was at dead-bottom in scores (out of 13 elementary schools in the district) when the principal was assigned to this school. The principal is directly responsible for the turn-around. (S1)

Another survey respondent delineated the components of strong leadership by explaining:

> A great leader makes coming even to a most difficult environment worth it when there is a plan, strategy and support to see each effort made acknowledged as the evidence seeps through data, positive school climate/culture is cultivated, and students feel wanted, needed and a sense of belonging. (S5)

This strong leadership was clearly reiterated through another staff member, "[The principal] has been a huge part of our success. Leadership is huge" (S5)! Strong leadership and management go together. The data reveled this turnaround principal managed the resources for the purpose of student learning. She also displayed three leadership roles which were evidenced throughout the data: modeling values, a clear vision, and instructional guidance. All of these leadership roles required her to distribute leadership. In the following sections, each of these findings will be presented to provide a

clearer understanding of the role and support of the leader in the turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School.

Management

Leadership in schools is essential but, without management, structure would be void within the building. The principal at Yosemite View not only led the turnaround process but managed it as well. Using financial resources allocated to the school, the principal ensured teachers were provided with resources such as training, materials, personnel, and technology.

The principal managed and helped staff learn by using monies to provide needed training. One participant said, “The principal was the one who pulled teachers together, encouraged them and got them the additional training/in-services they needed to meet the needs of the student population we are teaching” (S1). During the teacher focus group a rapid paced conversation arose about the principal buying the staff professional books and summer trainings which were funded through grants. Subs were provided for peer observations, quarterly planning, and data analysis meetings. At the faculty meeting the the researcher wrote field notes as the principal talked about the money which was used for a group of teachers to visit a school near a large city for observation and learning. Funding was allocated for training at this turnaround school, as was money for resources.

The principal managed resources as well. The data showed resources such as materials, personnel, and technology was provided to the staff. The principal commented on not only providing materials but also supporting teachers to get the needed materials. She said, “Providing teachers what they need so if I expect you to do something…but all the while expecting what can I do to get it copied for you?” (I1) She also hired additional

intervention reading teachers to support classroom teachers and “break up smaller groups” (I1). Teachers and parents talked about the grants the principal wrote to supply technology and lower class sizes (TFG3, PFG2, PFG3). Credit was given to the principal for managing this, “Our principal wrote grants. We are a _____ grant school. Our classroom enrollment is lower that around the rest of the district. Our principal received additional funding for us to have Promethean Boards, laptops, and projectors. These all help with our teaching efforts” (S8). The purpose of the principal’s management of resources was explained when she said, “Supplying personnel and then trying to maximize it with strengths because that’s a way to support a teacher. So materials gotten, personnel provided, schedules being organized to support that” (I1). A snapshot of the principal as the manager gives clarity to how resources are managed. This turnaround principal also led through modeling what she valued.

Modeling Values

Organizational members observe and replicate the values modeled by the leader’s actions. Evidence from the data points to the principal’s values: inclusive relationships, open communication, learning, and a hard work ethic; all of which surfaced through triangulating data from all sources.

Inclusive relationships. Initially the principal knew she had to build relationships with staff members as she recalls, “I had to my first year, just build relationships” (I1). She connected with each person individually and made them feel valued through affirmations and through building on individual strengths.” Five of the 10 survey results demonstrate her value of relationships. Two read, “our principal finds value in each of us

and helps us build on our strengths" (S2) and "you are made to feel like you are valued and an important part of the team" (S6).

The principal herself recalled the value she had for *all* staff members when she stated, "I'd try to infuse everybody" (I1). The focus group also revealed the inclusive nature of the principal. The teacher of the state preschool class housed on the campus made this comparison to other schools:

> Coming from preschool sometimes at different sites it's like an offsite. It's not…well…included. We try to include ourselves with the rest of the school and the principal has made that happen. She makes it a point to go to the preschool and see what we're doing on an academic level and see what children might need that extra help. (TFG1)

A new teacher also recognized the value of inclusion by making this comment:

> It's also making everyone feel valued. I'm one of the new people here…and every time [the principal] saw me she'd say, "Are you OK? Everything going Ok?" And so it kind of makes you feel like you were wanted, and needed, and special. (TFG4)

The principal's value of relationship was succinctly summarized through the following teacher's response:

> But I have to say that a lot has to do with the leadership. She's had the vision to tap in; she's been able to create the relationships with each individual. To really get to know us professionally and somewhat personally as well and to really embrace that every single person; students, any staff member, and any support staff as well, is a vital importance of moving the school forward. (TFG9)

Perhaps these relationships were created through inclusion of all staff members and through encouragement. A field note of observations of the principal revealed that each time the principal had an encounter with a staff member; she affirmed them in some way. TGF3 remarked “she [principal] connected with most of us individually and I know the first meeting she said we will give affirmations and it was like…wow…more positive!” TGF9 testified how the principal does very well at pulling on staff members strengths to create a team. A survey summed up the importance of valuing relationship:

> The principal was the one who pulled teachers together, encouraged them and got them the additional training/in-services they needed to meet the needs of the student population we are teaching. She created a sense of teammanship that had not been here before. Teachers began working together in "grade-level" meetings. (S1)

Open communication. A second value of the leader which emerged from the study of Yosemite View Elementary School was open communication. This seemed to be valued between the principal and staff members as well as between the principal and parents. Teacher responses such as, “The administrator has an open door policy, and takes time to discuss concerns, to make recommendations, and to set-up opportunities for coaching” (S5) and “she is available for questions and to give examples when we don’t understand what she is asking” (S10) were prevalent throughout the data. The researchers observations of teachers discussing issues with the principal support this value. One teacher shared how the principal had conversations when making difficult placement decisions with teachers and felt although the teacher would end the conversation feeling

the decision had been her choice, ultimately it was the decision the administrator wanted (TFG8).

Communication was made frequently with parents as well. Parents commented on how they felt welcome to discuss issues with the principal:

> She is so receptive to talking to parents and addressing your needs and concerns. She's…open door. Sometimes she's like 'walk with me, I'm in a hurry but we can talk as we go'. And if she can't see you right then and there, she will find time. She will get back to you. (PFG3)

Another way of communicating with parents was through weekly phone calls. "Every week there's a phone call to the home form Mrs. ___ to remind us of things that are going on" (PFG1). Through phone connect, a weekly call to homes providing school updates, newsletters, and flyers communication between the school and families remained important.

Leader as learner. The principal as a learner is a third emerging value. The principal recalled how she had learned to do "a ton of observing" as a leader (I1). The district official spoke frequently throughout the interview of how the principal prepared herself for the leadership position saying, "she was fully prepared to be an instructional leader" (I3). Teachers referenced the "hours and hours of research and investigation into best practices" (S10). And the staff meetings were focused on learning through professional development.

Hard work ethic. The fourth and final value to surface was an ethic of hard work. This emerging theme occurred throughout the interviews, focus groups, and through the observations. While on-site, the researcher observed the principal's full daily schedule

while still taking time for staff, parents, and children. One teacher said, “We have been very fortunate to have an administrator who works harder than we could ever hope to. She leads by example and never asks us to put forth more effort than she is willing to put forth” (S10). TFG7 referred to the principal’s assiduousness when she talked about the “rare combination she brings. So it’s not just bright, it’s not just driven, it’s not just knowledgeable, and a fabulous career as a classroom teacher. She’s so intuitive and the hardest working person here.” A discussion which took place during the teacher focus group underscored the value of hard work. “I don’t think there’s a teacher in our school who wouldn’t agree, she’s the hardest working person” (TFG7). “She’ll come to you and say, ‘I know it’s just one more thing.’ But we know she’s already done five other things. And we all go, ‘Ok, ok…because we know she’s working the hardest’” (TFG2).

Summary of leadership values. Values of relationship, communication, learning, and hard work seemed to be at the core of the leader at Yosemite View Elementary School. The importance of values in leadership was highlighted through one teacher’s survey response, “First, our principal leads by example. She has high standards for herself which makes us (myself) want to improve” (S2). The leader’s values drove the vision for improvement in the turnaround school, the second emerging theme from research question one.

Establishing a Clear Vision

A leader is truly leading when there are followers, but all will be lost if there is no vision of where to go. At Yosemite View Elementary, the principal established a clear vision for the teachers to follow: a fundamental belief that all children can learn, a focus on data analysis, and a plan to implement interventions to close learning gaps.

All children can learn. “I think the vision was to help every child be as successful as they could, academically and socially” (I2). Yosemite View Elementary School had a vision which became transparent as the researcher analyzed the study’s data. Survey responses read, “Her ideas have been the catalyst in the turnaround” (S10). Another response read, “We had a path mapped out by our administrator” (S2) because “she had a plan and she taught us how to use it” (S3). This clear vision was established by the principal. She recalled, “We did a mission statement together. What their true belief was about education and kids. Did they really believe all kids could learn or progress?” (I1) Through interviews, survey responses, and focus groups it was evident this vision that all children could learn was shared:

> I think it kind of all started, Sandi had a vision and the teachers definitely had a mission to help all children succeed… that every child especially was taken from where they were. And I think that’s what we learned from the beginning, we had to get that child where he was and fill in those basic skills that he didn’t have. We had to move them on. Because I feel that our whole vision was to help every child. But we were interested in EVERY child. So the vision was for every child, the accelerated learner too. (I2)

One teacher in the focus group described how this belief became a shared vision:

> The one at the top is part of this so I think that’s really important to bring into the picture as well, because her vision, her expertise, her ability to strategically put in place at every level and getting everyone to a comfort level and also pulling from our souls of each individual to be able to say, yea I believe that too and I can get the kids there, and we can get our school there. (TFG9)

Data indicated the leader believed all students could learn. The vision was shared as the staff reflected on their belief about educating children and together formulated a vision statement. From this belief they began to realize they had to help every child learn. For some this was providing interventions to fill in learning gaps and for others, acceleration. To fill in gaps they had to know what gaps existed through examining student formative and summative assessments. A vision to focus of analyzing data was led by the principal.

A vision to focus on data. Throughout the researcher's on-site visit the teachers acknowledged the impact the principal had as she led the process of looking at student data. One teacher remembered, "When the principal first came we weren't aware, she informed us of a lot of things. We were kind of in the dark about those below kids moving to basic" (TFG6). Another teacher recalled:

> When she [principal] came suddenly we were really dissecting data and really looking at who needed what…where. Something I don't think we put much time and effort into prior to her coming and it just really makes you focus on target students and what's needed and where to focus on. (TFG5)

Survey responses revealed how the principal created a focus on data, helped organized data, and provided guidance for teachers to do the same. The principal recalled how data analysis started at the beginning of each year:

> Every time there was data involved, at the beginning of the year we'd come back and get the data from last year. We would obsess…what did we do well? What are our scores telling us we did well? What do we want to keep this year? (I1)

The principal also provided time for data analysis:

> I would schedule, this was another huge thing…I scheduled a half day, sometimes a whole day, grade level, per quarter, per grade and we looked at curriculum, we looked at data, we used a lot of data. (I1)

Then she would help teachers reflect on data:

> I also said, what did you do at each of your grade levels? I'd have them go over what did you do that helped get these scores? And then what do you need to get rid of? What are your scores saying is a little part we need to work on? So I'd always bring it and then we'd share back out after grade levels met and talked. (I1)

Finally, a teacher told how the principal helped them focus on what the data revealed:

> After bringing to the table an agenda of things that we needed to start talking about so that we could focus on the data more effectively and not just looking at numbers but looking at data so instead of looking surface, started to delve in deeper as to the students we wanted to focus on. (TFG9)

The leader's focus on data, and support to analyze and interpret the data, appeared to provide the teachers with specific learning goals for children so they could implement interventions and begin closing learning gaps.

A vision to implement interventions. As teachers were learning how to use data to address learning needs, the principal knew she had to share her vision to implement instructional interventions. Data from the principal, interviews with other leadership, the survey, and the teacher focus group clearly demonstrated this vision from the principal. Teachers recalled, "She [principal] developed the intervention program used at this school and now used across the district" (S1).

> I think a big part of it was [the principal] coming in. She has a way of implementing interventions and how they worked. That was one of the first things she did was come in and set up our interventions in a very systematic way for those below or basic kids. So I think that was the start, the interventions that she set up. (TFG6)

The urgency to create interventions was reiterated through the principal as well. During the interview she stated three times "I had to start interventions the first year" (I1). The vision was clear; begin interventions to close achievement gaps.

Summary of establishing a clear vision. At this underperforming elementary school, the principal's unambiguous vision which was shared with teachers, was a belief that all students could learn, the importance of using data to determine learning needs, and a need to create interventions for closing gaps in learning. Teacher support was then provided through instructional leadership.

Instructional Leadership

A school principal is often referred to as an instructional leader. This is a complex task. As the data was collected from Yosemite View Elementary, three reoccurring themes appeared throughout the various data sources to define the instructional leadership in this turnaround school: curriculum knowledge, rigorous instructional practices, and pedagogical learning.

Curriculum knowledge. The data from teachers repeatedly revealed the principal knew the curriculum. Survey responses to the question inquiring about the aspects of the principal's leadership which influenced the school turnaround read, "Our principal is very knowledgeable about curriculum" (S9); another response repeated, "the principal [has]

extensive knowledge in curriculum" (S5). Curriculum knowledge was important to teachers. To one it was the reason the teacher enjoyed teaching at the school, "Administration is very knowledgeable and supportive" (S6). During the first part of the turnaround, the literacy coach was assigned to two schools. Her observation of the principal's curriculum knowledge was compared to other principals she worked with, "And [the principal] is so good because she knows curriculum…that's the one thing I noticed that's different between my other school principals and [the Yosemite View principal] is that she really knows curriculum and she can go in and teach it." (I2)

Teaching the curriculum was observed by the researcher as the principal modeled an intervention small group reading lesson for a teacher. She suggested the teacher make a chart as a scaffold for the students. The following day the principal and researcher returned to observe the teacher using the suggested chart during the intervention group lesson as evidenced through the field notes. The principal continued to demonstrate her knowledge of curriculum when she shared during the interview:

> I talk about the three different kinds of genre that you're going to see on that test so that must be important to teach, it's not just a test. You know there's functional, like every day reading like recipes and so on, there's the textual or expository, and then there's the narrative so balance it out. If you're teaching strategies, what are you going to teach on this narrative as opposed to expository? (I1)

A thorough understanding of curriculum expectations creates the necessary foundation for rigorous instructional practices.

Rigorous instructional practices. "Watching [the turnaround] from my perspective it was watching [the principal] put instructional practices in place; rigorous instructional practices" (I3). This statement was made by the district official during the researcher's interview. The rigorous instructional practices exposed through comparing various data sources were; a school-wide focus on reading, vertical alignment of curriculum, and high expectations for sustained instructional minutes.

The first rigorous instructional practice was an expectation to maintain a school-wide focus on reading instruction. The principal of Yosemite View Elementary School recalled the onset of the turnaround process where reading became the core instructional focus:

> Six years ago we were the lowest API in our district out of 17 schools. We were at a 675 and we have made steady gains from 2006 to 2010. It was quite a process, we've had a pretty steady teacher base but there have been a few changes along the way. We were part of the Reading First grant which helped us work on the essentials in English Language Arts (ELA) and it provided a literacy coach for grades K through three. We honed in on ELA even though we still needed to make the grade in math; that was our focus ELA. (I1)

Teachers also knew the curricular trump, "I know that reading is a strong focus of instruction at Yosemite View" (S6). Additional reading interventionists were hired to work with "small groups of at-risk students, meeting with each group for thirty minutes a day to improve reading fluency" (S7). Blocks of time were scheduled school-wide in the morning for reading instruction; students were grouped in ability level ELA classes; and a need to align the curriculum followed.

A vertical alignment of curriculum was the second rigorous instructional practice that seeped through the data. A first grade teacher explained:

> [The principal] does a really fine job I think too. It's not just the teachers who teach second on up to fifth, she even targets the first and the kindergarten teachers. You know she doesn't tell us but she kind of just gives us information on what we already know they're going to be tested on in second, third, fourth, and fifth. So we kind of gear our teaching and the way we do our planning to look at that. To see what they need to know in second, what they need to know in the upper grades. So it's just starting from the bottom also. (TFG2)

The preschool class housed on the campus is included in the rigorous instructional practices of aligning curriculum to prepare students for kindergarten also:

> [The principal] comes in to make sure we've changed our round-up tests so [the students are] not learning body parts anymore because their parents can do that. We're doing onset and rhyme now and blends and syllables on that test. So they know that that's what they're getting in kindergarten. (TFG1)

Through teacher planning meetings and the principal's global view of classrooms, an expectation for vertical curricular alignment could begin to close gaps in learning. With a focus on reading and a seamless curriculum, the third rigorous instructional practice which surfaced was a sense of urgency to adhere to instructional time.

The principal of Yosemite View School provided instructional leadership through high expectations for sustained instructional minutes. As the district leader succinctly stated:

> Now I saw a big change when she got there and for the most part it was just putting the instructional minutes in place, knowing that what the teachers were doing were standards based and instructionally sound and minutes weren't wasted. (I3)

High expectations for instructional time began with an uninterrupted literacy block in the morning. "All ELA is taught in the morning, no interruptions to classrooms during this time. If there is an emergency, the office staff is to walk to the classroom to inform the teacher…we're not taking a field trip in the morning, we're not [having a] celebration in the morning." (I1) Interruptions were not to come from personal cell phones either. The principal shared about a time when she notice instructional minutes were wasted due to the use of cell phones. She asked that cell phones remain off and put away unless the staff member was expecting an emergency call, of which they were to make her aware of. The literacy coach supported the high expectations for instructional minutes. She recalled:

> Sometimes I got too hard…and I'm usually easy on a teacher but time on task after a while, and students on task. I finally got really upset about going in and seeing a huge amount of wasted time when I thought we had all these tools, we had all these routines, we had all these techniques, we had these great teachers and engaged children. You know, move with it! And that seemed to make a big difference too. (I2)

A sense of urgency for teaching and learning during the school day appeared to be the prelude for putting towering expectations on sustaining instructional minutes. Rigorous instructional practices with a focus on reading pedagogy, vertically aligned

curriculum, and high expectations for instructional minutes led the way for pedagogical learning.

Pedagogical learning. Instructional leadership at Yosemite View Elementary School took place through the principal's knowledge of curriculum, rigorous instructional practices, and through providing opportunities for the staff to learn instructional strategies to improve their pedagogy. The principal led teacher learning in two ways: she was an active part of classrooms and she had staff share teaching practices at faculty meetings.

During the on-site visit at the school the researcher observed the principal's ease and frequency of being in classrooms. One way this turnaround leader led pedagogical learning was by modeling lessons for embedded professional development. Data from interviews and observations evidenced the impact of the modeling. "I know that she [principal] taught right alongside of those teachers for the first couple of years as she was modeling." (I2) The researcher observed the principal modeling a reading intervention lesson for a second grade teacher which highlighted the power of her suggestions. She suggested the teacher make a vowel chart and the following day the researcher observed students in the second grade classroom using the chart as a tool for learning vowel sounds. The principal herself commented saying, "I'm willing to try to model for them even though I'm out of the habit" (I1). She shared how she had focused on one or two grade levels per year to model specific instructional strategies.

Another way the principal led pedagogical learning was by frequently visiting classrooms. Even the parents knew she was in classrooms often. As one parent shared, "She's obviously part of the classrooms too because the kids know who their principal is.

They'll say, Mrs. ___ came into our room today. She helped me with this. She's part of each of the classrooms" (PFG4).

It seemed this turnaround leader visited classrooms to help students and teachers learn. During the interview she said:

> I left tons of notes to support them in the classroom about what I saw. I go around often to the classroom to validate and say oh I really like your powerful or masterful way of teaching this. Have you thought about this in the middle and then give them kudos on something else and leave it. They've put the notes on their walls. (I1)

Her suggestion for learning, along with positive observations, appeared to cause the principal's visits to be welcomed. As the district official commented, "I think that she really can bring that respect that they don't mind her coming in" (I3). One teacher described the principal's regularity in classrooms:

> The principal's in classrooms. She makes a point to go in every room, it's not just for your evaluation, she's just buzzing through the room and it might be to tell you something real quick or to talk to a kid, or she might see something and then later she'd say that was amazing! Can you tell me more about what you were doing? And then you tell her and she'd say "I think everyone needs to know about that." I think fifth grade might use it this way and kindergarten might use it this way. So she's already thinking three steps ahead by the time she's talked to you to bring that to the staff. (TGF8)

And so the staff taught their peers, the other observed method of leading

pedagogical learning at this turnaround school. During the teacher focus group the staff frequently referred to instructional presentations from colleagues at the faculty meetings. One teacher described the principal's instructional leadership like this:

> She went to the teacher and said, "You know the staff needs to see this." And for those of us who fear standing in front of our colleagues, she's able to help get us to that point so that we could do the presentations. And then for us to take back that information and try it in the classroom and come back and report out. So it's a shared, collaborative experience. (TFG9)

Another teacher described the leader's concentration of learning at staff meetings:

> She has everybody share out [at the staff meetings]. The first grade shared some things and I said oh my gosh, I'm a fifth grade teacher and I'm going to totally use that and tweak it…So she has you break up and work as a group so when we come back together she has everybody share out, you know on paper, and so you're like oh, ok, because we don't usually meet first with fifth grade, so by sharing out we're able to get the things that are working…Everyone's sharing with everyone. (TFG6)

The staff at Yosemite View Elementary learned through sharing pedagogical practices and strategies with the staff and through the principal's active part in classrooms. These two areas of pedagogical learning were led by the principal of this academically improved school.

Summary of instructional leadership. The principal, as the instructional leader used her knowledge of curriculum to lay the foundation for leading. High expectations of

instructional practices followed, and capacity was built through pedagogical learning. The district official summed up the principal's instructional leadership in this way:

> I think it was a magnificent turnaround. [Our school district is] really really proud of it. Really a testament to strong instructional leadership and having someone come up from the coaching end of it…Putting things in place that we knew would work and it happens quicker when you have somebody at the helm who is aggressive with it and also easy to work with and holds a lot of respect. (L3)

Summary of Findings for Question One

Question one examined the role and support leadership had at Yosemite View Elementary School's academic turnaround. Findings from the research data indicated strong leadership, management, the values the leader modeled, a clear established vision, and instructional leadership were roles the principal had in the school's academic improvement. Leadership was credited as the key in the turnaround process. She managed alongside of leading. She managed resources to provide training, materials, personnel, and technology. The principal's values of inclusive relationships, open communication, learning, and hard work were modeled. A clear vision of believing all children could learn with a focus on analyzing data to determine needed instructional interventions was established. Instructional leadership was provided through the principal's knowledge about curriculum. Expectations for rigorous instructional practices such as a school wide reading focus, vertical curriculum alignment, and high expectations for adhering to instructional minutes were another aspect of instructional leadership. Finally, instructional leadership was given through the principal's frequent classroom

visits and through embedded peer profession development through which pedagogical learning occurred.

Research Question Two

How did the staff influence the student achievement gains?

Discovering how the staff contributed to the academic improvement of Yosemite View Elementary was crucial to uncover the essential supports used in the turnaround. Data was collected from school and district leadership, staff, parents, and through observations to determine the staff's role and support. The questions for the interviews and focus groups were written using the school improvement framework which was created by Bryk et al. (2010) as a guide. The researcher attempted to use these questions to reveal the teacher impact on school improvement in the areas of pedagogy, interventions, collaboration, professional development, curricular alignment, student/parent relationships, and climate. Themes from the data centered on increased teacher capacity, but first teachers had to commit to the vision. Capacity was then increased through establishing a professional learning community, through developing shared curricular processes to address gaps in student learning, and through professional development.

Staff Commitment to the Vision

The staff at Yosemite View Elementary was experienced and talented with little turnover. This was substantiated through triangulated data from interviews, focus groups, and the survey. As one parent said during the focus group, "I think almost all of our teachers are kind of like mentor teachers. They're in their forties and up and they seem very gifted with their ability" (PFG4). A teacher reiterated this when she stated, "She [the

principal] really tapped in to the resources here at this site as well. As she said, there are very talented and gifted professionals on this site that you don't have on many other sites" (TFG9).

Building capacity when there is a foundation from which to build upon results in a solid framework. Increasing the capacity of experienced talented teachers cannot be accomplished, however, without commitment to the vision for improvement. This commitment started from the very beginning of the principal's tenure. One survey respondent recalled:

> As at most sites, there is apprehension when change of administration occurs, expectations of who will "rule the roost" as it were. Given that this site was not all embracing of the administrator prior to [the current principal's] arrival. Strong personalities, strong union representatives, three-fourths staff veteran/seasoned teachers of twenty plus [years] can make for a few challenges. But the change was welcomed in that many had known of or worked with [our current principal] at one time or another in the course of their career. Having some sense of the kind of leader that had come on board did help facilitate accepting the beginning steps toward change that would be necessary and eventually occur. (S4)

The data repeatedly revealed the commitment the staff had to the vision and their willingness to "accept the beginning steps toward change" (S4). Statements from teachers such as these were frequent: I was "willing to take on new challenges" (S7) and I "chose to fully implement changes, made necessary adaptations, and chose to support peers in doing the same" (S9). Teachers were described as "wanting to grow" (I2) through actions such as "pulling the grade level alongside them" (I1) and through willingly teaching the

most challenging classes; “veteran teachers were the ones who volunteered to do the [interventions for the lowest readers].” (TFG8)

A clear dedication for turning around academic achievement was not only in the teacher’s willingness to work hard but was also increased through the principal’s actions:

> They wanted to be up in front [at staff meetings] feeling like they were offering something to the team. So they would go back [to their classroom] and try [a new instructional strategy] and then come up and tell me what they were trying and their successes. So it was one-on-one. And…I’d try to infuse it, moving them along because if they were coming along even though they weren’t top dog, you want them to be heard and you want them to know there’s one more on the team. Come on, jump on! (I1)

Increased Capacity through a Professional Community

Yosemite View Elementary had strong, experienced teachers. First, they bought in to the vision for improvement. The teachers then established a community of professionals through coalescing into a team, followed by collaboration. As a united collaborative team their capacity as teachers increased.

A united team. It was a team at Yosemite View Elementary which formed the professional community. One staff member reminisced, “I made a list of what I thought was the biggest cause for us to change. I think the biggest one was teamwork between the staff” (I1). The staff as a team was built around the strengths of each member working “toward the goal of improvement with great passion and effort” (S6). One teacher described how the team united, “Creating a professional team of give and take of ideas, as well as being open to varying approaches based on research/data helps

build ownership of the change process among the team" (S3). Through knowledge of teacher strengths several teams emerged from the data to move the academic change along, specifically, a leadership team, problem solving teams, and collaborative grade level teams.

The leadership team was made up of teachers from each grade level. There were weekly leadership team meetings with the principal. Focus for these weekly meetings was described through this survey response, "The leadership team provides another avenue of support as [the teachers] voice and share the constraints that may be faced, or process[es] that are recommended to support efforts" (S5). Another grade level leadership team member explained, I "brought to my grade level information on data, trend, and expectations/steps for achieving the goal of reaching the state target of improvement, as well as moving out of school improvement status" (S4). To improve academics and other pressing student issues, problem solving teams were formed.

"We have student study teams and I think…during the four years…they became much stronger. Looking at a student…everybody working together…the decisions that were made were made by teams and everybody involved" (I2). According to several teachers, problem solving teams were formed on the belief that all students could learn; they examined academic, behavioral, and other issues related to students and best classroom and intervention placement options. Ongoing problem solving seemed to exist in this staff through behaviors such as going to colleagues for help, conferring about students, mentoring colleagues in best practices, and making changes to serve children in ways which may benefit them the most. Many of these problem solving times were at

collaborative grade level meetings, a second aspect of professional community which strengthened the capacity of the Yosemite View teachers.

Collaboration. Collaborative meetings or grade level meetings were times of learning and problem solving and were scheduled monthly with peers in grade level groups. A survey response stated during the academic turnaround period:

> The conversation at grade level and collaboration staff meetings, took a 180 from the minutia of the daily grind to focus on academic goals, gains, trends, and student growth (individually, grade level and whole school); everyone for the most part set their own agendas, egos, and self to the side and put professional teamwork at the forefront. (S5)

Collaborative teams were described as "cohesive grade level teams [where] each team member is dedicated and hardworking…like-minds brainstorming, venting, and solution-finding as part of the process of finding the way to meet the set-goal" (S5). Goals of learning new instructional strategies through book learning, through sharing about what was happening in classrooms, and then watching peers teach before practicing new learning became part of the grade level team meetings. According to a parent the teachers collaborated around what's best for each student and discussed what's working and what's not, for improvement (PFG2). The result of these collaborative meetings was stated by the literacy coach, "And so I think that was probably a really crucial part; that they could share together, work together, watch themselves, and that really promotes growth in the teacher" (I2).

A collaborative professional community increased teacher capacity and helped student academic achievement. The impact was succinctly stated by a teacher, "Our

active concern for each other and collaboration to help each other be successful has contributed greatly to our turnaround" (S2). As the staff at Yosemite View Elementary coalesced into a team and collaborated together it catapulted them into shared curricular processes to address gaps in student learning.

Increased Capacity through Shared Curricular Processes

The staff at this turnaround school was committed to closing academic gaps. To do this the collaborative team had to learn how to align and teach curriculum standards, plan lessons together, analyze data to determine student learning needs, and provide interventions for disparities in student learning.

Standards based curriculum. The focus on state standards dominated the data concerning curriculum from Yosemite View Elementary. Every survey response indicated the change in curriculum was in turning to standards based instruction. The principal led this effort as the district official indicated:

> I walked through Yosemite View Elementary for the seven years that they were Reading First; through all the principal changes prior to Mrs. –. Now I saw a big change when she got there and for the most part it was just putting the instructional minutes in place, knowing that what the teachers were doing were standards based and instructionally sound and minutes weren't wasted. (I3)

One teacher described the standards, "There's really four things that they need to know that are every year built upon; the same skills, another layer just keeps adding as they go through. And those are the ones that we really target and make sure they have an understanding" (TFG8). These standards were aligned throughout the grade levels or according to one teacher, "charted" (S5). The teachers revealed how they "review the

standards of [the] grade before and the grade following to ensure that [the] foundation is in place to build from and…to ensure that what is most essential is taught" (S4). Pacing calendars also helped to guarantee there were no instructional holes. One teacher provided a picture of her increased capacity through the change to a standards based focus:

> Uncluttered. What I mean is my filing cabinet, cupboards and desk no longer house the unnecessary, "I think I might use this item someday materials." Teaching is…now, about strategies that implement what students need and materials that are standards based. (S4)

With an emphasis in language arts, using explicit direct instructional strategies, all teachers implemented state standards as evidenced through the second shared curricular process of planning together.

Joint lesson planning. "My grade-level colleagues and I plan collaboratively using the reading, language arts, [and] mathematics content standards; and the district language arts and mathematics pacing calendars as guidelines to create well-thought out lessons to ensure all grade-level requirements are taught" (S3). Teachers shared about how they developed "a strategic plan to cover grade-level lessons" (S2). One teacher explained how they use a downward spiral from the standards students would be held accountable for in fifth, fourth, and third grades down to kindergarten. "It's not just the teachers who teach second on up to fifth…the first and kindergarten teachers…gear our teaching and…do our planning to look at…what they need to know in the upper grades" (TFG2). Not only were the grade level standards used for collaboratively planning but data was analyzed to discover what standards needed to be taught.

Data analysis. The third shared curricular process at Yosemite View Elementary was found in analyzing data. Teachers talked about their initial lack of understanding of how to use the results from the state assessments to determine a focus of student learning needs:

> When [the principal] first came we weren't aware, she informed us of a lot of things. We were kind of in the dark…she would give us presentations and then she'd have us look at our students, have conversations at our grade levels, and…she'd have a big question that we needed to talk about. Then she started delving into kids in certain standards…students were scoring lower in an area that was weighted the most. Then she even got into how many students in the whole school do we need to move from this level to this level to get our points. So one year, I can't remember if it was 20, if you break it down by grade level if each of you were able to move three kids or whatever. So you'd have a goal yourself in your classroom; if I could get three kids to move from here to here or get five kids to move from here to here. So she really broke it down specifically and moved it down to here and then here. Kind of started with a big and then it just went specific, specific, specific, specific (gestures with hands up in the air to create a funneling movement). So by now we're all aware of this looking at our kids saying we have these kids here and we can move this one. (TFG7)

Specifics for individualizing data by attaching needed standards to student names followed:

> And then after bringing to the table an agenda of things that we needed to start talking about so that we could focus on the data more effectively and not just

> looking at numbers but looking at data so instead of looking surface started to delve in deeper as to the students we wanted to focus on. (TFG9)

The researcher's observation of a fourth grade data analysis meeting demonstrated the teachers' effective use of data. Field notes recorded how the lead teacher gave everyone a data sheet and highlighted areas where instruction was needed to prepare for the upcoming California Standards Test. Next, she provided specific questions to help teachers understand how they could teach the needed standard. A conversation followed about teaching methods and student needs. The researcher recorded a field note which read, "Dialogue is open and everyone is engaged. All are looking through data and contribute with ease."

Expectations for examining data were shared for all grades not just those taking annual state assessments. Teachers explained how they looked at data in quarterly data analysis meetings for kindergarten through fifth grade. In the focus group one teacher specified:

> Data is still a big piece and when we go to meetings that just because we're teaching kindergarten or first does not mean that they don't have to do data and they don't look at it and look at multiple measures. (TFG8)

Teachers using data to help students learn required state standards, but, as one teacher shared, students also were "encouraged to set personal goals and track their own progress" (S5). According to a survey response, "Students have their own data binders and check off as standards are being taught weekly. They also chart their progress of these standards" (S5). Data chats with teachers and the principal helped students understand goal setting and infuse excitement for achieving goals (TFG7). Student

achievement was also recognized through “certificates [and] celebrations at school assemblies” (S4).

Teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade at Yosemite View School first had to understand how to use the data to direct their instruction. Next, they focused on teaching the specific standards the students lacked, and finally, they helped students create personal goals for learning. During the focus group, a teacher summed up their shared focus on data: we “really focused on our target students and looking at our data and seeing that our kids that aren’t getting it what we can do to get additional help” (TFG2). Data analysis was the springboard for the last shared curricular process, providing interventions.

Providing interventions. Student data identified children at Yosemite View Elementary School who were behind academically and needed interventions, or extra instruction to help them catch up in their learning. During the turnaround period a shared curricular process was implemented through grouping students by reading ability for language arts instruction within each grade level. Although this cannot be considered an intervention according to Response to Intervention (RtI) because it does not provide additional instructional minutes, the teachers and the principal referred to this as an important part of the improvement process. The principal shared about the ability grouping, “I think that was one reason we had increase. [Teachers] could gear instruction” (I1).

The grade level grouping was explained by one teacher, “We tried to make our classes even, our home class, and then for language arts a [teacher] would do the Read 180 [the below basic readers], a [teacher] would do the basic, a [teacher] would do the

basic students and the proficient, and then a [teacher] do proficient and advanced" (TFG6). "It went from being my kids to being our kids" (TFG5). Fluid groups with frequent assessments allowed students to move up to the next ability level. One teacher talked about this grouping addressing behavioral issues as well:

> Usually your lower kids…have always been acting out in class because they didn't know the answer, where that shifts and the lower kids, all with the same ability grouped together, feel like they're superstars in that classroom….So that's also a really good boost for them, they feel like they're students and they feel like they're learners and they want to achieve more. (TFG8)

A staff member shared through the survey: the "students with greater needs [were] placed in smaller sized groups and [got] extra intervention helps as needed" (S1). Reading, math, and behavioral interventions were provided in a variety of ways such as additional classroom instruction time, small group pull-out instruction from an interventionist, recess study groups, and individualized instruction as necessary. "There was an intervention piece for the kids that were bubble kids. They used regular curriculum and in addition to that they received 30-40 minutes every day, intervention—the Soar to Success. So they learned reading strategies outside of even the regular curriculum" (I1).

Teachers and parents seemed pleased with these interventions. A parent talked how her oldest daughter struggled in math: "[Teachers] target the problem areas…They have people pulling them out and working with them and they let us know what we can do at home" (PFG2). The staff at this turnaround elementary school addressed student

learning needs through ability grouping in language arts and providing interventions to students based on assessment results.

Summary of shared curricular processes. Findings of common curricular processes which were implemented at Yosemite View Elementary to close academic gaps were aligning curriculum standards, collaborative lesson planning, analyzing data to determine student learning needs, and providing necessary interventions to the lowest students. A survey response summed up the increased teacher capacity through shared curricular processes at the school:

> The curriculum changed by placing more emphasis on standards, analyzing data by student, grade, and school as we looked for trends and the need for staff development in specific areas to hone in on skills, strategies and research based best practices. (S5)

The staff at Yosemite View Elementary established shared curricular processes for improvement; they also received ongoing, embedded professional development.

Increased Capacity through Professional Development

Teacher capacity was increased through professional development to influence student achievement gains. Book studies, summer trainings, the writing project, vocabulary pedagogy, Explicit Direct Instruction, and a staff member as a literacy coach were some of the ways the staff learned at this turn-around school. Attitudes for learning appeared to mirror the principal's: "Teachers wanting to grow and teachers as learners" (I2) who felt "supported with training and suggestions instructionally" (S10) and had "shelves…aligned with professional reading materials for reference," (S4) all exhibit an

attitude of learning. One teacher's synopsis regarding change over time of the school's professional development was:

> I think the staff development that has transpired over the course of the years is not something that's a shot in the arm, presented once or here's an idea and then walk away, but it's something that has been presented, worked on, and continued to be supported. So when [the principal] does go through the classrooms she'll see snippets of, ok this is how it's being used and how it's being used. And so when it's staff meetings and she wants to go on to the next piece or the next level she can bring that global view that she's had in all the classrooms and say see it's working in this way in this classroom and this classroom. So I think that's very fortunate for this site that the staff development just doesn't come as a one-time piece but continues moving forward; just building to the next level. (TFG9)

As indicated above, the increasing professional development took place at the faculty meetings.

Faculty meetings. Teachers at this turnaround school knew the purpose of faculty meetings, to increase capacity. Two teacher responses read, "Staff meetings are more than just a mandatory meeting required by the district. Most staff meetings are turned into staff development where teachers share their classroom successes across the grade levels" (S6) and "Faculty meetings [were] driven for a specific topic or point that we [were] focusing on…and then sharing out at the grade levels" (TFG7).

Over the course of the four-year school improvement, everyone shared at staff meetings, however the principal recalled how she initially chose teachers to present:

> The teachers that were making huge gain waves…we call it ‘in the green’. At every staff meeting I would have two or three teachers present for three to five minutes on what they were doing to get ‘in the green’ and then strategies they were using…I believe that was huge because it was building capacity. (I1)

As the staff shared and met as grade level teams, they learned best practices of pedagogy from one another to increase their capacity. Teaching strategies for learning, re-teaching concepts not learned, and slowing the pace of a lesson to allow for wait time were some of the pedagogical practices which arose from the data. A survey response proudly read:

> At our school the instructional focus is on providing all students with the best, the latest, and most effective research-based teaching methods and strategies available to ensure all of our pupils develop proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking at grade level. (S3)

The professional development through reading, staff meetings, grade level meetings, course work, and committees was summed up:

> All this impacts my instruction to be more cognizant of changes coming down the pike that will impact my students learning and my approach to their success; utilizing materials in a more analytical, data driven approach which allows weighing what strategies will have the greatest impact to help students gain academic growth, but without squelching their creative and individual gifts. (S5)

Summary of Findings for Question Two

Findings revealed the staff at Yosemite View Elementary influenced student achievement gains though a commitment to a vision for improvement. An increased

capacity was needed to implement the vision. Capacity was increased through establishing a professional community which first became a team and then collaborated together. Capacity was also increased through a shared curricular focus of standards based instruction which guided collaborative lesson planning and required data to be analyzed to determine needed interventions for individual students. Finally, capacity was increased through professional development, most of which occurred at faculty meetings and in grade level meetings, allowing teachers to share best pedagogical practices. One teacher penned in the survey how she increased her capacity to influence the student achievement gains when she wrote:

> On a daily basis fine-tuning skills and approaches not as a single individual (which is passé) but to hone in on what my colleagues are successfully implementing and zeroing on what can best serve my students by my active participation in improving my skills. (S5)

The staff contributed to the student achievement through focusing on the vision to turn the school around and through ongoing improvement of pedagogy. Research question three will uncover the elements of the school's climate and the influence on the academic improvement.

Research Question Three

How did the school climate impact student achievement?

According to Bryk et at. (2010) the school's climate is an essential support for school improvement. Questions for the interviews, focus groups, and surveys were aimed at providing a rich description of the school's climate and changes in the climate during the four years of the turnaround which could then be linked to student achievement. Two

aspects of the climate emerged from the data collected at Yosemite View Elementary: a learning climate and a supportive community.

Learning Climate

The product of a school is student learning; therefore, a climate centered on learning appears to be essential to academic success. At Yosemite View Elementary the climate seemed to be first and foremost a learning climate. The principal talked about the change in the climate during the improvement period: "But [the] climate has changed…they [teachers] feel like its positive and it's more about learning. It's much more about learning than it is about whose leading the pack out there" (I1). To provide a picture of the learning climate at this turnaround school, four themes emerged from the data: a positive atmosphere, a shared responsibility for all students, and high expectations both academically and behaviorally.

Positive atmosphere. The teachers and staff at Yosemite View Elementary tried to be positive. They looked for student and colleague's strengths, recognized and rewarded achievements, and as a result, the students wanted to learn and the teachers wanted to teach. This was observed during the on-site visit when the researcher recorded the following field notes about the positive school culture, "The staff meetings started with affirmations, when speaking with a staff member or student the principal spoke positively, the teachers spoke highly of their colleagues, and voices remained pleasant in the classrooms." The positive climate was a place teachers wanted to come to. The principal shared how teachers worked hard and would tell her they liked what they did. Nine of the ten survey responses to the question "Do you enjoy teaching at your school? Why or why not?" read, "I love teaching at my school" (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S9,

S10). According to one teacher the positive climate attributed to her satisfaction, “I very much enjoy teaching at the school because it is a place with a positive atmosphere” (S7).

The positive climate had an effect on students also. The staff made “calls home that [were] achievement and success centered, both behavioral and academic” (S4). A flag pole ceremony on the last Friday of every month acknowledged achievement in front of peers, staff, and parents (PFG1, PFG4). One teacher stated, “Even though we serve many, many high risk students, our school climate is positive. I give lots of positive reinforcement and recognition for students who work hard and try their best” (S9).

The academic turnaround included embracing a positive climate. “I think we’ve figured out over the years…that negative constantly doesn’t really work. You have to push those kids up” (TFG6). “You’ve gotta find something that [the students] can do well. And I think that during that four years the teachers and the principal really, really, really, really did” (I2). A positive culture, led by the principal, was summed up in this survey response: “A great leader makes coming into a most difficult environment worth it when…a positive school climate is cultivated, and students feel wanted, needed and a sense of belonging” (S5).

Our kids. The learning climate was positive where students felt they could achieve and had a sense of belonging. These students belonged to everyone at the school; there was a “feeling of US” (S8). One teacher said, “It went from being *my* kids to being *our* kids” (TFG5). According to another teacher the leveled grouping of students between classrooms attributed to this philosophy as did their value. The principal explained “our kids” as, “Your value. What you *do*; your value *is*. You know, do you value all kids or is

it just the kids inside of my class? You know even out here [she gestures to the recess yard]…with behavior" (I1).

Several different survey responses capped the climate of *our kids*. "At Yosemite View everyone [had] a shared responsibility in educating our children" (S2). Another response entailed the results of the 'our kids' climate. "Providing opportunities to build a belief that all students can learn and all students at a site belong[ed] to everyone [built] the capacity for a professional learning community that can see the global picture of the educational goal - success for all - students; teachers; school; community; and administrator" (S3). "I am extremely proud, and honored to have had an active role in the continuity of the Yosemite View community academic success" (S2).

High academic expectations. It was a shared goal to educate all children at Yosemite View Elementary and a culture of high expectations for learning, through embracing the principal's vision that all students could learn, made the climate learning centered. In an interview, the literacy coach shared her thoughts on how high expectations contributed to the school improvement:

> Just having the expectation that all children can learn [and] giving them the confidence that they can learn and helping them feel that they can learn. That's probably a real biggie we haven't ever brought up but I think that in this school and in this climate those four years, that was exceedingly high. You expected the child to learn. You knew that the child could learn…they somehow became, were able to become more independent learners on their own and build their own strengths. Every child was a learner and every child could succeed in learning. And that does make a big difference. (I2)

During the focus group, another teacher helped provide an understanding of the impact high expectations had on students and the staff, by adding:

> I think the culture has grown over the years as things have shifted. It's how we look at our students; its how we look at ourselves as professionals and the expectations, not only that we have for our students but we have for ourselves and that culture exists at this site and that is what's elevated at this site to a totally different place. (TFG9)

A climate was established of high expectations for learning to turn the school's academic achievement around. "The climate at the school seem[ed] to be one of believing that change and success [was] possible" (S6). Not only were there high expectations for student learning, but also high expectations for student behavior.

High behavior expectations. The staff at Yosemite View created a climate of high positive behavioral expectations. These expectations were developed during the four years of school improvement. The principal recalled the behavioral climate when she arrived, "When I first came here…I had a couple of expulsions…with knives being brought and threats. Had gang signs being thrown; these [were] kids that I had to expel" (I1). Together the leader and staff created shared positive behavioral expectations:

> I think at the beginning all of us had our own kind of rules in our classroom and as the years have progressed they've become…more consistent rules. I'd say on the playground, the cafeteria…I think everyone pretty much has positive behavior expectations instead of negative behavior rules like "Don't do this" "Don't do that". The positive expectations encompass the negative behaviors by stating it positively. (TFG8)

Students were not suspended right away; instead partner teachers were used, two years apart, to place students in a different classroom when time away was needed. "Kids who cannot function in non-structured settings…playgrounds, cafeteria, morning recess…" are on a behavior contract (TFG8). Even on the contract, upper grade kids can earn recess time, but the recess must be with a lower grade.

While the researcher was on-site, the following school wide behavioral expectation was observed. In the morning the students were playing on the playground before school began. The bell rang and the kids stopped playing and became quiet. The teachers on duty waited a few minutes until everyone stopped; it was like the children told each other, "It's time to stop playing." During this time it continued to remain silent. Then the teacher blew a whistle and all students walked to their assigned places and lined up. As the researcher shared this during an interview, the leader replied, "I think [the teachers] really have changed. We did not have that, many years ago. The teachers overall are better classroom managers" (I2).

The high expectations for behavior continue at Yosemite View Elementary. A survey response read, "I recently became involved with a group for improving site behavioral expectations" (S9). Recently Positive Behavior Implementation Program (PBIS) was added to the school. There was a behavioral support group which regularly met. An after school program was attributed to help with behavioral issues. "As a result [there's been] a huge change in behaviors because it's some of those lock key kids that go out to a gang with an older brother or sister after school, so it takes them out of it" (I1). The principal summed up the process of making high expectations shared and visible:

> It's been a long process. I came and inherited some rules and stuff and I had to kind of do it a bit at a time because [the staff] perceived the climate as what they [saw] in a typical day here. (I1)

Summary of learning climate. A typical day at Yosemite View Elementary now included a positive climate where all students belonged to everyone and high expectations for academics and behavior were commonly observed. This fostered a climate where all children could learn. Themes from the data suggested Yosemite View not only had a learning centered climate but also a supportive community.

Supportive Community

A supportive community was part of the culture at Yosemite View Elementary, another theme which emerged from the data taken from this case study. Employees, students, and families supported one another through a welcoming environment and through caring. One parent called it a family:

> We're a community here [at Yosemite View Elementary] and it's from [the principal] down to the janitor. I'm serious, we all communicate. Parents communicate with each other; we communicate with the principal, with the teachers, and just keep each other informed. Being involved I think is a key thing [and] makes it work. Community. I'd rather refer to it kind of like a family. (PFG2)

Welcoming. The supportive community embraced a welcoming environment which teachers described. "The school climate is welcoming. Teachers are courteous and are open to new ideas. There is always someone here who is…willing to assist…in whatever [is] need[ed]" (S5). A welcoming environment has been a stable ingredient of

the school. “Staff at this school have been known famously for [their] warm and welcoming qualities. Everyone who has ever visited Yosemite View has left testimonial commentaries to that effect” (S4). Not only were visitors welcomed but students were welcomed to school each day. “We’ll have many teachers here that I notice when you come in in the morning, they’ll be standing at the door…shaking [the student’s] hand and tell[ing] them good morning” (L2). The researcher observed this greeting as a first grade teacher welcomed each child into the classroom at the beginning of the day.

“Parents are [also] made to feel the site is welcoming and always encouraged to visit” (S4). Several parents shared how this welcoming climate impacted the support of their child’s education. “The school is open; teachers are really willing to talk to us” (PFG1). Another parent specified the times they could talk to the teachers, “The doors are open at any time. You may have to make an appointment and come in the morning or afternoon but [the teachers] are always willing to talk to you” (PFG2). Not only do teachers welcome communication with parents, but they also welcome parent volunteers. “Most of the teachers let the parents come in and volunteer in the classroom” (PFG3). This welcoming climate encouraged participation and created an environment in which children and staff wanted to be in, as does a culture of caring.

Caring community. Yosemite View Elementary appeared to be a caring community because teachers loved working there. Survey responses in this theme were prolific in the data collected from the school and several exclaimed, “I LOVE teaching at this school” (S1, S3, S4). Other responses read, “I very much enjoy teaching at the school” (S7, S5, S6, S10). The culture of caring which permeated the school’s climate was exhibited in several responses: “We are a family here. I can't imagine being

anywhere else. We have a staff that genuinely cares for students and each other. …it is a place where people care a great deal about each other" (S9, S2, S7).

Not only do the teachers feel the school is caring, the parents do as well. One parent said she was on a first name basis with the principal and teachers (PFG1). Another parent described how she felt, "You come in and everyone is very helpful…it's a community here" (PFG4). The effects of a caring community were evident as well, "When you feel like you belong then you want to help out" (PFG3).

According to the data, a culture of caring was exhibited through support, sharing, feeling valued, treating children with kindness, love and respect, and collaboration; as stated in this teacher's response:

> I have enjoyed working at this school because of the collegial atmosphere. Teachers are always willing to share and support each other's efforts and ideas. Administration is very knowledgeable and supportive. You are made to feel like you are a valued and an important part of the school. Student achievement is always on the forefront. It is why we are all here. (S6)

The caring community described above fostered an environment to support performance improvement. This survey reply provided a rich description of the caring climate at Yosemite View School; the explicit words which follow allow the reader to form a visual picture of the caring community:

> I look around the campus and see people (in all areas from the principal, the learning director, to the office secretaries, to the custodian, to teachers, aides, clinicians, to the ladies in the cafeteria etc.) who care about our students and show these children kindness, love and respect. I see people who do their job well and

give it their very best every single day. I am proud to be a part of this school community. (S7)

Summary of Findings for Question Three

The climate found at Yosemite View Elementary was first and foremost a learning centered climate. Conversation was positive around the school and the teachers viewed each of the 500 students as their own. All students could learn and all needed to achieve, high academic and behavioral expectations facilitated this. Secondly Yosemite View School was a welcoming and a caring community. These aspects of a supportive community ensured the school was a place in which teachers were happy to be a part of, working hard for improvement. As one teacher summarized, "Our school climate is one that is goal oriented, certainly strong, encouraging, compassionate, and understanding" (S3).

Research Question Four

What was the role of the parents and the community in the turnaround of the school?

Findings in the data show a scattered opinion about parent involvement. The district official evaluated the level of parent involvement at Yosemite View Elementary when she said, "It's high, you know it's high" (I3). Yet when the literacy coach was asked about the level of parent involvement at the school, her response was, "There really isn't" (L2). Although, according to one teacher, "parents seem[ed] to be more involved now than they were four or five years ago" (S8); another teacher felt "due to our population this will continue to be the area in which we can always improve on" (S6). The plight of parent's becoming involved was described:

> Let me just say this, half of [the parents] don't have cars or if they do they're limited. They take buses. Some may have cars but they're very poor. So therefore they don't feel like they belong they don't see the need for education. Let teachers take care of it. (I1)

Teachers felt parents did not play a role in the turnaround process but they did feel "support[ed] in [their] teaching efforts" by the few involved parents (S7). The Montessori families seemed active in the school and, as one teacher stated, "Those families provide a positive, enriching stimulus for the rest of the school [which] has helped the general climate of the entire school" (S4, I2).

Parent Involvement

Despite varying opinions on parent involvement, themes from the data showed parents were involved through participating in school functions, reading with their child, and through regular communication with school personnel. Parents and teachers indicated some level of involvement in these areas, especially in reading together and homework support.

Parents involved in school functions. Although not the majority, a few parents at Yosemite View Elementary were involved in the Parent Teacher Club (PTC), School Site Council, and through raising money for field trips. The principal recalled how one parent complained to her which subsequently led to her leadership as the president of an active Parent Teacher Club:

> [She] came to me and said I don't like how you did this with the way we started the year…I called her, had a talk with her. Went up to her shortly thereafter and said are you interested in serving as PTC? Would you mind taking this on? She

> got our PT's going. So four years this woman was on there and three years as president of PTC and grabbed people to help raise over $10,000 to help kids take field trips. (I1)

Raising money to fund field trips for children to build experiential knowledge is vital; the teachers acknowledged the contributions of the parents. "They have been very supportive of the staff" (S9). Teachers also were aware of parent involvement in the school through PTC. "Parents are all invited to be a part of the school community through Parent/Teacher club" (S1). Not only are parents on the PTC, they are also part of the School Site Council.

According to one teacher, Yosemite View Elementary "[has] a few parents that are very involved in the school site council. These parents are also very active in fundraising for [the] kids" (S8). Seven parents attended a School Site Council meeting which the researcher observed while on-site. One parent stood up and gave a report about a matching grant for an artist in residence. The principal affirmed the parent saying, "Thank you for being a part of that, Alex. I know your work has been a key to making that happen". Raising funds through PTC and School Site Council are not the only way parents are involved at Yosemite View Elementary. Parents also raise money for field trips and help to chaperone the trips.

> When you think about how socially economic disadvantaged this [turnaround] school is, since the district has pulled the plug on field trips, every grade has had a field trip ever since. [The parents] have consistently raised everything that they need. (PFG3)

This statement was lauded by a parent during the focus group. A mother chimed in saying her husband chaperoned for field trips. Parents volunteer in a variety of other ways as well.

During the parent focus group a mom explained how she volunteered in the kindergarten classroom one day a week before her twin sons were born (PFG3). The district official shared how parents attended a school board meeting and spoke as advocates for the school (I3). The teachers talked about parents volunteering in the classroom (S3, S6). One parent told how she could not come to the school functions during the day but her mother came to support her grandchildren (PFG6). Another parent talked about her involvement:

> I come two or three times a week but I just go out on the playground at lunchtime when the kids are playing ball. I have medical issues and I couldn't be consistent so that's why I don't volunteer for PTA. But I try to get out here often just to support my daughter and her new friends, you'd be surprised how many kids enjoy that. "I wished my mom would come out and I wished…" And we play four-square and teach them different things and make them do a group thing. As a matter of fact, [the principal] told me, "You need to look into being a yard duty teacher but like I say I can't be consistent because of my medical issues but I do enjoy coming out to the school and just checking on Lucy and the kids. I love it. It's wonderful. (PFG1)

Volunteering in classrooms or at school in various capacities is a way parents are involved. Parents also walk their children safely to and from school, attend reward ceremonies, and read with their child at home, the second aspect of parent involvement.

Parent support of child's learning. Responses from the parent focus group indicated parents support their child's learning through reading regularly together. Teacher responses in regard to parents and children reading together revealed, "not all parents get involved but most do" (S1). One parent shared, "And you're (the parent) just training that habit of reading…Establishing that routine, a routine from kindergarten all the way through fifth grade" (PFG4). Another parent challenged one parent to read daily with her child to help the child catch up to grade level expectations (PFG3). Reading to support a child's learning was summed up by PFG1, "Letting them [the child] read to me [the parent] at night for 30 minutes. Be part of their world. Just supporting them."

Not only was support provided through reading together but through a focus on homework as well. Parents seemed to help kids with homework, according to both teachers and parents. One parent talked about allowing her child to work on Kahn Academy after her child was done with homework (PFG2). Another parent shared her role as a parent was to "make sure they have a place where they can learn. Do your homework before you go outside" (PFG1). Whether support was provided through reading with their child or supporting homework, parents and teachers indicated most parents willingly supported their child's learning. The turnaround process at the school appeared to have been somewhat supported through parent involvement, community involvement is yet another school tie which was examined.

Community Involvement

When asked about community involvement during the data collection at Yosemite View School, little was attributed to the community's impact on the school improvement process. Two minor themes of community involvement did, however, emerge from the

data: community involvement through funding and community involvement through partnerships.

The principal told about a business which donated money "because we were poor" (I1). Complimentary certificates, food, clothing, and books were mentioned by the principal and parents as funding from the community; however community involvement through funding seemed to be scarce.

Community involvement through partnerships was limited also. A connection with a large university, located near the school, sent practicum students to the site (I1). A spouse of a prominent community member hosted a discovery club. The Presbyterian church helped through mentorships. The principal summed up the community involvement when she said:

> And that's about the extent of it, so it's not like I would see community involvement of…like volunteers. The district [feels] liability is involved. As far as community involvement it's been very little. I don't have a strong community involvement." (I1)

Summary of Finding for Research Question Four

The role of the community in the turnaround of the school seemed to be limited due to minimal school-community ties. The parents did; however, appear to have an impact on the school's academic improvement. One teacher, when looking at the parents of students in her classroom, felt parents had a role in the turnaround. She recalled, "The parents of my students played an important role in the improvement. They [were] well-informed of our school goal and [were] involved in many ways. They all attended our

school-wide Parent/Teacher conference and helped with the homework assignments" (S3).

The principal felt few parents were involved at a level to contribute to the turnaround. According to her, "There's been one; no I'll say there's several. There's a group of ten to fifteen parents that have been a part of this turn around process" (I1). During the focus group a teacher explained why parental involvement was low:

> We were a deciles school…deciles, 10%...we were the lowest in the state…That identification presumes that we are going to be a high poverty school, that we are going to have "challenging to teach" students, and what comes with both of those pieces is not a lot of parental involvement. (TFG7)

Some parent involvement themes did surface through data collection at the school; parent involvement in school functions and academic home support were shown to impact student learning. There were few community contributions tied to the academic improvement at the school, however. A school district official summed up the parents contribution to the turnaround effort: "[The parents are] supportive of the school. They're very proud of the increase in Academic Performance Index (API)" (I3).

Summary

While many states have received waivers from the federal NCLB rigorous expectations, schools are still required to show gains in student learning. Schools which cannot demonstrate academic gains will continue to be labeled as failing. These schools must determine a framework for improvement. Bryk and his colleagues (2010) suggested a framework to turn around underperforming schools. The framework includes five essential supports which are strong leadership, increased professional capacity,

instructional guidance, a safe learning climate, and strong parent-school-community ties. The purpose of the case study of one failing school was to provide an understanding of the essential supports used for improvement.

Yosemite View Elementary School was a failing school which increased in California's API over a four-year period to meet the expected standards. This study examined the impact leadership, staff, climate, and parent/community involvement had on the academic improvement of an underperforming school. *Figure 1* demonstrates the sources of data revealing the major themes found in this study.

Data Source	**Strong Leadership**	**Increased Staff Capacity**	**Learning Centered Climate**	**Parent Community Involvement**
Interviews	70	39	7	9
Teacher Focus Group	46	36	15	5
Parent Focus Group	16	15	10	20
Observations	20	16	2	1
Survey	50	101	30	23

Figure 1. Representation of the number of times data referred to one of the major themes presented in the study from each of the various data sources.

The data collected revealed strong leadership as the driving force for school improvement. The leader at Yosemite View Elementary modeled values, established a clear vision, provided instructional leadership and managed resources. Staff then committed to the vision for improvement and increased their capacity through assuming the role of a professional learning community, sharing curricular processes, and

professional development. The climate was learning centered and supportive. Parents had a role in the turnaround effort through providing academic support at home and involvement in school functions. These themes were uncovered in the data to create the framework one low performing school used to turn the school around and show student academic achievement.

Chapter Five will allow for further discussion of the study's findings. It will begin with a brief introduction and then will provide a summary of the findings. A discussion will follow which will attempt to connect the essential supports used at Yosemite View Elementary to the framework Bryk et.al (2010) found in a fifteen year study in Chicago Public Schools; as well as to the academic literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Following the discussion, a section will be presented on the implications this study has for failing schools. Finally limitations of the study and recommendation for further research will complete the chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Two efforts to reform education have increasingly faced school leaders: preparing students for 21st century jobs which require problem solving and high level thinking skills along with holding schools accountable for student performance (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). Measuring student performance began with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act when No Child Left Behind (NCLB) became a federal law aimed at improving failing schools and closing achievement gaps which existed between various ethnic, language, and academic disparities (Price, 2010). Requirements of NCLB were intended to turn around consistently low performing schools while preserving good schools, thus improving public education in the United States (Price, 2010). In 2014, ultimate requirements for NCLB would be realized when schools are required to demonstrate one hundred percent learner proficiency or be deemed a failing school.

Without changes to NCLB, an estimated 80% of the nation's public schools would be labeled as failing by 2013-2014 (McNeil & Klein, 2011). Recently, President Obama gave states flexibility under NCLB to create need-driven comprehensive school improvement plans, an accountability system that is focused, flexible, and fair, and teacher/principal evaluations that are supportive and focus on improvement (Duncan, 2012). States receiving waivers from the stern NCLB requirements will continue to measure school progress through an approved accountability system. Schools unable to demonstrate progress will be branded as failing.

Students in failing schools need not be left behind. According to Bryk (2010), “It is hard to improve what we do not understand” (p. 30). To turn around failing schools an understanding of a framework of essential supports for improvement is needed. Such frameworks have been identified by numerous studies (Blase & Blase, 1999; Bryk et al., 2010; Connelly, 2010; Davila, 2009; Fullan, 2005; Gordon et al., 2006; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Hess & Gift, 2008; Leithwood, 2005; Levine, 1991; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; McCollum, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Walters et al., 2003). One substantial 15-year study in Chicago Public Schools uncovered a framework for improvement consisting of essential supports which included strong leadership, increased professional capacity, instructional guidance, a safe learning environment, and parent-school-community connections (Bryk et al., 2010).

This qualitative instrumental case study was aimed at unpacking the essential supports one turnaround school, located in the agriculturally rich valley of California, used as a framework to come out of program improvement status. Yosemite View Elementary, a high poverty, diversely ethnic school, was labeled failing when a new principal assumed leadership in 2006. Over a four-year period, this medium sized elementary school implemented a framework to meet state requirements and demonstrate adequate yearly progress. Discovering the influence the leadership, staff, climate, and parents/community had to create a framework for improvement to turn around the academic achievement of students at Yosemite View Elementary was the purpose of this study.

Chapter Five contains five major sections, beginning with a summary of the findings which includes the research questions and themes found from each of the four

questions. The next section, a discussion, connects the academic literature in Chapter Two to the study's findings. The implications from the findings for practice follow the discussion. Finally, Chapter Five concludes with the study's limitations and recommendations for further research.

Summary of Findings

The data for this qualitative study were collected through interviews, focus groups, observations, and an open-ended survey. The turnaround framework found by Bryk et al. (2010) was the lens through which the instrument questions were developed and observations were made at the school. Participants were staff, parents, and a district official who were involved in the turnaround at Yosemite View Elementary School. The guiding question for this study was: What essential supports were implemented and how were they implemented over a four-year period for the academic turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School in the central valley of California as perceived by the school leadership, teachers, and parents? Specifically, the study examined:

1. What was the role and support of leadership in the turnaround of the school?
2. How did the staff influence the student achievement gains?
3. How did the school climate impact student achievement?
4. What was the role of the parents and the community in the turnaround of the school?

The essential supports implemented at this turnaround school, which surfaced through themes from the data gathered for this study, pertain to leadership, staff, and climate influence on student achievement gains. Although the role of the parents and community

was examined there was little effect found in these areas to increase student academic achievement at this school.

Theme One: Strong Leadership

Strong leadership was found to be central to school improvement. The role and support of the leader was at the core of the turnaround process and included management. Ongoing modeling of values of inclusive relationships, open communication, learning, and assiduousness were demonstrated by the principal. These values drove the vision created by the leader for academic improvement which began with the belief that all children can learn. This belief necessitated a vision to focus on analyzing data to determine instructional needs, both school-wide and for individuals. Data analysis revealed curricular gaps and so a vision to design and provide interventions followed. To fulfill the vision and to provide support for teachers, instructional leadership was needed. Initially, the leader had to have knowledge about curriculum and pedagogy, and then put rigorous instructional practices in to place. Instructional practices included literacy as the central focus, seamless curriculum alignment, and high expectations for instructional minutes. Finally, instructional leadership was provided through pedagogical learning which included modeling and sharing teaching practices and strategies with peers which allowed for additional leaders to emerge. The concept of the leader's role in the turnaround process can be seen in *Figure 2*.

Theme Two: Increased Staff Capacity

The staff at Yosemite View Elementary was an experienced group of teachers. First, staff buy-in to the leader's vision for academic improvement was needed. Once there was teacher buy-in, teacher capacity could be increased. The staff at this turnaround

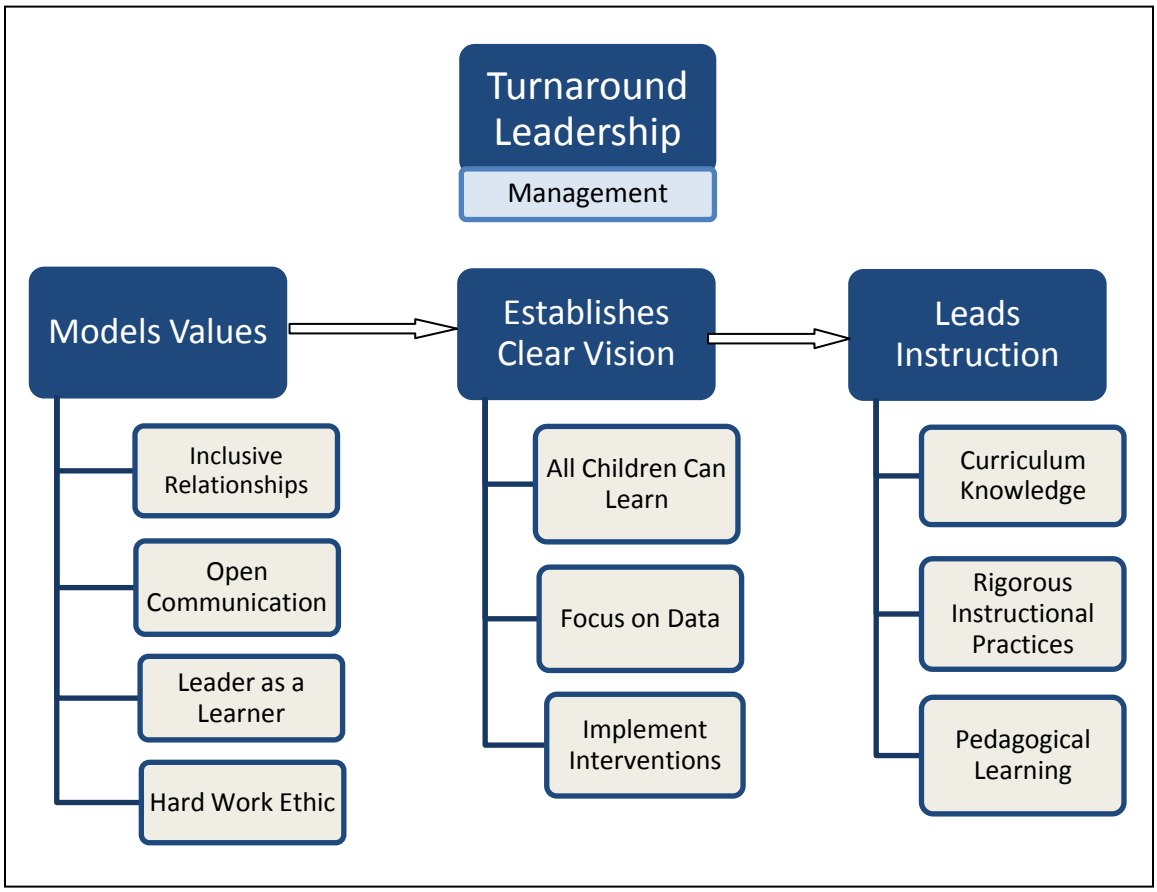

Figure 2. The conceptual framework of a strong leader's central role in the turnaround process.

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school influenced student achievement through augmented capacity. A professional learning community was established though coalescing into a team and then collaborating together at grade level meetings where staff learned together through study, observations, and reflection. Next, the staff increased their capacity through shared curricular processes of focusing on standards based curriculum, joint lesson planning, analyzing data together, and providing needed interventions. Finally, capacity was increased through professional development, some of which occurred through book studies and various trainings, but

most of which took place through sharing pedagogy practices and strategies at staff meetings. *Figure 3* demonstrates the concept of the staff's influence on the student achievement.

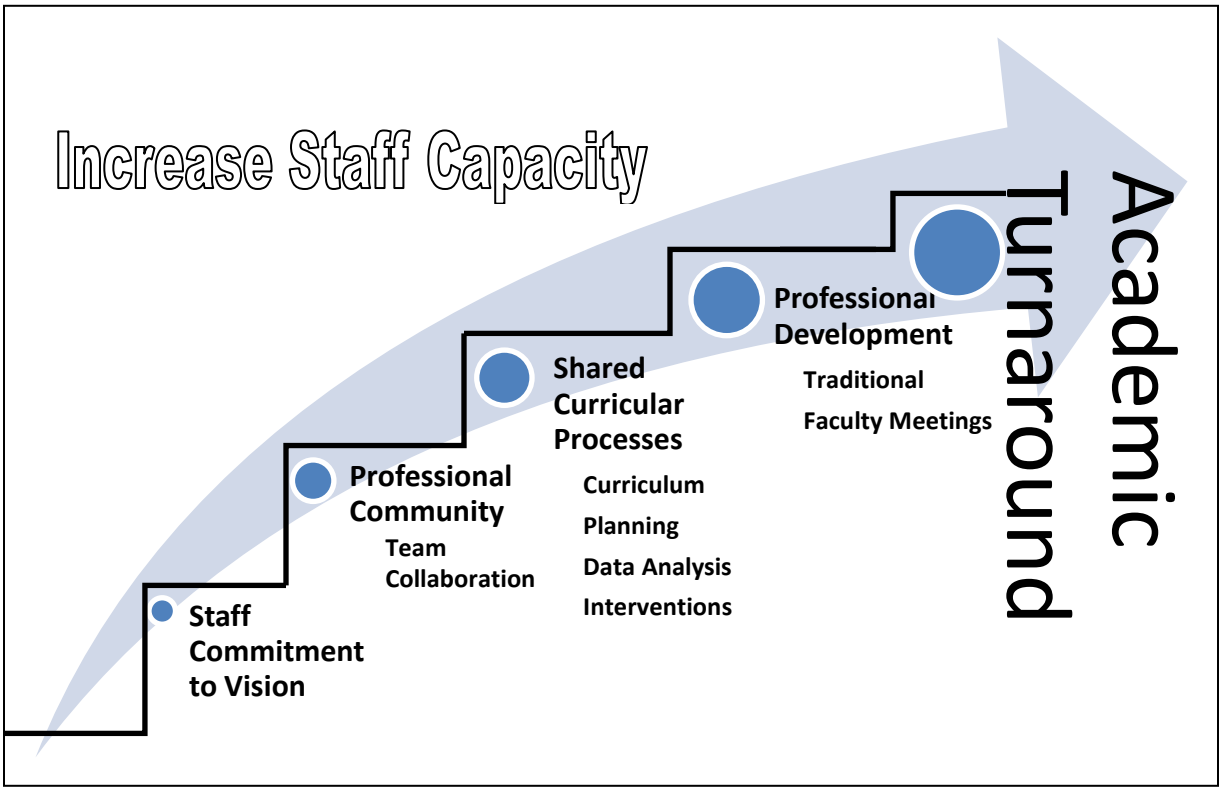

Figure 3. Staff influence of student achievement gains through increased capacity.

Theme Three: A Learning Centered Climate

The climate at Yosemite View Elementary was first and foremost a learning centered climate. Several aspects of a climate which encouraged learning emerged from this school. The atmosphere was positive; staff viewed all children as their own and held high academic and behavioral expectations for the students. The climate was also a supportive community. Staff members were welcoming to students, parents, and visitors

and a caring community existed amongst staff and parents. This learning centered climate with a supportive, caring community appeared to impact student achievement for improvement. Aspects of the learning centered climate found at Yosemite View Elementary School are presented in *Figure 4*.

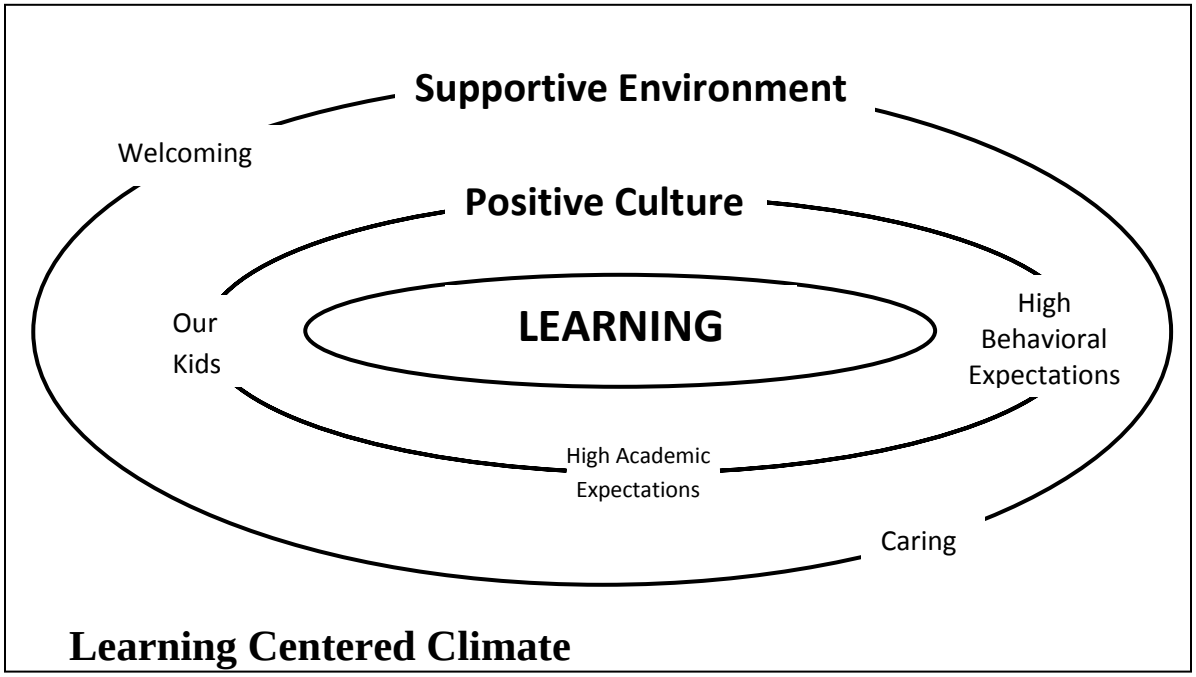

Figure 4. Aspects of the climate influencing student achievement in a turnaround school.

Theme Four: Parent Connections

While most of the data did not indicate an effect on student achievement resulted from parent or community involvement, themes were presented throughout the data of parents participating in school functions, reading with their child, and communicating with school staff. Although data was collected from only a few parents, involvement through Parent Teacher Club, School Site Council, and raising money and chaperoning field trips were areas in which the parents participated in the school. Evidence of some

parents supporting their child's learning in literacy through reading at home together surfaced. Community involvement was scarce. The data revealed a few sources provided money or supplies and partnerships were limited, although a few existed in the forms of a club, mentorships, and practicum students. The role of the parents and community in the turnaround of the school seemed to be limited due to minimal parent-school-community ties.

Summary

Findings from the study revealed this school turnaround began with strong leadership and a clear vision for improvement which was bought into by all staff. Next teacher capacity was increased and a learning climate was central to student achievement gains. A discussion of these major themes and how they make up the framework of essential supports for school turnarounds related to the academic literature found in Chapter Two will follow.

Discussion

The framework Bryk et al. (2010) suggested for school improvement included school leadership, building the professional capacity of the teaching staff, instructional guidance, improving the school learning climate, and establishing partnerships with parents and the community. This framework is established within the four major themes of the study's findings. Instructional guidance is provided through leadership, and, through the leader's influence, the professional capacity of the staff is increased. Together the principal and staff establish a learning centered climate. With the exception of parent-school-community ties, each of the components in the framework Bryk et al. (2010) suggested was evident in the data. In the next section of this chapter, details of

each of the themes will be connected to the literature in Chapter Two to confirm the essential supports needed for school improvement.

Theme One: Strong Leadership

The literature on failing schools revealed strong leadership is the most predominant factor for turning around low-performing schools. In all organizations, from corporations to public education institutions, leadership has been found to be the central variable of success (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Murphy, 2009; Yukl, 2006). In studies on leadership and school improvement, leadership is the essential element for turnaround schools and student learning (Murphy, 2009; Williams, 2009). This was substantiated throughout the data from Yosemite View Elementary. Data from interviews, surveys, teacher, and parent focus groups all pointed to the key role of the principal. One teacher wrote the principal "has been a huge part of our success. Leadership is huge!" Another teacher statement from the survey summed up the role the principal had in the turnaround:

> Without the principal's leadership I do not believe there would have been any turn-around or at best very little progress. This school was at dead-bottom in scores (out of 13 elementary school in this district) when the principal was assigned to this school. The principal is directly responsible for the turn-around.

The principal at Yosemite View Elementary was not only a strong leader, she also managed resources for optimal student achievement by providing additional staff, training, and materials. Through her leadership, she modeled values of inclusive relationships, open communication, learning, and hard work which opened the door for her vision to be shared and for teachers to receive necessary instructional leadership.

Academic literature states the leader must have a challenging sharply focused vision, which is communicated to stakeholders through influential relationships (Blase & Blase, 1999; Connelly, 2010; Levine, 1991; Walters et al., 2003). The principal's value of inclusive relationships was established so the vision would be heard. According to turnaround studies, the framework of essential supports is assembled as the leader (a) manages, (b) models values, (c) establishes a clear focused vision, (d) creates a climate of learning, and (e) distributes leadership (Bryk, et al., 2010; King-Rice, 2010; Lambert, 2006; Parrett & Budge, 2009). Each of these essential supports will be connected from the study's data to the literature.

Management

Turnaround literature addresses leadership and stresses the importance of good management (King-Rice, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Purposeful management includes managing the school's resources to enable optimal teaching and learning (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009). The principal at Yosemite View Elementary managed resources as she provided training opportunities. One teacher revealed, "I was sufficiently provided with…several informative cross-grade level staff meeting sessions, staff development, and trainings." She also managed resources by supplying teachers with materials, personnel, and technology.

Model Values

At Yosemite View Elementary School inclusive relationships, open communication, the leader as a learner, and a hard work ethic surfaced as values of this turnaround leader. Bush (2003) states that modeling best practices and values of the organization is one of the ways leaders teach followers. The values displayed by the

leader communicate the purpose for the vision which translates into commitment from the staff, thus institutionalizing the vision (Bush, 2003). A prominent value modeled by the principal was inclusive relationships.

Inclusive relationships. Leadership studies have found the willingness to change occurs as the leader influences people—an influence aimed for specific outcomes (Cuban, 1988; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Gold et al. (2003) found values such as inclusivity and equal opportunities displayed through the actions and speech of outstanding principals. The principal clearly valued inclusive relationships as was evident when she shared, "I'd try to infuse everybody and they said to me, 'You're not partial. You don't just hone in on these that have been leaders all along'" (I1). One survey response echoed her value: "Our principal is very good at creating a sense of purpose and connection for every staff member." The data exposed the inclusive relationships the principal established. It appeared that valuing a relationship with *every* staff member led the way to influence and a willingness to commit to the work and learning required for improvement.

Learning. Fullan (2010), who has written on school reform, stated the one primary factor for school improvement is for the principal to be a learner. Connelly (2010) found turnaround principals were lifelong learners with the core value and belief that all students can learn and all schools can improve. The turnaround leader at Yosemite View Elementary was knowledgeable, researched and investigated best practices, and prepared for her role as an instructional leader. During the onsite visit as the researcher was talking to the principal, she pulled book after book off her shelf to share topics she had led the teachers to study. Research on the connection between

leadership and school improvement found the importance for the leader to not only foster the learning of students but of the staff as well (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). The principal of Yosemite View Elementary valued learning, not only for students, but for her and the staff as well.

Open communication. The leader of this turnaround school valued open communication; teachers and parents shared about her open door policy and her receptiveness to discuss concerns and make recommendations. Leithwood (2005) and Walters et al. (2003) found turnaround leaders valued listening, open mindedness, problem solving, and colleagues' ideas. Open communication encapsulates these values.

Although the data triangulated to show an ethic of hard work was valued by the principal at Yosemite View Elementary, the researcher did not find a specific value of assiduousness in the academic literature correlated to leaders at improved schools. This strong leader did model hard work; however, along with inclusive relationships, learning, and open communication which opened the way for her vision of academic improvement to be shared. In studies on school improvement it was found visions were communicated as the leader modeled values of high expectations personally and for the staff (Dinham, 2005; Hess & Gift, 2009).

Communicate a Clear Vision

Exceptional school leaders have a vision of increased student learning, a vision of possibilities which sets the direction for school improvement (Bush, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). The principal at Yosemite View Elementary had a vision of what the future could hold; a vision founded in the belief that all children could learn. To turn around the academic achievement of the

school and help all children learn she envisioned focusing on data to determine gaps in learning and then implementing interventions to close achievement gaps.

All children can learn. First and foremost, this turnaround principal knew to accomplish the task of moving the school from the ranking as the district's lowest performing school to meeting AYP, her vision had to begin with a shared belief that all children could learn. This process started with a mission statement. "We did a mission statement together. What their true belief was about education and kids. Did they really believe all kids could learn or progress? [We] worked through those kind of things" (I1). Research has indicated the leader must value the belief that all students can learn; Bush (2003) described this as "the moral purpose for education" (p. 172). Together the principal and the staff established this foundational vision of education that all children could learn, and then they provided interventions to meet various learner's needs.

Create interventions. Literature on school turnarounds found that outstanding school leaders have a vision of increased student learning: they see possibilities, which sets the direction for school improvement (Bush, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). Even though Yosemite View was the lowest performing school in the district, the principal could see the school meeting AYP expectations and knew interventions were needed. During the interview the principal recalled, "I had to my first year…put RtI interventions in place." The survey, focus groups, and interviews confirmed the principal's vision of increasing student learning; teachers shared about the vision the principal had for improvement and the interventions she designed. One teacher shared how her interventions are now used in all the district

schools. Interventions could not be implemented, however, without first analyzing data to determine student needs, another part of this turnaround principal's vision.

Focus on data. The study at Yosemite View Elementary found monthly collaborative data analysis sessions were part of the vision for improvement. According to Lambert (2006), in turnaround schools, teams of staff talk about student performance and raise questions about practices to create achievable goals congruent with the vision for student improvement. A teacher recalled this process at the school which led to data analysis:

> [The principal had] conversations with each and every teacher…where we saw the need, where we needed growth, and…what we needed as staff development to be able to implement those changes. And then after bringing to the table an agenda of things that we needed to start talking about so that we could focus on the data more effectively and not just looking at numbers but looking at data so instead of looking surface started to delve in deeper as to the students we wanted to focus on.

At Yosemite View the staff shared how the principal helped teachers focus on data to discuss student performance and plan interventions. Teachers talked about how a strategic focus was created to increase each class by three points on the state test which would thus demonstrate school improvement. Robinson and Buntrock (2011) discovered effective and sustainable turnaround measures found capable strong leaders had a strategic focus, inspired change, and drove decisions. This turnaround leader appeared to drive instructional decisions as an instructional leader.

Instructional Leadership

The principal at Yosemite View Elementary not only modeled values and established a clear vision for improvement; she also provided the instructional leadership needed for teachers to achieve improved student achievement goals. Instructional leadership was provided through her depth of curriculum knowledge, through rigorous instructional practices, and through pedagogical learning.

Curriculum knowledge. According to Wahlstrom and Louis (2008), "as an instructional leader in the building, the principal is expected to understand the tenets of quality instruction as well as have sufficient knowledge of curriculum to know that appropriate content is being delivered to all students" (p. 459). Through data collected from this turnaround school, it was evident the principal was not only the instructional leader, but knew the curriculum well enough to understand strategies and what was taught in classrooms. Teachers seemed secure in her knowledge too. Survey, focus group, and interview responses revealed, "Our principal is very knowledgeable about curriculum." It was clear the principal knew curriculum, while talking to the researcher she referred to the three genres of literature, higher level thinking strategies, components of writing, reading prompts, and the researcher observed her modele a lesson of an intervention reading group. This knowledge appeared to give her confidence to create rigorous instructional practices.

Rigorous instructional practices. According to academic literature, three areas principals of schools should focus on to provide instructional leadership are literacy, curriculum coherence, and instructional minutes (Fullan, 2005; Payne, 2008). Through rigorous instructional practices, the principal of Yosemite View was an instructional

leader by guiding teachers in each of these three areas. First, she "honed in on English Language Arts (ELA)" (I1). A large block of uninterrupted time was set aside in the morning for literacy instruction, one way the principal protected instruction. She shared how active cell phones were not allowed in the classroom during literacy teaching, calls from the office were not to interrupt literacy teaching, and field trips were not allowed in the morning during literacy teaching. Blasé and Blasé (1999), Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009), Murphy (2009), and Walters et al. (2003) all found the instructional leader should protect instructional time. Student academic performance was found to be impelled by instructional leadership as the principal positioned the direction for instruction and protected it (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Murphy, 2009). Teachers also knew the school-wide focus was literacy; additional intervention teachers were hired to serve classrooms and students were grouped by ability levels for ELA instruction. The principal focused on literacy, protected instructional time, and also aligned the curriculum.

Most turnaround literature agrees that leaders of schools should provide instructional guidance to the teachers for student learning and establish a school-wide seamless curriculum (Blase & Blase, 1999; Davila, 2009; Levine, 1991; Walters et al., 2003). Teachers at Yosemite View Elementary shared how they gathered regularly in grade level planning meetings to align curriculum from preschool through fifth grade. The principal frequented classrooms as well, which gave a global perspective of classrooms to help align curriculum. Instructional leadership through rigorous instructional practices of aligned curriculum, high expectations for instructional minutes, and a focus on literacy began to help close gaps in student learning.

Pedagogical learning. One of the key responsibilities of the leader is to continually increase the capacity of the staff (Blase & Blase, 1999; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Leithwood, 2005). Instructional leadership was provided at this turnaround school through ongoing pedagogical learning. According to Rhodes and Brundrett (2009), learning is cultivated by establishing mores of knowledge and inquiry through an intense focus on improvement, dialogue, accountability, and shared leadership. This is how the staff learned at Yosemite View. Opportunities for learning occurred as staff shared instructional strategies at faculty meetings and the principal frequented classrooms to observe and demonstrate pedagogy. The principal of this turnaround school led this learning through empowering others to teach another.

Summary of Discussion for Strong Leadership

Strong leadership is an essential support to turn around under achieving schools. Data from this study correlated to the literature which underscored leadership as the predominant factor of school improvement. The leader at Yosemite View Elementary was pivotal in turning the academic achievement around. She valued inclusive relationships, learning, open communication and hard work and consistently modeled these to create a path for her vision. A vision which was clear: all children could learn, a focus on collaborative data analysis, and a need to provide interventions in the areas the data revealed. The principal then provided instructional leadership through rigorous instructional practices and pedagogical learning. This turnaround principal also managed resources. She shared leadership to build capacity. As capacity increased, so did student achievement; a transformation of both student and teacher. A survey response summed up the principal's role succinctly:

> The influence was due to several factors: building relationships; building capacity from within from the talent and expertise of experienced staff; and focus on the goal of improvement with guidance of researched strategies, data, as well as the experience brought in team building as she coached each individual or grade level to make the change their own. (S4)

Theme Two: Increased Staff Capacity

Academic literature has not only found strong leadership as a necessary component of school turnaround frameworks, but also, increasing staff capacity is an essential support to improve student achievement in low performing schools (Blase & Blase, 1999; Dinham, 2005; Leithwood, 2005; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Walters et al., 2003). Increased staff capacity was the second theme found from the case study of one turnaround school. It began with a commitment to the vision. Capacity was then increased through uniting as a professional learning community, shared curricular processes, and through professional development.

Commitment to the Vision

The leader at Yosemite View Elementary modeled her values to convey a vision for improvement. Bush (2003) stated the values displayed by the leader communicate the purpose for the vision which translates into commitment from the staff, thus institutionalizing the vision. Statements such as these were found repeatedly in the data: "[I] chose to fully implement changes [and] made necessary adaptations and chose to support peers in doing the same" (S9). The vision became a norm as was evidenced through the actions of the teachers; they became a professional learning community, formed into a focused team who met regularly with grade level colleagues to analyze

data, plan, and provide necessary interventions, and attempted new instructional strategies, willingly sharing successes at faculty meetings. Lambert (2006) wrote that when the vision became a core value of the members of the school community and values were modeled by the principal, they provided guidance for the development of initiatives to accomplish the challenging task of improving student performance.

Increased Capacity through a Professional Community

A professional learning community was one initiative found as a theme for the turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary School. Literature on school improvements revealed a collaborative professional community exists in learning-centered schools (Bryk et al., 1999). This turnaround school formed several professional teams to close student achievement gaps, a leadership team, problem solving teams, and collaborative grade level teams. According to one teacher, "The leadership team provided another avenue of support as [the teachers] voiced and shared the constraints that may be faced, or process[es] that are recommended to support efforts" (S5). Academic and behavioral problem solving teams formed through student study teams, asking peers for help, conferring about students, and mentoring colleagues. And grade level collaboration began with goals of learning new instructional strategies through professional study, peer observations, data analysis, and planning. According to academic literature, a responsibility for school change and improvement was formed as teachers' increased their capacity to collaborate around innovative ideas of teaching and learning through study and practice (Bryk et al., 1999; Lambert, 2006; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Sawchuck, 2011).

Increased Capacity through Shared Curricular Processes

The staff at Yosemite View Elementary School shared analogous curricular processes of using standards based curriculum, lesson planning, data analysis, and providing interventions. First, they aligned curriculum from preschool through fifth grade, using the California state standards to guide them. The teachers revealed how they "reviewed the standards of [the] grade before and the grade following to ensure that [the] foundation [was] in place to build from and…to ensure that what [was] most essential [was] taught" (S4). The literature found a positive relationship between aligned curriculum coherence and improved student achievement (McCollum, 2010; Newmann et al., 2001; Parrett & Budge, 2009).

Second, the staff began planning together. Academic success was found in literature through grade level planning periods and cross-grade level planning teams (Newmann et al., 2001; Parrett & Budge, 2009). One teacher explained, "My grade-level colleagues and I plan collaboratively using the reading, language arts, [and] mathematics content standards; and the district language arts and mathematics pacing calendars as guidelines to create well-thought out lessons to ensure all grade-level requirements are taught" (S3). Teachers also talked about how they used a downward spiral from fifth grade to preschool using state standards the students would be held accountable for. Collaborative planning was found to increase teacher's capacity by sharing subject knowledge and instructional strategies together (Rowan et al., 1997).

The third area of curricular processes the staff at Yosemite View shared together was data analysis. Academic literature found turnaround schools aggressive in collecting performance data and analyzing it to improve student learning (Mai, 2004; Robinson &

Buntrock, 2011). Teachers explained how they looked at data in quarterly data analysis meetings for kindergarten through fifth grade. A weekly grade level data analysis meeting was also implemented at the school. During the focus group a teacher summed up their shared focus on data, we "really focused on our target students and looking at our data and seeing that our kids that aren't getting it, what we can do to get additional help" (TFG2).

Finally, the staff at this turnaround school provided interventions to students based on gaps in learning which the data revealed. Academic issues in low-performing schools are complex; large gaps exist in student learning. "Teachers must be trained to deal with the complexities of teaching " in order to close achievement gaps and address the needs of all student learning (Bryk et al.,1999, p. 752). Through shared curricular processes of aligning curriculum, planning, and analyzing data; instructional gaps demanded teachers provide interventions. Reading, math, and behavioral interventions were provided in a variety of ways such as additional classroom instruction time, small group pull-out instruction from an interventionist, recess study groups, and individualized instruction as necessary. It appeared as teachers' capacity increased at this turnaround elementary school, they addressed student learning needs and provided interventions to students based on assessment results.

Increased Capacity through Professional Development

Capacity was increased in the staff at Yosemite View Elementary through professional development, most of which took place during faculty meetings. Mai (2004) and Parrett and Budge (2009) found achieving schools incorporated professional development into the faculty meetings, allowing teachers to share their professional

knowledge. Data from teacher responses read, “Staff meetings are more than just a mandatory meeting required by the district. Most staff meetings are turned into staff development where teachers share their classroom successes across the grade levels” (S6). The faculty meetings focused on a specific topic teachers were learning about and after presentations by peers, the staff grouped by grade level teams to share out (TFG7). According to the literature, as principals empower teachers to share their knowledge, professional learning becomes insatiable and teachers become a resource and teach colleagues, which in turn influences student learning (Dinham, 2005; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009).

Summary of Discussion for Increased Staff Capacity

The essential support of increasing the capacity of the staff was found in the academic literature which correlated to the data uncovered at Yosemite View School. The staff’s role in the turnaround process began with a commitment to the vision for improvement, a necessity for turnaround schools according to the literature. Next, teacher capacity was increased through becoming a professional community of collaboration, through shared curricular processes, and through professional development. The reviewed literature suggested staff capacity is accomplished through a staff of strong supportive teachers who are committed to the change process and provide quality instruction (Leithwood, 2005; McCollum, 2010; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Silins & Mulford, 2002; Walters et al., 2003).

Theme Three: A Learning Centered Climate

Academic literature unveils how organizational cultures are created through the history of the organization and the leader (Schein, 1993). At Yosemite View, academic

failure was the history of the school which burdened the principal with the responsibility to create a learning centered climate. According to Murphy (2009), learning climates associated with achievement contain: high academic and behavioral expectations, student cooperation and accountability, avoidance of negative practices, and established classroom structures and routines. At Yosemite View Elementary shared cultural assumptions shifted to believing all children could learn and every student belonged to every staff member. These assumptions were embedded in a positive learning centered climate of high expectations and a supportive community.

Reoccurring factors of school climates in the literature of turnaround schools include a positive and safe climate and high expectations often called academic press (Davila, 2009; Leithwood, 2005; Walters et al., 2003). The principal talked about the change in the climate during the improvement period, "But [the] climate has changed… [teachers] feel like it's positive and it's more about learning." The staff looked for student and colleague's strengths, recognized and rewarded achievements, and as a result the students wanted to learn and the teachers wanted to teach. Many teachers stated how they loved teaching at the school and that they viewed all children as their students. As one teacher said, there is a "feeling of us" (S8).

A positive culture was paired with high expectations. According to Fullan (2005) the high expectations create a demanding culture of continuous improvement. One teacher shared about this demanding culture of high expectations:

> I think the culture has grown over the years as things have shifted. It's how we look at our students; it's how we look at ourselves as professionals and the expectations, not only that we have for our students but we have for ourselves and

that culture exists at this site and that is what's elevated at this site to a totally different place. (TFG9)

Not only was the learning centered climate positive with high expectations, it was supportive as well. Academic literature cited effective school climates as a safe supportive learning culture for students and teachers (Davila, 2009; Gordon et al., 2006; Leithwood, 2005; Parrett & Budge, 2009). The staff at the school welcomed and cared for colleagues, students, parents, and visitors. One parent said, "The school is open; teachers are really willing to talk to us." Teachers talked about being a "family" and how they not only cared for each other but for students as well (S2, S7, S9). In a study of a turnaround school, Cinanca and Lampe (2010) found a caring environment existed. As teachers process knowledge individually and collectively solve problems, this "leads to changes in values, beliefs, and norms that result in a development of a unique learning culture" (Silins & Mulford, 2002).

Theme Four: Parent Connections

Partnerships with parents for the benefit of their child's learning and supportive community involvement to share the responsibility for school and student success were encouraged for academic improvement in the literature (Connelly, 2010; Davila, 2009; Hess & Gift, 2008; McCollum, 2010; Walters el al., 2003). Although parent and community involvement was mentioned in literature, however, it was found infrequently as was the case at Yosemite View Elementary School.

Teachers at this turnaround school felt the parents were supportive but did not play a role in the turnaround process. Robinson and Buntrock (2011) studied 123 turnaround schools and found schools engaged parents through phone calls, personal

home visits, and through bringing parents into the school regularly for education or celebration opportunities. The data revealed parents were involved in school functions such as Parent Teacher Club, School Site Council, raising money for field trips, or volunteering at the school. Parents supported their children at home through reading together and assuring homework was completed. One parent shared her role was to "make sure [her child has] a place where they can learn" (PFG1). Yosemite View Elementary communicated regularly with the parents and invited parents to celebrations of student learning. One parent summed up how the school connected with the parents through this belief, "The willingness of our community as parents, teachers, [and] administration to all work together to bring kids up" (PFG4).

An increasing amount of research provides evidence of the benefits of connecting the school to the community for student learning (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Literature suggests partnering with businesses and church groups for volunteers and resources are ways schools can connect to the community (Borman et al., 2000; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; McCollum, 2010). The principal shared about a few scattered partnerships or resources received from the community, however, little were attributed to the community's impact on the turnaround of Yosemite View School.

Summary: Turnaround Leadership

The concept of a school turnaround refers to schools which are initially classified as failing and student academic performance increases, as evidenced through state accountability expectations, to remove the school from a failing status. This study sought to determine the essential supports one turnaround school implemented for improvement

and how they were implemented. The essential supports which made up the turnaround of Yosemite View Elementary appeared to be leadership, increased staff capacity, and a learning centered climate.

Turnarounds hinge, however, on leadership. The literature on improving failing schools revealed leadership is the most essential support for turning around low-performing schools; with nearly all literature citing leadership as a necessity for the turnaround framework (Blase & Blase, 1999; Connelly, 2010; Davila, 2009; Fullan, 2005; Gordon et al., 2006; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Hess & Gift, 2008; Leithwood, 2005; Levine, 1991; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; McCollum, 2010; Murphy, 2009; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Walters et al., 2003). Two leadership theories may provide insight on how the leader of Yosemite View Elementary linked the essential supports found in her leadership, with distributive and transformative leadership, to sustain the turnaround.

Distributive Leadership

Distributive leadership can be defined as strategic shared leadership between the principal, teachers, and other staff to improve student learning (Heck & Hallinger, 2010). A key to school turnaround and sustainability is found as principals focus on developing other leaders equally for the intentional focus of student achievement (Fullan, 2005; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009; Williams, 2009). The principal at Yosemite View distributed leadership. The teachers led with her vision and they taught their peers. She talked about her strategic plan to distribute leadership when she shared about developing the leadership team. The first year of her assignment, she kept the existing leadership team. The second year she began to build the leadership team by

adding teachers who possessed strategic teaching practices and who would advocate for kids. The third year the principal named teachers for the leadership team. It was these teachers whom she trained so they could train and lead others. As she put it, “letting them become leaders, so building a team.” They facilitated data analysis, lesson planning, and professional study meetings; which link to themes found for the leader’s role in the turnaround, establishing vision and instructional leadership, and themes found for the staff’s influence in the turnaround, shared curricular processes and professional development to increase capacity.

Another way this turnaround principal distributed leadership was through pedagogical learning. In their study of leadership in turnaround schools, Leithwood and Strauss (2009) found as the school improved, leadership became progressively more distributed through considerable staff involvement. The principal shared how two or three teachers would present at every staff meeting for three to five minutes about successful instructional strategies. As she put it, “And letting them become leaders, so building the team, even though they weren’t totally on leadership [team]” (I1). As teachers trained peers and led various meetings, a learning climate was established by both the principal and teachers. Findings from turnaround schools revealed distributed leadership practices enhanced student academic performance to the point the school no longer has a *failing* label (Lambert, 2006). Evidence of greater levels of teacher commitment result in increased student achievement and attests transformational leadership is at the center of turning the school around (Bryk et al., 1999; Griffith, 2004).

Transformational Leadership

Turnaround leadership is transformational, a result of distributed leadership, which appeared through the leader in this case study as teachers committed to the vision of improvement. Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) described transformational leadership characteristics as the ability to establish relationships, motivate, provide intellectual stimulation, and influence followers. Studies have shown the turnaround leader is transformative as they establish a clear focused vision, model values, manage, create a climate of learning, and distribute leadership (Bryk et al., 2010; King-Rice, 2010; Lambert, 2006; Parrett & Budge, 2009; Silins & Mulford, 2002). All of these transformative characteristics were seen in this turnaround leader. She modeled values, established a clear vision, built relationships, centered herself and the staff on learning, and supported the staff as they led their peers. Transformational leadership can best be seen through the words of a teacher:

> When I first came here in 2006, I could sense a feeling of resentment. Some teacher's gave the principal a difficult time, as she implemented changes in the way things were to be done. It wasn't the most comfortable place to work…Slowly, as [these teachers] began to see the improvement in their students reading, working with them became much easier. Changes are never EASY, but with good results, we…developed into a wonderful team. (S1)

Principals with high leadership capacity, or transformational leaders, “no longer had to facilitate the conversations, frame the problems, or challenge the assumptions in isolation. Principals and teachers began to share the same concerns and work together toward their resolution” (Lambert, 2006, p. 249). This they did at Yosemite View

Elementary School which is illustrated in *Figure 5*, a representation of the impact distributed leadership and transformational leadership had on leadership, staff, and climate to link them for a sustained turnaround.

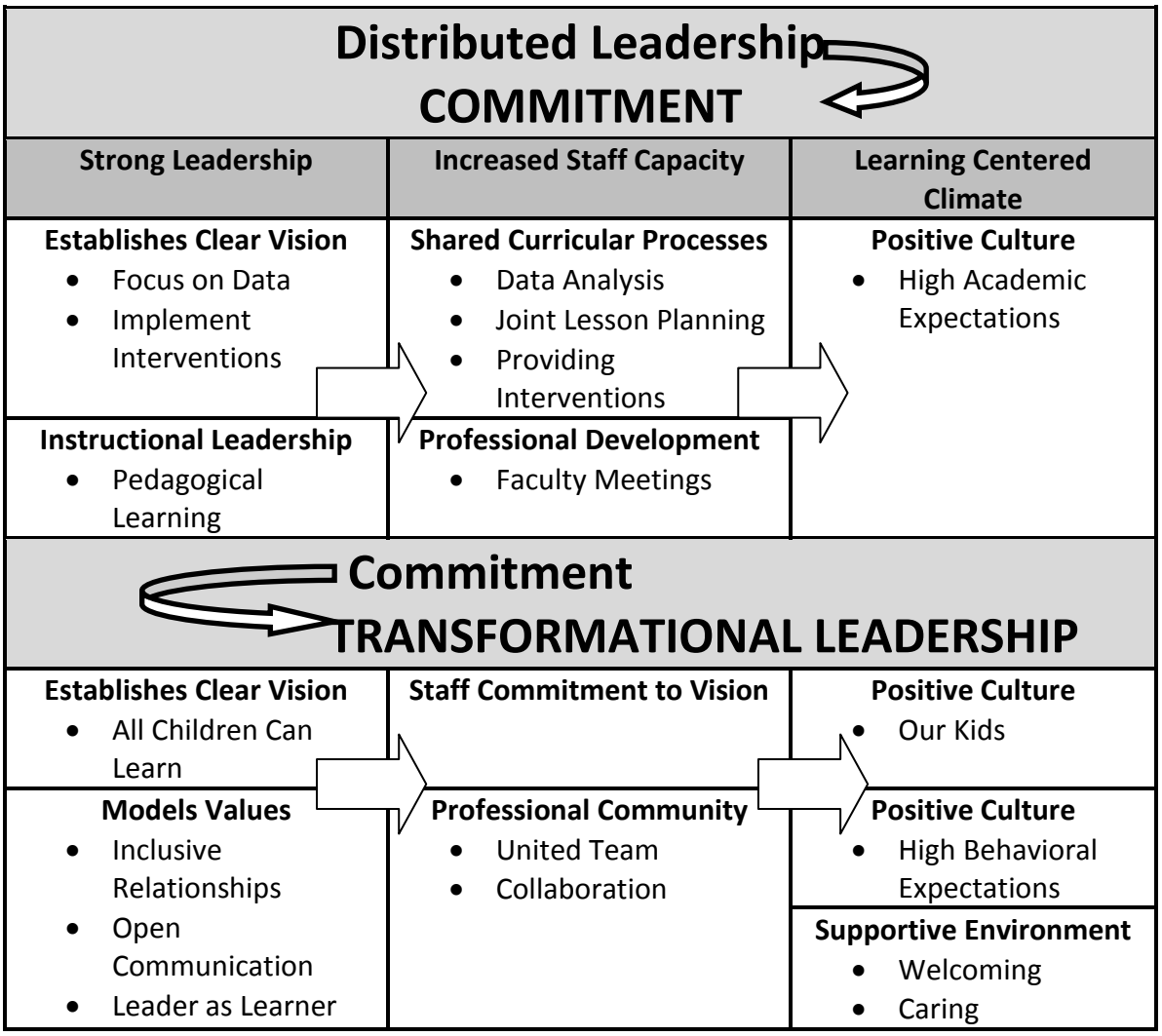

Figure 5. Distributive and transformational leadership theories impact on leadership, staff, and climate themes found in turnaround school.

The principal described "the biggest shift" of transformation when she said, the teachers have "stepped up and [are] now pulling the grade level alongside them…If we're going to make progress and make these scores and be proud of it, they have to pull, pull

the other team members along." Distributive leadership led to transformation at Yosemite View Elementary as leaders and the staff strategically began to work toward academic improvement, it appeared to help erase the label of *Program Improvement*. A survey respondent seemed to sum up the transformational leadership at Yosemite View Elementary when she wrote, "When everyone involved in working to achieve one common goal, is certain of their responsibility, feels important, and is given words of encouragement with understanding and compassion when needed, success is within reach and everyone wins" (S3).

Implications for Practice

According to Katash et al. (2010), without an understanding of the essential supports needed to turn failing schools around the number of failing schools could double over the next three years. This study purposed to understand the essential supports used to improve one failing school on the west coast. Turning around the lowest-performing schools includes establishing a learning centered environment where all children can learn, building capacity of teachers, addressing curriculum needs, and involving the community in the school (Paletta, Stillings Candal, & Vidoni, 2009). Implications from the findings of this study will provide a clearer understanding of the framework needed for schools in failing status through delineating the roles the leadership and staff, the climate, and involvement of parents and community played to improve one failing school.

One implication of this study is for school districts. Recently research has begun to find the role the district must play in turnaround schools through creating conditions which enable schools to improve (Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). The school district of

Yosemite View Elementary implemented a collaborative data analysis early release day for all teachers. Principals were expected to adhere in curriculum and testing expectations but were given some autonomy over how they were implemented. Flexibility and support from the district enable the turnaround to be sustainable.

Hiring strong leaders as principals for failing schools is another implication for educational practice. In studies on leadership and school improvement, leadership is the essential element for turnaround schools and student learning (Murphy, 2009; Williams, 2009). Robinson and Buntrock (2011) stated we must "recognize the vital importance of leadership [because] high-impact principals are essential for turnaround success" (p. 4). One teacher shared about the strong leadership of the principal of Yosemite View, "her vision, her expertise, her ability to strategically put in place at every level…" (TFG9). According to the district official the principal was a strong leader also. Referring to the school's turnaround she said, "Really a testament to strong instructional leadership…" (I3).

An understanding of instructional leadership is a third implication provided through this case study for educational practice. Newmann et al. (2001) defined instructional leadership as the coordination of curriculum, 'instructional strategies, student support programs, teaching assignments, expectations for teachers' performance, and in-service professional development" (p. 300). According to this definition, the principal at Yosemite View was an instructional leader. She aligned the curriculum from preschool through fifth grade, focusing on state learning standards. She hired additional reading specialists to provide needed interventions and created a plan for teaching literacy by grouping students according to learning levels for targeted instruction. She

worked with underperforming teachers to help them learn, placing them in the *best fit* grade level. She maintained high expectations for instructional minutes and planning. And she provided ongoing professional development through spending time in classrooms to observe and model, through empowering teachers to teach at faculty meetings, and through providing grade level data analysis and planning times.

The final implication for professional practice is the need to provide relevant, ongoing professional development to increase the capacity of the staff in underperforming schools. According to research, ongoing professional development including collaboration, dialogue, and collective inquiry should be offered to enable teachers to monitor student progress and continually refine pedagogy skills for continuous improvement (Blase & Blase, 1999; Gordon et al., 2006; Heck & Hallinger, 2010). Robinson and Buntrock (2011) added professional development should focus on instructional strategies and how data is used to drive instruction. One of the strongest subthemes in the data from Yosemite View Elementary focused on the faculty meetings as a time of professional learning. Participants were not sure whether to call it a faculty meeting or a professional development meeting. The principal described faculty meetings where a teacher would share about a successful instructional strategy or data analysis and then teachers formed grade level teams to discuss and apply their learning. Bryk et al. (2010) argued that professional development should be an anchor to increase the capacity of the staff so teachers stay current with new learning and continue their individual professional growth.

This study provided a clearer understanding of the essential supports needed for school improvement. Implications for practice in education consist of the need for district

level support of failing schools, a requirement of strong leaders in underperforming schools, a call for for instructional leadership, and embedded ongoing professional development. Yosemite View Elementary was a single case study of one failing school, although essential supports to create a turnaround framework surfaced through the study, there were limitations.

Limitations

The foremost limitation of this single case study was that it examined merely one turnaround school; however, there were other limitations as well. Themes appeared weak in parent school community section. Correlating parent and community involvement to the the school's improvement process was difficult. The researcher conducted one hour long parent focus group with only six parents attending and these were the parents who were already involved in the school and willingly came to the focus group. The responses of parental support for learning were all taken from a group of parents who chose to be involved in the school and learning of their child.

Another limitation of the study was the bounded time the researcher had on the campus for observations. The researcher was on-site for one week during which the teachers were preparing for the upcoming state standardized assessment. Although the researcher conducted nine observations, to obtain a clear understanding of the school as a whole would have necessitated observations at various times throughout the year and in various grade levels.

The third limitation of the study was the participants in the teacher focus group. The focus group consisted of grade level leaders whom appeared to be strong teachers. These voices were the ones giving insight to the turnaround of the school and although

they represent various ethnicities and grade levels, they did not represent various capacities.

Recommendations for Further Research

This turnaround study of a single failing school has revealed the need for further research in three areas. First, there is a need to study how higher level thinking is developed in students while continuing to demonstrate increased student learning on standardized assessments. Secondly, there is a need to study how to connect parents and communities with the school for sustained school success.

The Knowledge Age, or the 21st century, is demanding higher level thinking where jobs require problem solving and knowledge creation (Bryk et al., 2010). Schoen and Fusarelli (2008) described "21st-century learning and thinking skills as critical thinking and problem solving skills, creativity and innovation skills" (p. 185). Bryk et al. (2010) placed pedagogy of higher level thinking as one of three necessary components of instructional leadership. The Knowledge Age requires educators to develop critical thinking, independent research, and problem solving skills (Nair, 2009). When the leader of Yosemite View School was asked how the teachers address teaching higher level thinking, she replied, "THAT still needs to be worked on" (I1). Further study is needed to understand the link between teaching higher level thinking using inquiry based learning methods and standardized assessments which determine the success of a school.

Another area for further research is an understanding about engaging parents and the community in the school to improve student learning. An increasing amount of research provides evidence of the benefits of connecting the school to the community for student learning (Kahlenberg, 2009; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Parrett & Budge,

2009; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Partnerships between the school and parents, to benefit children's learning, and supportive community involvement were encouraged for academic improvement (Connelly, 2010; Davila, 2009; Hess & Gift, 2008; McCollum, 2010; Sanders, 2008; Walters el al., 2003). Yet this turnaround school engaged the parents and community very little. Research of how to engage parents and communities in poverty schools, despite the plethora of problems poverty creates, is needed to help turnaround schools sustain academic success.

Turning around failing schools requires a complex framework of essential supports; yet additional research is still needed. Research is needed on the how to develop and assess critical thinking skills to show student academic growth. Research is also needed on how to best link parents and community to failing schools for increased academic success. These recommended areas of further research would provide additional understanding and support of the framework needed for turnaround schools.

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APPENDIX A

Turnaround School Case Study
Principal's Recruitment Script for Participation in the Study

I spoke with you about last fall about Rebecca Donaldson about the research project she will be conducting at our school this spring. Rebecca is a doctoral student at the University of Missouri, and is currently working on her dissertation entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University. Rebecca's study has been approved by the Merced City School District Research Approval Committee and by myself.

The purpose of this meeting is to ask you if you would be willing to participate in Rebecca Donaldson's research project regarding the academic student improvement at our school. During the week of March 19th, she will be visiting our school to conduct interviews and focus groups; and make observations of classrooms, the faculty meeting, and other instructional planning or data analysis. I will be interviewed along with our instructional coaches and each interview will last approximately 20-30 minutes. If possible the teacher focus group would be best completed with a teacher from each grade level, a reading specialist, a specialty teacher, and a preschool teacher. The focus group will be after school and will last 45-60 minutes. The following week after Rebecca's visit, she will send a survey to each teacher who has taught at our school during the turnaround process from 2006-2010. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the researcher. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., principal), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports.

If you would be willing to participate and have your responses included in the study results, please let me know. You can sign your name on this sheet of paper to let me know you are willing to participate. Thank you in advance for your participation in this project.

Turnaround School Case Study Participation

I volunteer to participate in the dissertation study entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School".

Name Email

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

6._____

7._____

8._____

9._____

10._____

11._____

12._____

13._____

APPENDIX B

Turnaround School Case Study Survey
Informed Consent Letter Email Text

Dear Teachers,

The purpose of this letter is to elicit your participation in a survey I am conducting to research the academic improvement of your school from 2006-2010. As a doctoral student at the University of Missouri, I am currently working on my dissertation entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University. My study has been approved by the the Merced City School District Research Approval Committee and your building principal.

Background: The goal of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was to expose achievement gaps and hold schools accountable for all students learning. Through yearly standardized testing to determine student proficiency levels, school are deemed as performing or failing. Failing schools are on the rise, even with the recent flexibility of NCLB, which allows for states to apply for waivers from federal requirements of NCLB, schools will still remain accountable for improving student achievement. Failing schools need to know how to apply a comprehensive framework with essential supports to improve student achievement.

Survey Instrument: You will find a **Turnaround School Case Study Survey** in the attached link of SurveyMonkey.com that has been emailed to all teachers at your school. I am using this survey to collect data for my study. The survey responses will help me understand how student academic achievement improved at your school over a four year period and what essential supports facilitated this improvement. The brief open-ended survey should take only 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Participation is Voluntary: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to complete the survey. You can decline to answer any questions or withdraw your participation in this study at any time without negative consequences. If there are certain questions you do not wish to answer, that is acceptable. If you choose to withdraw from the project, all data pertaining to you will be destroyed. Refusal to participate or discontinued participation at any time will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Potential Benefits and Forseeable Risks: Findings of this project will be integrated into reports, presentations, and publications that can advance the scholarship for understanding the essential supports needed to create a framework for turnaround schools and how these supports are implemented. Findings may also be used in articles, presentations, and other publications to inform a national and international audience.

Benefits of improved schools in communities may result from sharing the findings. Potential risks associated with participation in this study are loss of privacy should confidentiality of responses be compromised. The researcher has taken steps listed below to protect participants' identity in order to protect individuals from embarrassment that may be caused by associating identities of respondents with their responses.

Confidentiality: All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the researcher. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., teacher), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports. Neither the school nor the school district will be identified in any reports or publications related to this study.

Informed Consent: Your input is very valuable, and your participation will be greatly appreciated. **The first question of the survey will ask for your consent to complete the survey. By providing your consent to take the survey, you will be forward to the remainder of the survey and you are allowing your survey responses to be used in this study.** ***If you choose not to participate in the survey please respond to the first question by choosing "I decline to participate".***

Thank you for your consideration of my request to complete this survey. If you have questions, feel free to contact me or my dissertation project advisor, Dr. Cynthia MacGregor (417-836-6046 or CMacgregor@MissouriState.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research project participant, you may contact the University of Missouri Campus Institutional Review Board at 573-882-9585.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Donaldson
3209 N. 10th Street
Ozark, MO 65721
417.773.8396
rdonaldson@spsmail.org

Turnaround School Case Study
Turnaround School Survey

Thank you for your willingness to complete this brief survey. Results of the survey will be used to understand how student academic achievement improved at your school over a four year period and what essential supports facilitated this improvement. You are under no obligation to complete the survey. If there are certain questions you do not wish to answer, that is acceptable. All responses will be kept confidential during the period of this study and will be destroyed seven years following the completion of the study.

1. **What was your role in the improvement of student achievement at your school?**

2. **What aspects of the principal's leadership do you see as influencing the school turnaround?**

3. **How is parent and community involvement promoted at your school?**

4. **What ongoing professional development do you participate in and how does this impact your instruction?**

5. **How were you supported in the turnaround effort?**

6. **Do you enjoy teaching at your school? Why or why not?**

7. **How did your school's curriculum change during the four-year period of improvement?**

8. **How has your teaching style changed from before the improvement until now?**

9. **Describe the school climate and how you feel this attributed to the turnaround.**

10. **What role did the parents of your students play in the improvement?**

11. **What is the instructional focus at your school?**

12. **What supports do you give your students to be successful?**

13. **What collaborative groups are you involved in?**

14. **How do you ensure all grade level requirements are taught?**

15. **Is there anything else about the academic success of this school?**

APPENDIX C

Turnaround School Case Study
Interview Participant Recruitment Email Script
Administrator and Instructional Leader(s)

Dear _____,

A few days ago I sent an email to the staff members of your school introducing the research project I will be conducting at your school. As a doctoral student at the University of Missouri, I am currently working on my dissertation entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University. My study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Missouri, the Merced City School District Research Approval Committee, and your building principal.

The purpose of this email is to ask you if you would be willing to be interviewed by me regarding the academic student improvement at your school. During the week of March 19th, I will be visiting your school to conduct interviews and make observations of classrooms, the faculty meeting, and other instructional planning or data analysis. The interview will only take 20 to 30 minutes. I can set this interview up at your convenience to be conducted after school or during the school day during the week of my site visit to your school.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked office accessible only to the researcher. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., principal), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports.

If you would be willing to be interviewed and have your interview responses included in the study results, please let me know. You can either call me at 417-773-8396. You can also simply respond to this email. I will follow up this email with a phone call to set a day and time for the interview. Thank you in advance for your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Donaldson
rdonaldson@spsmail.org
417.773.8396

Turnaround School Case Study
Recruitment Script – Reminder Phone Call

This is Rebecca Donaldson. I'm just calling to remind you about the interview we have set up next week on _____(day) at _____ time. Your responses to the interview questions will be used as data to support my doctoral research study regarding how the academic turnaround of your school occurred and what essential supports facilitated the improvement. I sent you an email today describing the topics we will cover during the interview. Do you have any questions that I can answer before we get together next week?

Turnaround School Case Study
Interview Informed Consent

Please sign and return this copy of the Informed Consent Letter to Rebecca Donaldson.

Dear _____ ,

This form requests your consent to participate in a research study entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). This study explores how student academic achievement improved at your school over a four-year period and what essential supports facilitated this improvement. Data collection and analyses will be completed under the direction of Rebecca Donaldson, a doctoral student of the statewide cooperative Ed.D program in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis through the University of Missouri and Missouri State University. The interview will take approximately 20—30 minutes. The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University.

Project description: During this research project the school principal and one or two faculty members who serve as an instructional leader and/or a teacher leader will be interviewed to determine how the student achievement at the school improved over a four year period and the essential supports implemented for the improvement.

Potential Benefits and Forseeable Risks: Findings of this project will be integrated into reports, presentations, and publications that can advance the scholarship for understanding the essential supports needed to create a framework for turnaround schools and how these supports are implemented. Findings may also be used in articles, presentations, and other publications to inform a national and international audience. Benefits of improved schools in communities may result from sharing the findings. Potential risks associated with participation in this study are loss of privacy should confidentiality of responses be compromised. The researcher has taken steps listed below to protect participants' identity in order to protect individuals from embarrassment that may be caused by associating identities of respondents with their responses.

Confidentiality: All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the researchers. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., teacher), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports. Neither the school nor the school district will be identified in any reports or publications related to this study.

Interview recording: All interviews will be audio recorded to help the researcher provide accurate transcripts of the participant answers. If you agree to be interviewed, you have the right to request the recorder be stopped at any time—either to stop the interview

completely or to continue the interview unrecorded. Audio recordings and transcripts of the recordings will be destroyed seven years following the completion of the study.

Follow-up Interviews: If necessary, the researcher may contact you for follow-up interviews for the purpose of clarifying information.

Participation is Voluntary: Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can decline to answer any questions you do not wish to or withdraw your participation in this study at any time without negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw from the project at any time, all data pertaining to you will be destroyed. Refusal to participate or discontinued participation at any time will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Informed Consent: Your input is very valuable, and your participation will be greatly appreciated. **Two copies of this form are being provided to you. Please sign and return one to me and keep the second copy for your reference. By signing this informed consent letter and returning it to me, you are consenting to allow use of your interview responses in this study.**

Questions: Please contact Rebecca Donaldson (417-773-8396 or rdonaldson@spsmail.org) or Dr. Cynthia MacGregor (417-836-6046 or CMacgregor@MissouriState.edu) with any questions or concerns. If you have questions about your rights as a research project participant, you may contact the MU Institutional Review Board at 573-882-9585.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Donaldson

Please check the appropriate line and sign this form to indicate that you have read and understand this informed consent letter and return the form to Rebecca Donaldson.

_____I agree to participate, and I give consent that the interview can be audio recorded. At any time I may ask that the recorder be stopped.

Signed: _____ _____

Date

Turnaround School Case Study

Interview Informed Consent
District Leaders or Community Members

Please sign and return this copy of the Informed Consent Letter to Rebecca Donaldson.

Dear _____ ,

This form requests your consent to participate in a research study entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). This study explores how student academic achievement improved at your school over a four-year period and what essential supports facilitated this improvement. Data collection and analyses will be completed under the direction of Rebecca Donaldson, a doctoral student of the statewide cooperative Ed.D program in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis through the University of Missouri and Missouri State University. The interview will take approximately 20—30 minutes. The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University.

Project description: During this research project school district leadership or community members who have supported the improvement process at John Muir Elementary School will be interviewed to determine how the student achievement at the school improved over a four year period and the essential supports implemented for the improvement.

Potential Benefits and Forseeable Risks: Findings of this project will be integrated into reports, presentations, and publications that can advance the scholarship for understanding the essential supports needed to create a framework for turnaround schools and how these supports are implemented. Findings may also be used in articles, presentations, and other publications to inform a national and international audience. Benefits of improved schools in communities may result from sharing the findings. Potential risks associated with participation in this study are loss of privacy should confidentiality of responses be compromised. The researcher has taken steps listed below to protect participants' identity in order to protect individuals from embarrassment that may be caused by associating identities of respondents with their responses.

Confidentiality: All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the researchers. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., teacher), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports. Neither the school nor the school district will be identified in any reports or publications related to this study.

Interview recording: All interviews will be audio recorded to help the researcher provide accurate transcripts of the participant answers. If you agree to be interviewed, you have the right to request the recorder be stopped at any time—either to stop the interview completely or to continue the interview unrecorded. Audio recordings and transcripts of the recordings will be destroyed seven years following the completion of the study.

Follow-up Interviews: If necessary, the researcher may contact you for follow-up interviews for the purpose of clarifying information.

Participation is Voluntary: Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can decline to answer any questions you do not wish to or withdraw your participation in this study at any time without negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw from the project at any time, all data pertaining to you will be destroyed. Refusal to participate or discontinued participation at any time will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Informed Consent: Your input is very valuable, and your participation will be greatly appreciated. **Two copies of this form are being provided to you. Please sign and return one to me and keep the second copy for your reference. By signing this informed consent letter and returning it to me, you are consenting to allow use of your interview responses in this study.**

Questions: Please contact Rebecca Donaldson (417-773-8396 or rdonaldson@spsmail.org) or Dr. Cynthia MacGregor (417-836-6046 or CMacgregor@MissouriState.edu) with any questions or concerns. If you have questions about your rights as a research project participant, you may contact the MU Institutional Review Board at 573-882-9585.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Donaldson

Please check the appropriate line and sign this form to indicate that you have read and understand this informed consent letter and return the form to Rebecca Donaldson.

_____I agree to participate, and I give consent that the interview can be audio recorded. At any time I may ask that the recorder be stopped.

Signed: _____ _____

Date

APPENDIX D

Turnaround School Case Study
Interview Protocol

Framework codes:

F L PC IG C PSC

Category	**Items for Discussion**
Warm-up Item	What has been the best thing that has happened to you as a leader of this school?
Question 1. Framework	Tell me about the turnaround of your school.
Question 2. Leadership	How did your role support the teachers in the improvement of student achievement?
Question 3. Vision	Tell me about the vision and how it was established. • What was done to promote the vision? • How do staff members demonstrate they share the vision? • How did you facilitate others to fulfill the vision?
Question 4. Professional Capacity	What was done to develop pedagogy and collaboration?
Question 5. Instructional Guidance	Talk about the curriculum at your school.

Category	**Items for Discussion**
Question 6. School Climate	How has the school climate changed over the past six years?
Question 7. Parent/Community Involvement	To what extent were the parents involved in the turnaround process? • What was the community's involvement?
Question 8. Instructional Guidance	What classroom instruction methods have stayed the same and what have changed?
Question 9. Higher level thinking	Would you say the students have the ability to think well? How so?
Question 10. Structures	What structures or routines have been implemented at your school?
Question 11. Distributed Leadership	Describe the decision making process within the school.
Concluding Item	Is there anything more you would like to share with me regarding the turnaround at your school?

APPENDIX E

Turnaround School Case Study
Teacher Focus Group Informed Consent

Please sign and return this copy of the Informed Consent Letter to Rebecca Donaldson.

Dear _____ ,

This form requests your consent to participate in a research study entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). This study explores how student academic achievement improved at your school over a four-year period and what essential supports facilitated this improvement. Data collection and analysis will be completed by Rebecca Donaldson, a doctoral student of the statewide cooperative Ed.D program in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis through the University of Missouri and Missouri State University. The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University.

Project description: During this research project two focus groups one comprised of staff members and the other comprised of parents from one elementary school will meet for approximately 45-60 minutes to discuss the student academic turnaround over a four-year period and how it was implemented and the essential supports for improvement.

Potential Benefits and Forseeable Risks: Findings of this project will be integrated into reports, presentations, and publications that can advance the scholarship for understanding the essential supports needed to create a framework for turnaround schools and how these supports are implemented. Findings may also be used in articles, presentations, and other publications to inform a national and international audience. Benefits of improved schools in communities may result from sharing the findings. Potential risks associated with participation in this study are loss of privacy should confidentiality of responses be compromised. The researcher has taken steps listed below to protect participants' identity in order to protect individuals from embarrassment that may be caused by associating identities of respondents with their responses.

Confidentiality: All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked office accessible only to the researcher. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., teacher), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports. Neither the school nor the school district will be identified in any reports or publications related to this study.

Interview recording: Focus groups will be audio recorded to help the researcher provide accurate transcripts of participant answers. If you agree to have the focus group session

recorded, you have the right to request the recorder be stopped at any time—either to stop the interview completely or to continue the interview unrecorded. Audio recordings and transcripts of the recordings will be destroyed seven years following the completion of the study.

Participation is Voluntary: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can decline to answer any questions or withdraw your participation in this study at any time without negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw from the project, all data pertaining to you will be destroyed. Refusal to participate or discontinued participation at any time will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Informed Consent: Your input is very valuable, and your participation will be greatly appreciated. **Two copies of this form are being provided to you. Please sign and return one to me and keep the second copy for your reference. By signing this informed consent letter and returning it to me, you are consenting to allow use of your focus group responses in this study.**

Questions: Please contact Rebecca Donaldson (417-773-8396 or rdonaldson@spsmail.org) or Dr. Cynthia MacGregor (417-836-6046 or CMacgregor@MissouriState.edu) with any questions or concerns. If you have questions about your rights as a research project participant, you may contact the MU Institutional Review Board at 573-882-9585.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Donaldson

Please check the appropriate line to indicate that you have read and understand this informed consent letter and return this form to Rebecca Donaldson.

_____I agree to participate, and I give consent that the focus group session can be audio recorded. At any time I may ask that the recorder be stopped.

Signed: _____ _____

Date

Turnaround School Case Study
Teacher Focus Group Participant Recruitment Email Script

Dear _____,

A few days ago I sent an email to the staff members of your school introducing the research project I will be conducting at your school. As a doctoral student at the University of Missouri, I am currently working on my dissertation entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University. My study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri, the Merced City Schools Research Approval Committee, and your building principal.

The purpose of this email is to ask you if you would be willing to serve on a focus group regarding the student academic improvement at your school. During the week of March 19th, I will be visiting your school to conduct interviews and focus groups and make observations of classrooms, faculty meetings, and other collaborative meetings. The focus group session will only take approximately 45-60 minutes. The focus group will be made up of various grade level and specialty level teachers, representing the diversity of the staff from your school. Since these staff members all have different schedules, the focus group session will have to be set up after school during the week of my site visit to your school.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the researcher. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., teacher), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports.

If you would be willing to serve on this focus group and have your responses included in the study results, please let me know. You can either call me at 417-773-8396. You can also simply respond to this email. I will follow up this email with a phone call to set a day and time for the focus group session. Thank you in advance for your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Donaldson
rdonaldson@spsmail.org
417-773-8396

Turnaround School Case Study
Teacher Recruitment Script – Reminder Phone Call

This is the phone script that will be used to remind subjects of the dates and times of their interviews and focus group sessions.

This is Rebecca Donaldson. I'm just calling to remind you about the focus group session we have set up next week on _____(day) at _____ time. Your responses to the focus group questions will be used as data to support my doctoral research study regarding how a framework for improvement was implemented and the essential supports of the framework. I sent you an email today describing the topics we will cover during the focus group session. Do you have any questions that I can answer before we get together next week?

APPENDIX F

Turnaround School Case Study
Teacher Focus Group Protocol

Identifying Participant Codes: T=Teacher # = Grade level

Group Make-up: _____

Category	Items for Discussion
Warm-up Item	Share an example of when you felt you had the greatest impact as a professional.
Framework	Tell me about the turnaround process.
Leadership: Vision	How did the idea to turn the school around begin? • What role did the principal have in the school improvement process? • What role did you have in the school improvement process?
Facilitative Leadership	Describe the decision making process at your school. What influence do teachers have about how school funds are used? • What material is used • Creating schedules • Professional development • Hiring new teachers/principal
Instructional Leadership	How do you and/or principal track student progress? How often do you change special programs? Do you make sure new programs are working after starting them?
Professional Capacity of Staff	What recent changes have you made in your teaching?

Professional Development	Describe your professional development. Talk about how you put into practice the things you learn in professional development.
Professional Community	Describe the professional community of your school. • Collaboration • Planning • Data analysis
Instructional Guidance Curriculum Coherence Pedagogical Methods Time	How do you assure all the grade level requirements are taught? Describe the most commonly used teaching methods. How is the school organized to maximize instructional time?
Climate	Talk about school or classroom routines you have school-wide or in your classroom. How do you communicate your expectations for learning? Describe discipline at your school.
Parent-School-Community Ties	How do you build relationships with your students? How do you build relationships with your parents? What do you expect from the parents of your students? Do any parents volunteer in your classroom or at the school?
Conclusion	Is there anything you would like to add that would help me better understand turnaround process in your school?

APPENDIX G

Turnaround School Case Study
Parent Focus Group Informed Consent

Please sign and return this copy of the Informed Consent Letter to Rebecca Donaldson.

Dear _____ ,

This form requests your consent to participate in a research study entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). This study explores how student academic achievement improved at your school over a four year period and what essential supports facilitated this improvement. Data collection and analyses will be completed by Rebecca Donaldson, a doctoral student of the statewide cooperative Ed.D program in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis through the University of Missouri and Missouri State University. The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University.

Project description: During this research project two 45-60 minute focus groups, one comprised of staff members and the other comprised of parents, from one elementary school will meet to discuss the student academic turnaround over a four year period and how it was implemented and the essential supports for improvement.

Potential Benefits and Forseeable Risks: Findings of this project will be integrated into reports, presentations, and publications that can advance the scholarship for understanding the essential supports needed to create a framework for turnaround schools and how these supports are implemented. Findings may also be used in articles, presentations, and other publications to inform a national and international audience. Benefits of improved schools in communities may result from sharing the findings. Potential risks associated with participation in this study are loss of privacy should confidentiality of responses be compromised. The researcher has taken steps listed below to protect participants' identity in order to protect individuals from embarrassment that may be caused by associating identities of respondents with their responses.

Confidentiality: All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the researcher. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., parent), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports. Neither the school nor the school district will be identified in any reports or publications related to this study.

Interview recording: Focus groups will be audio recorded to help the researcher provide accurate transcripts of participant answers. If you agree to have the focus group session

recorded, you have the right to request the recorder be stopped at any time—either to stop the interview completely or to continue the interview unrecorded. Audio recordings and transcripts of the recordings will be destroyed seven years following the completion of the study.

Participation is Voluntary: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can decline to answer any questions or withdraw your participation in this study at any time without negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw from the project, all data pertaining to you will be destroyed. Refusal to participate or discontinued participation at any time will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Informed Consent: Your input is very valuable, and your participation will be greatly appreciated. **Two copies of this form are being provided to you. Please sign and return one to me and keep the second copy for your reference. By signing this informed consent letter and returning it to me, you are consenting to allow use of your focus group responses in this study.**

Questions: Please contact Rebecca Donaldson (417-773-8396 or rdonaldson@spsmail.org) or Dr. Cynthia MacGregor (417-836-6046 or CMacgregor@MissouriState.edu) with any questions or concerns. If you have questions about your rights as a research project participant, you may contact the MU Institutional Review Board at 573-882-9585.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Donaldson

Please check the appropriate line to indicate that you have read and understand this informed consent letter and return this form to Rebecca Donaldson.

_____I agree to participate, and I give consent that the focus group session can be audio recorded. At any time I may ask that the recorder be stopped.

Signed: _____ _____

Date

Turnaround School Case Study
Parent Focus Group Participant Recruitment Email Script

Dear _____,

I will be conducting a research project at your school. As a doctoral student at the University of Missouri, I am currently working on my dissertation entitled "A Case Study of the Essential Supports Which Make up the Framework of a Turnaround School" (IRB project #1201459). The advisor for this dissertation project is Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education Department at Missouri State University. My study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri, the Merced City Schools Research Approval Committee, and your child's building principal.

The purpose of this letter is to ask you if you would be willing to serve on a focus group regarding the student academic improvement at your school. During the week of March 19th, I will be visiting your school to conduct interviews and focus groups and make observations of classrooms, faculty meetings, and other collaborative meetings. The focus group session will only take approximately 45-60 minutes. The focus group will be made up of parents of students from the school. The focus group session will have to be set up in the morning during the week of my site visit to your school.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All information associated with project participants will be kept in a locked office accessible only to the researcher. In accordance with the Federal regulations, the research materials will be kept for a period of seven years after the completion of the research project. No comments will be attributed to you by name in any reports or publications related to this study. You may be identified by category (e.g., parent), but a pseudonym will be used in place of your name in all reports.

If you would be willing to serve on this focus group and have your responses included in the study results, please let me know. You can either call me at 417-773-8396. You can also simply respond to this email. I will follow up this email with a phone call to set a day and time for the focus group session. Thank you in advance for your participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Donaldson
rdonaldson@spsmail.org
417-773-8396

Turnaround School Case Study
Recruitment Script – Reminder Phone Call

This is the phone script that will be used to remind subjects of the dates and times of their interviews and focus group sessions.

This is Rebecca Donaldson. I'm just calling to remind you about the focus group session we have set up next week on _____(day) at _____ time. Your responses to the focus group questions will be used as data to support my doctoral research study regarding how a framework for improvement was implemented and the essential supports of the framework. I sent you a letter yesterday describing the topics we will cover during the focus group session. Do you have any questions that I can answer before we get together next week?

APPENDIX H

Turnaround School Case Study
Parent Focus Group Protocol

Group Make-up: _____

Category	**Items for Discussion**
Warm-up Item	Please share about the children you have in this school and their grade levels. Talk about one thing your child has done that you are proud of.
Turnaround	Are you aware of the academic student improvement at this school? What do you know about it?
Comfort	Do you feel welcomed at this school?
Teacher Quality	How do you feel the quality of teachers are in this school?
Contact	What contact do you have with your child's teacher and how often is it? What contact do you have with the principal? How often?
Participation	How do you support your child's learning?
Volunteerism	How often do you visit or volunteer at the school?
Community	Do you know of any community supports for this school? If so, what are they and how do they support the school?

APPENDIX I

Turnaround School Case Study
Formal and Informal Observation Protocol

Research question one: What was the role and support of leadership in the turnaround of the school?

"Look Fors"

- Shared vision (collaboration)
- Modeled values (high expectations, enthusiasm/passion)
- Management (order, teaching and learning, resources)
- The leader as a learner (culture of learning, knowledge)
- Distributive leadership (teacher empowerment)
- Support (instructional, relationships)

Research question two: How did the staff influence the student achievement gains?

"Look Fors"

- Classroom schedule
- Student work
- Behaviors and routines
- Student dialogue
- Student grouping
- Evaluations
- Pedagogical knowledge
- Preparation

Research question three: How did the school climate impact student achievement?

"Look Fors"

- Routines and structures
- High expectations
- Shared beliefs
- Reflective dialogue
- Positive environment
- Supportive peer norms
- Appropriate behavior

APPENDIX J

Turnaround School Case Study
Document Analysis Guide

Document Description:
_____

Category	**Observation**
Impact on classroom teaching	
Commitment to shared vision	
Impact on student achievement	

VITA

Rebecca Donaldson was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She grew up in a large family where education was valued, even though the highest education both parents earned was from high school. Each of the six children received a college education.

Mrs. Donaldson graduated from Evangel University in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education. After marrying, she moved to California where she served as an elementary classroom teacher from 1983 through 1988. Many of the classrooms were comprised of over half of the students as English language learners. From 1988 through 2003 Mrs. Donaldson taught part time or stayed home with her children.

In 2004, Mrs. Donaldson earned a Masters of Education in Reading from Evangel University. She began teaching full-time in Springfield Public Schools as a Reading Interventionist and then became a literacy coach in a high poverty school. Equipped with instructional knowledge as a literacy coach, Mrs. Donaldson developed a desire for educational leadership. She began her doctoral program and simultaneously completed the coursework for educational administration, earning a Masters of Administration from Missouri State University in 2011.

Mrs. Donaldson has always worked in Title I, high poverty schools. She and her husband have worked with poverty issues for over 20 years and currently have a non-profit organization which focuses on poverty issues in rural communities. Mrs. Donaldson has started two after school programs which included G.E.D. classes, parent education classes, and tutoring for children. Community volunteers have staffed the programs. Mrs. Donaldson has a desire to develop initiatives for poverty families which provide parent and child education while engaging the community in the public schools.