

A COMPARISON OF THE LEADERSHIP STYLES OF ADMINISTRATORS  
IN CHARGE OF SCHEDULING IN MISSOURI'S SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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by  
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Dr. Cynthia MacGregor, Dissertation Advisor

ABSTRACT

The need for educational leaders who can effectively implement change in their schools has never been greater. Due to No Child Left Behind legislation and other demands for reform and accountability, schools must meet strict educational standards or face serious consequences. Schools must find leaders that are not just willing, but able to face these challenges by successfully initiating change in their schools.

Bass and Avolio's (2004) constructs of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership were essential in identifying and studying various leadership behaviors that would lead to successful and innovative educational change. The purpose of the study was to determine the leadership style of those individuals most responsible for changing or maintaining a high school's scheduling system and what internal or external factors might effect the ability of a person to make meaningful changes in a high school setting.

The Full Scheduling Leader Questionnaire was used to gather demographic, descriptive and open-ended response data from 195 superintendents in the state of Missouri. The data was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, mean subscale scores, independent sample t-tests, Pearson correlations, frequencies and percentages. Additionally, emerging themes were gathered and analyzed from opened-ended responses.

An analysis of the data showed no significant differences between transformational and transactional leaders' willingness or ability to change their schools scheduling system. Data did indicate a significant difference in laissez-faire leaders' willingness or ability to initiate change in a school.

High school principals and superintendents were found to be the individuals most responsible for a school's scheduling system. However, a group of individuals (administrators, teachers, counselors, board members, etc.) were found to be the third most likely decision-makers regarding a school's scheduling system. It was found that the individuals responsible for the scheduling system had typically held their positions for a short period of time.

The data showed that 90% of the schools that changed their scheduling systems changed to some form of traditional scheduling system. Similarly, 85% of those schools that chose to not change their scheduling system continued to use a traditional rather than a block scheduling format.

The reasons that schools gave for changing their scheduling system fell into three categories: (a). Those wanting to improve student achievement through improved instruction and greater course selection; (b). Those that had problems with the previous scheduling system itself, and (c). Those that changed due to an internal leadership position and/or philosophical change. The reasons that schools gave for not changing or their current scheduling system also fell into one of three categories: (a). Because the current schedule met their needs, worked well, and they liked it; (b). Because of an unwillingness to change and/or comfort with the status quo, and (c). Because of staffing and/or budgetary concerns.

Changing a school's scheduling system was a popular mechanism used by educational leaders to initiate change in their schools for many years. However, this reform initiative alone was and is not the sole answer to the problems facing schools today or same systemic educational complaints would not continue to be heard.

The findings from this study indicate that as schools and their leaders are held accountable to higher educational standards, many are responding by broadening their leadership horizons by including as many people as possible in a collaborative process to find and implement solutions. It is hoped that a group of collaborative leaders working together to find solutions holds the keys that will unlock the academic gates leading to greater student success and achievement.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### *Background*

On April 26, 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education presented an open letter to the Secretary of Education and the American people. Their report was titled “A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.” The report was commissioned because of concerns regarding the “widespread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our educational system” (p. 2). The commission was specifically instructed to focus their efforts on the education of teenage youth by “focusing on high schools” (p. 4) in America. The committee found the institution of secondary education in America to be seriously lacking and called for a national movement towards “reform and excellence throughout education” (p. 6). They reported a serious “lack of leadership” (p. 4) and challenged principals to “play a crucial leadership role in developing school and community support” (p. 1) to enact their proposed reforms. School boards were challenged to “consciously develop leadership skills at the school and district levels” (p. 1).

Eight years following the “Nation at Risk” report, the government continued to be unsatisfied with the progress and reforms taking place in America’s schools. The result was Public Law 102-62 (Education Council Act of 1991). This law established another National Education Commission tasked with determining the “relationship between time and learning in the nation’s schools” (National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 1). In April of 1994, exactly eleven years following “A Nation at Risk,” a new commission released their report entitled “Prisoners of Time.” This commission

concluded that “the reform movement of the last decade is destined to founder unless it is harnessed to more time for learning” (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 1994, p. 3).

The continued dysfunction of America’s educational systems was determined by the “Prisoners of Time” commission through comparisons to various other educational systems throughout the world, especially Germany and Japan. The commission echoed the sentiments and calls for reform in “A Nation at Risk,” by stating:

Learning in America is a prisoner of time. For the past 150 years, American public schools have held time constant and let learning vary. The rule, only rarely voiced, is simple: learn what you can in the time we make available. It should surprise no one that some bright, hard-working students do reasonably well. Everyone else—from the typical student to the dropout—runs into trouble. Time is learning’s warden. (p. 5)

Invoking the trifecta of the educational reform movement in conjunction with an age-old truism, “Prisoners of Time” stated:

if experience, research, and common sense teach nothing else, they confirm [that]...we have put the cart before the horse: our schools and the people involved with them—students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff—are captives of the clock and calendar. The boundaries of student growth are defined by schedule for bells, busses, and vacations instead of standards for students and learning. (p. 8)

If “time is learning’s warden” (National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1994, p. 6) then, as a result of this commission’s report, Americans were to conclude that

students are prisoners to an archaic educational system in need of revamping. The call for educational reform took on a sense of greater urgency as the public and the commission perceived that the quality of education provided in public schools in America was lagging far behind the rest of the world.

The call for increased standards and additional education reform was answered seven years later with the Bush administration's "No Child Left Behind" (2002) legislation (PL 107-110). This legislation set national education standards and imposed various degrees of consequences for schools not meeting them. The eventual outcome of schools not meeting the imposed educational standards would be the firing of every teacher and administrator, with the government taking eventual control of the school district. Faced with these consequences, it is no wonder that educational leadership has become synonymous with educational reform and change.

The "widespread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our educational system" (National Commission of Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 2), has obviously continued. The call to repair and reform America's broken public schools has been led by the government through legislation and educational commissions. Educational leaders, responding to the call, are expected to initiate change that will lead to greater academic success of students as they meet the standards imposed upon them. Our current school improvement era is typified by administrators reforming their schools in countless ways. Willower and Licata (1997) described what administrators face by stating that "new nostrums will appear, new bandwagons will be created, and the current fix will become passé. Administrators who want to be associated with the current remedy, including some who like to be seen as using the latest regimen, whatever it

might be, will jump on the new bandwagon” (p. 2). Some administrators have experienced “innovation fatigue,” tired of the “cycle of reforms that schools and districts chase in hope of a silver bullet for increasing test scores and changing school climate” (Sammon, 2005, p. 51).

One of the most popular “bandwagon” reform movements in high schools in the last decade has been the adoption of block scheduling. The popularity, academic effects, as well as the overall advantages and disadvantages of block scheduling, have been faithfully chronicled by numerous authors (Canady & Rettig, 1995; Jenkins, Queen, & Algozzine, 2002; Zepeda & Mayers, 2006) but are relevant to this study only as an example of a popular organizational change model adopted by many public school leaders. The block scheduling movement became popular with educational leaders wanting to enact change in their schools because it appeared to address the major concerns identified in both the “Nation at Risk” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and especially the “Prisoners of Time” (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 1994) commission reports. Like administrators around the country, many administrators in the state of Missouri adopted this change hoping to meet increased state standards.

This study focused on the leadership styles of educational leaders in the state of Missouri who are confronted with demands for change in order to meet the public’s expectations for reform and results in the form of increased academic achievement. The theory of transformational leadership, originally developed by James Burns in the late 1970s, and further refined by Bass and Avolio (2004) into the Full-Range leadership Theory (FRLT), was used to assess the leadership style of administrators (Avolio, 1999,

Burns, 1978, Yukl, 2002). Specifically, it was used to determine whether such leaders exhibited transformational, transactional or laissez-faire leadership characteristics as they faced pressure to change or reform their school. Is there a typical leadership profile for administrators who choose change verses those who maintain the status quo, or do outside influences play a greater role in the change process than the leadership theory espoused by administrators? The answers to these and other questions relating to educational leadership, organizational change and instructional reform were addressed in this study.

### *Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study*

In the late 1960s, James M. Lipham wrote extensively regarding leadership and educational administration. His writings were obviously a product of his time and reflected the pre-reform movements in education. He made important distinctions between administrators and leaders. He defined an administrator as an individual who utilizes existing structures or procedures to achieve an organizational goal or objective. Most tellingly, he stated that administrators are concerned primarily with maintaining, rather than changing established structures, procedures, or goals and are accordingly viewed as a stabilizing force. In contrast, he described a leader as being concerned with initiating changes in established structures, procedures, or goals and disrupts of the existing state of affairs. To Lipham, the essence of leadership was to initiate new structures and procedures to accomplish organizational goals, while an administrator would work to maintain the status quo. His concepts of leadership and educational administration were mutually exclusive and at odds with each other. Using his rationale, an administrator could not be a successful leader.



Burns (1978), perhaps referencing the work of House (1977), proposed the basics of what would eventually become a new leadership paradigm. He suggested that power wielding administrators may have limited influence compared to leaders that engage with their followers, pursue mutual goals, and permit themselves to be influenced by their followers (as they influence them reciprocally). By the early 1980s theorists began to bridge the theoretical and philosophical gap between leadership and educational administration. Bernard Bass (1985), with other researchers (Boyd, 1988; Curphy, 1992; Longshore, 1988; and Yammarino & Bass, 1990), led this trend and helped to codify a leadership paradigm which “permitted systematic exploration of the phenomenon of transformational leadership and the effects of its application to specific conditions” (Bass, 1998, p. 2).

In the 1980s and 1990s many researchers began to make new distinctions about leadership styles to identify the types of leadership that are in tune to the conditions faced by contemporary organizations. Their emphasis was on leadership that is future-oriented rather than present-oriented. Future-oriented leaders strengthen organizations by inspiring followers’ commitment and ability to contribute creatively to the organization. Although this approach was first mentioned by Burns’ (1978) delineation and description of transformational leadership, it was subsequently elaborated upon and brought to the fore by Bass (1985, 1998).

In 2001, Kotter veered from the increasingly traditional interpretation and study of leadership by describing leadership and management as complimentary systems of action. It appeared that he was reverting back to leadership theory first espoused by Lippman (1965) in the 1960s. He wrote that managers, who would fill the position of

principal in the K-12 educational hierarchy, would cope with complexity while the superintendent or actual educational leader would deal with change. Kotter (2001) believed that leaders at different levels in an organization are distinct and that the behaviors and competencies that lead to success at lower levels become less relevant at higher levels in the organization. Because of this skill differentiation, he believed that any single assessment device measuring effective leadership would be unable to assess the abilities at both the managerial and executive levels. However, many others have found correlation strength between leader behaviors and outcome variables at different leadership levels within an organization. (Dalton 1989; Gavin & Hoffman, 2002; Gronn, 2002).

Two important concepts that Kotter (2001) tied together are educational leadership and change. He stated that leaders “don’t make plans; they don’t solve problems; they don’t even organize people. What leaders really do is prepare organizations for change and help them cope as they struggle through it” (p. 2). That connection had been made earlier by Bass (1990). He stated that “when an organization must be changed to reflect changes in technology, the environment, and the completion of programs, leadership is critical in orchestrating the process” (p. 8). The connection between leadership and change would eventually become a common theme among researchers, but at its foundation, what Bass stated remains true today, “leadership is often regarded as the single most critical factor in the success or failure of institutions” (p. 8).

The forty intervening years from Lippman to the present have seen a transformation in leadership theory and practice. Researchers now find that if a school is

to improve its effectiveness and reach new heights, the administrator must initiate change. Educational administrators must now be leaders, and one universal condition that every educational leader faces is that of change. When approached with change, every administrator must exhibit a leadership style whether by choice or circumstance, that will reflect their ideals, if not the specific leadership theory or philosophy they espouse. The leadership style of administrators faced with change can be examined to create a typical leadership profile of those leaders who choose change, as well as those who choose to maintain the status quo within their schools (Boyd, 1988; Curphy, 1990; Gorton, 1987; Longshore, 1988; Yammarino & Bass, 1990).

#### *Full Range Leadership Theory*

Bass and Avolio refined various leadership paradigms (House, 1977; Burns, 1978) and created a Full-Range Leadership Theory (FRLT) (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 2004). Bass and Avolio's Full-Range Leadership Theory recognizes three dimensions of leadership displayed by organizational leaders who are either intent upon effecting change, or have change thrust upon them: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire or non-leadership behavior. As the title suggests, this leadership theory is an ideal lens through which a full or broad range of leadership behaviors can be examined by breaking down the concept of leadership into not only three broad categories, but various subcategories as well. Bass and Avolio did not view their three categories as mutually exclusive, but recognized that the same leader may use the different "types of leadership at different times and different situations" (Bass & Avolio, 1993, p. 211).

The essence of transformational leadership is the achievement of superior results by leaders who set challenging expectations and motivate others to do more than they intended to do or thought possible. It “engages followers in such a way as to raise them to new levels of morality and motivation” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 10) while advancing new cultural forms.

Unlike transformational leadership, transactional leadership “motivates followers by appealing to their self interest (Yukl, 1989, p. 210). Transactional leaders exchange rewards with compliance, depending upon the adequacy of compliance or performance exhibited by followers. Transactional leadership does not stimulate commitment or enthusiasm because the extrinsic rewards associated with this leadership style are contingent upon compliance.

The final category of Bass and Avolio’s (2004) transformational leadership theory is laissez-faire leadership. Laissez-faire leadership, according to Goodnight (2004) “may be the best or the worst of leadership styles” (p. 1). If a leader follows the normally understood definition and standard practice of non-interference when supposedly leading his or her followers, the worst form of leadership is manifested. However, when the leader has actually properly prepared his or her followers, laissez-faire leadership emerges as the ultimate form of leading. The two words laissez-faire and leadership are absolute direct opposites. The French term laissez-faire was originally coined in economic terms to mean non-interference by government to allow a natural economic order. Leadership, as defined by many, is an interactive process where guidance and direction are provided. The leader’s role is to actually provide direction to his or her followers and give them needed support which will provide for the organization’s

ultimate success. Laissez-faire leadership is actually the absence of leadership, when an individual avoids making decisions and demonstrates a passive indifference to both tasks and followers. It is neither a form of transformational or transactional leadership, it stands alone and is generally considered to be the least effective leadership style because no leadership is exhibited (Bass, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 2004; Goodnight, 2004; Yukl, 2002)

Atwater, Lau, Bass, Avolio, Camobreco and Whitemore (1994) stated that “a principal mechanism that can be used to bring about...changes is the adoption of the full-range model of leadership” (p. 147). They showed how all aspects of Bass and Avolio’s full-range leadership model have been used successfully to initiate change at various levels and advocated “change as an agent of the transformational leader” (p. 171). Bass (1998) also believed that every leader displays each of the aforementioned styles of leadership to some extent. An optimal leader would practice transformational components more frequently and transactional components less frequently. Bruce Avolio (1988) and Bernard Bass (1994, 2004) embraced this two-factor theory of leadership and believed that the two build upon one another. The transactional components deal with the basic needs of the organization, while the transformational practices encourage commitment and foster change. Although transformational and transactional leadership are at different points on the leadership continuum, the two can be complimentary (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Sorenson & Goethals, 2004; Stewart, 2006).

#### *Education’s Call for Change*

Over the last century, the national clamor for educational reform and change has increased. Educational leaders have been challenged to reform schools by increasing

student achievement (as measured by standardized tests), while the leaders themselves face unprecedented accountability and sanctions for not meeting or living up to the educational standards that have been established. In most cases, these standards have not been put in place by educators, but by politicians and policy makers concerned that students are inadequately prepared for the intellectual challenges that they will face in college or the workplace. As a result, they believe our students will be unable to compete in the global workforce—which will adversely affect the nation’s economy (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006).

A historical perspective of educational reform movements and calls for change can be seen in Appendix A. Beginning as early as 1893 and continuing to the present day, national calls for educational reform have been made by numerous individuals and entities (Elliot 1893; Obama, 2009a; Obama 2009b; Zepeda & Mayers, 2006). Early calls for reform were based on the perceived need for standardization of curriculum, school days, and what constituted a completed course. In the 1970s through the mid-1980s, the calls for sweeping reform typically focused on emerging needs to educate all students equally while advocating the need for students to be proficient in the educational basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the proponents of educational reform began calling for standardized educational benchmarks and goals. They wanted assessments carried out that would ensure that students were meeting the established goals. By the early 2000s, with the adoption of No Child Left Behind (2002), states were required to have established educational goals and high-stakes tests to ensure that students and schools as a whole were making adequate yearly progress towards achieving those goals.

As recently as December of 2009, The New York Times printed an opinion-editorial article entitled “In Search of Education Leaders” (Herbert) where it was stated that “the greatest national security crisis in the United states is the crisis in education” (p.1) and that new generations of Americans “are nowhere near ready to cope with the great challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (p. 1). This article stated that America needs to “develop dynamic new leaders who will offer the creativity, intellectual rigor and professionalism that is needed to help transform public education in the U.S., [but] it won’t get done right without the proper leadership” (Herbert, 2009, p. 1). This is typical of recent calls for change and leadership in public education.

#### *Organizational Structure and Change*

Bolman and Deal (1997) stated, regarding the various strategies used to improve organizations, that “the most basic change strategy is to improve management and leadership, but a common myth promises that organizations will work well if they are well managed” (p. 8). Unfortunately, as Bolman and Deal point out, this modern myth is a far cry from the reality faced by many organizations. They suggest that effective organizations require two things in order to be successful, proper structure and proper leadership.

Bolman and Deal (1997) believed that the structure of an organization both enhances and constrains what organizations can accomplish, but “successful organizations employ a variety of methods to coordinate individual and group efforts” (p. 41). The structure of an organization must be built around the organization’s “core process for transforming raw materials into finished products” (p. 51).

A public school's core process is to educate children (raw material) in a broad range of subjects in a timely manner in order to produce young men and women who are prepared to successfully contribute to society as educated individuals (finished product). Schools, like all organizations, must create a working structure in which the core process of education can take place, but "the right structure depends upon an organization's goals, strategies, technology, and environment" (p. 57). If a school wants to effectively implement change, then it must focus on modifying its core organizational structure.

One of the most integral core organizational structures of all secondary schools is its scheduling system. What type of scheduling system a school employs is totally dependent upon a school's educational goals, instructional strategies, availability and use of technology, and the educational climate or environment in which it is implemented. However, according to Bolman and Deal (1997), the key to implanting such integral and systemic change, as is required in changing a school's scheduling system, is to first look at improving management and leadership. It is only through successful leadership and proper organizational structure that change can be accomplished in an organization. Implementation of alternative scheduling systems has been a mechanism that many school leaders have looked at in order to improve academic achievement by changing the organizational structure of their school.

### *Scheduling Issues and Options*

Starting as early as the 1960s, educational leaders have used time management and flexible scheduling constructs in high schools to respond to frequent demands for educational reform. One of the most common ways that educational leaders used to demonstrate leadership and implement a broad range of reforms in their schools was



through the use of block scheduling systems. By implementing a block scheduling system, educational leaders hoped to increase student achievement, decrease discipline referrals, increase student attendance rates, and improve the overall school climate (Buckman, King, & Ryan, 1995; Coeyman, 2002; Duel, 1999; Khazzaka, 1997; Queen, Algozzine, & Eaddy, 1996; Wood, 2002). According to Canady and Rettig (1995), since the early 1990s approximately 50% of all high schools in the United States have implemented an alternative schedule or have considered one. By 1996, the block scheduling reform trend had grown so popular that 163 public high schools in the state of Missouri were using some form of block scheduling system (Simpson, Gordon, & Valentine, 1996).

Unfortunately, regardless of the school's time schedule, "what happens between individual teachers and students in classrooms is still most important, and simply altering the manner in which we schedule school will not ensure better instruction by teachers or increased learning by students" (Veal, 1999, p. 7). Consequently, the actual reform-oriented results of block scheduling have been mixed. Some researchers, after implementing a block scheduling system, found a decrease in student achievement and a drop in standardized test scores. Others found that block scheduling had no impact on academic achievement and student attendance rates, while discipline referrals increased under block scheduling (Cobb, Abate, & Baker, 1999; Fletcher, 1997; Hamdy & Urich, 1998; Maltese, Dexter, Tal, & Sadler, 2007; Murray, 2008; Pisapia & Westfall, 1997).

According to Crawford (2008):

In the classic approach to forming and implementing policies, policy and practice are isolated. Policy makers take the first step and practitioners go

second, both doing more finger pointing than communicating along the way. As a result, the work of policy and practice occurs in isolation, and much goes awry”. (p. 3)

The recent demands for reform and accountability were initiated by policy makers. Educational leaders were told what results they were expected to achieve, but were given no clear method or manner in which to effect the change to get the expected or desired result. This trend continues today, but perhaps things are changing with an awareness that educational directives and standards from on high without consultation with educational leaders and professionals will continue to fall short. In a speech given in July of 2009, regarding a new educational initiative, President Barack Obama concluded his remarks by stating the following:

Better standards. Better teaching. Better schools. Data-driven results. That's what we will reward with our Race to the Top Fund. But as I've said before, fixing the problem in our schools is not a task for Washington alone. It will take school administrators, board presidents, and local union leaders making collective bargaining a catalyst—and not an impediment—to reform. It will take business leaders asking what they can do to invest in education in their communities. It will take parents asking the right questions at their child's school, and making sure their children are doing their homework at night.

(p. 3)

The continued calls for educational reform has resulted in school administrators being eager to demonstrate their leadership and reform their schools by initiating change. Many chose to use block scheduling as the medium to enact these changes. However, given the mixed results of this popular educational reform effort in the last three decades (block scheduling), it is apparent that some educational leaders chose to demonstrate their leadership and reform their schools by discontinuing an educational reform that wasn't working—block scheduling. Based upon each individual leader's perspective and circumstance, it is possible that leadership could be demonstrated both by the implementation of or the removal of block scheduling in a school. This study demonstrated the degree to which educational administrators used the various aspects of the full-range leadership model when confronted with making changes in their schools.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

In the last several years, there has been interest in testing a new paradigm of transformational and transactional leadership (Avolio, 1999; Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio 1994). However, previous leadership models have fallen short of explaining and identifying leadership styles ranging from charismatic and inspirational leaders to individuals totally lacking (laissez-faire) a traditional leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Heck (1998) noted a lack of research and “details concerning how principals respond to their schools' environmental contexts as they seek to shape organizational processes and outcomes” (p. 51) through demonstrated leadership. In response to this lack of informed research concerning educational leadership, organizational structure, and change, the problems to be investigated in this study are what are the differences in

leadership styles between educational leaders who chose to change their high school's organizational structure (scheduling system) compared to those who have not changed and to what degree do these leaders exhibit transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership?

Educational leaders must be agents of change and reform if improvements are to be made in providing our nation's youth with a firm educational foundation upon which their lives and ultimately our society will be built (Arth et al., 2004; Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Morris, 1999; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). While many studies have explored the nature of leadership and the need for change in public education, few have tied the two topics together to discover the typical leadership profile of educational leaders who consciously chose change versus those who choose to maintain the status quo. The current study will help determine whether educational leaders exhibit transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leadership when faced with changing their schools' organizational structure (scheduling system) to implement educational initiative which promote student learning and achievement.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

While calls for effective leadership abound in research and literature, there remains a void regarding the type of leadership that educational administrators actually exhibit as they determine whether to change or not to change aspects of their school which have been shown to have a direct impact on student learning. The purpose of this study is to fill the void in current research by identifying the leadership style of principals who choose to change or not to change their school's scheduling system.

This study will determine the preferred leadership style, transformational, transactional or laissez-faire, of these school administrators. Additionally, through this study, it will be determined whether outside factors beyond the control of the school administrator impact the decision making ability of school administrators who might otherwise successfully implement or attempt to implement change in their school. It is possible for a school administrator to exhibit or espouse a certain leadership theory, but be unable to make desired changes or demonstrate a particular leadership style due to conditions beyond his or her control. However, overcoming such obstacles “as well as the need to overcome resistance to change” (Bass, 1960, p. 83) may be seen as the essence of demonstrating leadership (Bass, 1998; Stogdill, 1974).

Fundamental to Bass and Avolio’s (2004) Full Range of Leadership model is the idea that “every leader displays each style to some extent” (p. 4). Research studies have shown that transformational leaders were more effective than transactional leaders. Although the best leaders frequently employ both transformational as well as transactional leadership (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Avolio, Waldman & Einstein, 1988; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1991; Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

In 2002, Yammarino, Dionne, and Chun, published a review of over 230 conceptual and empirical publications relating to transformational and charismatic leadership. They found the following:

In brief, only 13 of the 143 empirical publications on transformational and charismatic leadership, or about 9%, addressed levels-of-analysis issues appropriately in all four areas of theory and hypothesis formulation, measurement, data analysis, and inference drawing. An entire field of

leadership research, the “new genre” of transformational and charismatic leadership, is thus built upon empirical publications of which over 90% do not address, incorrectly address, ignore, misspecify, misuse, or abuse levels-of-analysis issues! (p. 47)

This study concluded that further research was needed in this area of leadership. A study identifying differences in leadership styles of principals in an educational setting is needed as the need for educational leadership continues to grow. An analysis of demonstrated leadership styles by secondary administrators is currently lacking. This lack of analysis and data comes at a time when the need for effective educational leadership is imperative due to the continuing demands for change, reform, accountability, and student achievement. The data derived from the questionnaire used in this study will help to account for the varying impact that different types of leaders have on their associates, teams and organizations. It will be possible to quantify the extent and pattern of leadership of administrators whose degree and style of leadership affects the satisfaction of subordinates and impacts organizational success (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass & Avolio, 2004).

#### *Research Questions*

The primary research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What is the leadership style (transformational, transactional, laissez-fair) of the following secondary school administrators?:
  - a. Those who have changed their school’s scheduling system.
  - b. Those who have not changed their school’s scheduling system.

2. Are the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire) of secondary school administrators who have and have not changed their school's scheduling system significantly different?
3. Is there a correlation between the number of years that a secondary school administrator has held a position and the type of leadership style they exhibit?
4. Who is primarily responsible for changing or not changing a secondary school's scheduling system?
5. What are the factors (as derived from an open-ended response) that precipitate secondary school administrators to change or not change their class scheduling systems?

#### *Limitations, Assumptions, and Design Controls*

Typical research studies are narrow in scope and limited by the methodological instruments and practices used by the researcher. This study is no exception, although the narrow scope and targeted research questions will attempt to control and manage the limitations in the study as much as possible. The following are limitations of the study:

1. This study was limited to secondary school administrators in a Midwestern state.
2. The population of the sample was limited to superintendents who have secondary schools in their school district.
3. Superintendents are very busy individuals, who may or may not take the time to respond to the survey.
4. The survey results may be biased based upon who answers the questions. Superintendents were asked to respond to the questionnaire regarding the

leadership style of the person most responsible for the scheduling system in the high school. However, the superintendent could be primarily responsible for the scheduling system. In that case, the superintendent would be self-reporting regarding his or her own leadership style. Self-reported data can be biased as it is a reflection of how individuals view themselves, not how others might view them (Merriam, 1998).

5. The criteria for inferring cause and effect relationships are difficult to establish because of statistical measurement errors (Singleton, Straits, & Straits, 2004).
6. The findings of this study are limited by the reliability and validity of the instruments being used. The questionnaire written and designed for this study might have statistical variance depending upon the type of analysis being employed, item/scale construction, and restricted sampling sizes (Bass & Avolio, 2004).
7. A mixed design study such as this has inherent limitations, namely, the subjective nature of the qualitative portion of the study. It is possible that a different researcher, with a different focus, could draw different conclusions from the qualitative data.

#### *Definition of Key Terms*

To assist the reader's understanding of the research, key concepts and terminology, the following terms were defined and noted as important to the study.



*4x4 Block.* Sometimes called the accelerated block, this schedule allows students to take four complete courses each semester in blocks that meet every day lasting from 85 to 100 minutes each. This pace allows students to complete a normal year's work in a single semester for each class (Canady & Rettig, 1995; Cobb et al., 1999; Duel, 1999, Mondie, 2009).

*A/B Plan.* This block scheduling system is sometimes called the Alternating Day Block or the 8 Block because students attend eight blocks of classes over a two-day period. All students will attend each of their classes five times in a two-week period under this plan (Canady & Rettig, 1995; Cobb et al., 1999; Duel, 1999, Mondie, 2009).

*Block Scheduling.* A term which refers to any number of methods used to extend instructional time in various classes. Under most systems, students attend fewer classes each day for a longer period of time (Canady & Rettig, 1995; Cobb et al., 1999; Duel, 1999, Mondie, 2009).

*Laissez-faire leadership.* This is the avoidance or absence of leadership. Individuals demonstrating laissez-fair leadership avoid making decisions, are unavailable or stay out of the way of employees, and fail to manage, supervise, or lead. This type of leadership has consistently been found to be the least satisfying and effective management style (Bass, 1990, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 2004; Goodnight, 2004).

*Modified Block.* This term means different things to many different people. At some schools, a modified block means the school is on a 4x4 block or 8 block plan four days during the week, with a traditional seven or eight period day during one day of the week, normally Friday. This term is also used for those schools who combine different block modifications with different ways of dividing up the school year—year-round,

trimester, semester, etc. (Canady & Rettig, 1995; Cobb et al., 1999; Duel, 1999, Mondie, 2009).

*Traditional schedule.* A traditional scheduling system typically consists of six, seven or eight classes being offered each day with each class lasting from 45 to 55 minutes each. Class taught in a traditional schedule meet every day for the same amount of time each day.

*Transactional leadership.* Transactional leaders display managerial behaviors associated with constructive and corrective transactions. The constructive style is labeled contingent reward and the corrective style is labeled management-by-exception, which has both active and passive attributes. Transactional leadership defines expectations and promotes performance to achieve these levels. Rewards and penalties are based upon employee's performance (Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 2004; Sorenson & Geothals, 2004).

*Transformational leadership.* A process of influencing in which leaders change their associates awareness of what is important, and move them to see themselves and the opportunities and challenges of their environment in a new way. They convince their associates to strive for higher levels of potential as well as higher levels of moral and ethical standards. Transformational leaders behave in ways categorized in four subgroups: charismatic leadership; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Bass, 1998; Conger, 2004).

### *Summary*

The need for educational leaders who can effectively deal with and implement change in their schools has never been greater. Principals are no longer the mere

managers of a school. They must become the educational leaders who are motivated to help students achieve their full potential. Due to No Child Left Behind legislation and other demands for reform and accountability, schools must meet strict educational standards or face serious consequences.

Due to this added pressure, schools must find leaders that are not just willing, but able to face these challenges. To do this, schools must determine the qualities they need in an educational leader and be able to match their school's needs to the leadership profile of potential leaders. This study will help identify the leadership behaviors associated with effective and ineffective leadership. A leadership profile of administrators who have successfully implemented change in their school will be formulated. From this profile, schools can match their needs with the leadership profile of future prospective educational leaders in their systems. While some studies have attempted to determine the leadership profile of administrators, none have used the willingness or ability of said leader to effect change using block scheduling as the defining structural change factor. The knowledge gained through this study can help prepare active and aspiring administrators to learn the qualities most closely associated with effective leadership.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

It can be seen through much of the world's recorded history that man has been very interested in leadership and the creation of leadership theories, frameworks and constructs. As Yukl (2002) stated, the term leadership "connotes images of powerful, dynamic individuals who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from atop gleaming skyscrapers, or shape the course of nations. The exploits of brave and clever leaders are the essence of many legends and myth" (p. 1).

Confucius, in the sixth and fifth century BCE in China, attempted to define the laws of order between leaders and followers and wrote about it in the Analects. Likewise, the Greek philosopher Plato attempted to describe an ideal republic in the fourth century BCE when he wrote of philosopher-kings providing judicious leadership. Judeo-Christian history, as chronicled in the Old Testament, is replete with examples of wise and judicious leadership (e.g., Solomon, Moses, Noah) as well as stories of leadership and leaders gone awry (e.g., David, Saul, Aaron). The Ten Commandments can be viewed as one of the first recorded treatises on followership.

Additional works followed through the ages with Niccolo Machiavelli in the sixteenth century, Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century, Mary Parker Follet in the late nineteenth century, and Bertrand Russell and Harold Lasswell who analyzed power and leadership in the twentieth century. The concept of leadership is one of emerging themes and evolving models with conflicting opinions and diverging perspectives

(Chemers & Ayman, 1993; Gardner, 1995; Julius, Baldrige, & Pfeffer, 1999; Rost, 1991).

According to Stewart (2006), the fundamental question for educational leaders remains: “how will educational leaders navigate others within a culture that fully embraces systemic change?” (p. 1). The efforts listed above and other philosophical approaches are part of an ongoing normative approach and attempt to understand leadership by suggesting concepts of leadership, and emphasizing how leaders and followers should behave. A normative approach to leadership attempts to give answers to would-be leaders who are confronted with different situations and ask, What should be done?

In contrast to the normative approach, the descriptive approach to the study of leadership looks at leadership behavior. It investigates not what we would like leaders to do or what we think they should do, but rather investigates the reality of what they actually do. Much of the descriptive work relating to leadership uses the tools of social science and has come about since the turn of the twentieth century. This model typically uses empirical methods from the fields of psychology, sociology, and political science. Whether descriptive or normative in nature, leadership theories throughout history are neither discrete nor linear, they make appearances in some form or fashion at various times and in different ways (Sorenson & Goethals, 2004).

Wright (2004) asserted that America has progressed so rapidly as a society, that the skills and customs that Americans learned as children are outdated by the time they reach 30 years of age. In this sense, we struggle to keep up with our own culture. With the passage of time, the roles of both leaders and followers become more complex and

elaborate. This has led to the present situation where multiple perspectives exist regarding how leadership is conceptualized (Stewart, 2006).

While the term leadership itself may be generalized, it has numerous facets, each with a specific and different meaning and appearance. In fact, one author (Stewart, 2006) has stated that “despite the copious amount of literature on leadership, an agreed upon definition of leadership does not exist” (p. 4). That said, it is difficult to engage in conversation or research without a clear definition of what is being discussed or researched.

The definitions of leadership are as varied and subjective as those individuals who have studied it. Yukl (2002) cited nine basic yet different definitions of leadership while Sergiovanni (2000) chose to not define leadership at all, citing instead examples of good and poor leadership styles while letting readers define or identify for themselves what effective leadership was or was not. Gardner (1995) stated that leadership boils down to “the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader” (p. 3). Bolman and Deal (1997) stated that leadership is “a subtle process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling, and action to produce cooperative effort in the service of purposes and values of both the leader and the led” (p. 296).

The process of persuasion leading to change seems to be the nexus of leadership (Bensimon et al., 1989; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2000; Yukl, 2002). That persuasion process can be defined in many different ways, depending mainly upon the attributes or actions of the person or persons doing the leading. However, the actions taken by a leader will change depending upon “the nature

of the task” and the leader’s “perception of [their] role requirements” (Yukl, 2002, p. 31) needed to accomplish the task. Change is inevitable and effective leaders are the ones who are able to respond to it (Hallinger, 2003).

### *Historical Perspective of Leadership*

A systematic analysis of review of literature regarding leadership was begun in 1966 by Ralph Stogdill at the request of the Smith Richardson Foundation. The result was the 1974 publication of *The Handbook of Leadership*. This was the first attempt to assemble all of the published evidence on the topic and summarize the findings. In 1978 James MacGregor Burns wrote a Pulitzer Prize winning book entitled *Leadership*, which contained the first meaningful construct and description of transformational and transactional leadership. Burns noted that although leadership was in rich abundance in literature at that time, no central concept of leadership had emerged because scholars were working in separate disciplines to answer specific questions unique to their specialty.

Burns (1978) suggested that the role of the leader and follower could be united conceptually and that the process of leadership can be explained, at its core, through the interplay of conflict and power. Burns delineated two types of leadership, transactional and transformational. Transactional leaders approach followers with the intent to exchange one thing for another. However, “the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 4). The result of this type of leadership is a mutual relationship that converts followers to leaders and leaders into moral agents. The concept of moral leadership was proposed as a means for leaders to take responsibility for their leadership

and to aspire to satisfy the needs of the followers. Burns' position, contrary to many theories at the time, was that leaders are neither born nor made; instead leaders evolve from the structure of motivation, values and goals.

Arguments were also made by Burns (1978) suggesting that leadership theorists had relied on a faulty and over-emphasized role of power. He wanted to set aside the preoccupation with power in leadership studies. Instead, he was more interested in seeing power and leadership not as things, but as relationships. He stated:

It lies in seeing that most powerful influences consist of deeply human relationships in which two or more persons engage with one another. It lies in a more realistic, a more sophisticated understanding of power, and of the often far more consequential exercise of mutual persuasion, exchange, elevation, and transformation—in short, of leadership. (p. 11)

According to Avolio (2004), the work of Burns “significantly marked the course of leadership research for the next twenty-five years, resulting in transactional and transformational leadership being the most widely researched constructs in leadership literature throughout the 1990’s and into the next millennium” (2004, p. 1558).

However, the work of Bass (1997, 1998) and Bass and Avolio (1993, 2004) was a response to some of the limitations and omissions which eventually became evident in Burns' work, in particular, “the lack of empirical evidence to support his theories” (Stewart, 2006, p. 10).

Burns' (2003) latest book entitled *Transforming Leadership: A New Pursuit of Happiness*, offered an expansion of his earlier work. Through an examination of the work of world leaders, he suggested ways that transactional leaders can learn to become



transformational. He further suggested that what was lacking in his original work was a focus on psychology. He believed that to understand leadership and change, we must examine human needs and social change. He stated that “transforming leadership begins on people’s terms, driven by their wants and needs, and must culminate in expanding opportunities for happiness” (p. 230).

Although Bernard Bass used Burns’ work as the foundation for much of his research in leadership theory, Burns actually quoted Bass in his most recent book by stating that a “leader is characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and completion of tasks, vigor and persistence in the pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem solving” (p. 10). Although Burns’ original work and leadership theories prompted much additional research, it is obvious that Burns’ views on leadership have changed and grown to include the views of others over time.

Prior to his death in 1978, Stogdill asked Bernard Bass to collaborate on a revision of Stogdill’s original *Handbook of Leadership*. This collaboration resulted in a second edition in 1981, and a third edition in 1990. Hallenger (2003) believed that due to this research, which was based upon Burns’ earlier work, by 1990, researchers had shifted their attention to leadership models that were “more consistent with evolving trends in educational reform such as empowerment, shared leadership, and organizational learning” (p. 330). Transformational leadership became the primary model reflecting these characteristics.

Bernard Bass dedicated a significant portion of his career elaborating upon the theories and ideas of Burns. He began collaborating with Bruce Avolio in the late 1980s and together performed numerous research projects and produced copious amounts of

research relating the study leadership (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1997; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002).

Bass (1998) concentrated his research on military, business, and educational organizations. He delved into, what was considered at the time, the new paradigm of transformational leadership. Through research, Bass found that transformational leadership was particularly powerful and had the foundation to move followers beyond what was expected. He believed that transformational leaders did more than set up exchanges and agreements, they behaved in certain ways in order to raise the level of commitment from followers.

### *Leadership Theories and Models*

According to Bensimon et al. (1989), “research traditions in leadership can be grouped into six major categories” (p. 7). However, the categories are not mutually exclusive, nor are they agreed upon by researchers themselves. One group of researchers study and identify leadership through six broad theories: trait theories, power and influence theories, behavioral theories, contingency theories, cultural and symbolic theories, and cognitive theories. Yet another set of researchers study and identify leadership models: instructional, transformational, moral, participative, contingent, and managerial (Bensimon et al., 1989; Hackman & Johnson, 2000; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2000). The various aspects of leadership will now be summarized using these theories and models.

Early leadership theory focused mainly on the traits of great leaders, including physical stature and vocal force. These theories have come to be known as “great man” theories. Trait theories attempted to identify the personal characteristics that allowed a

leader to become effective. These traits might be physical, personality, social background, ability, motives, values and skills. These early leadership theories suggested that individuals with certain traits are natural leaders. However, numerous studies have shown that no traits have been proven to be essential in order for a leader to be effective (Bensimon et al., 1989; Yukl, 2002).

Power and influence theories attempt to explain the use of power by leaders. Yukl (2002) stated that these theories “seek to explain leadership effectiveness in terms of the amount and type of power possessed by a leader and how power is exercised” (p. 12). Several researchers (Bensimon et al., 1989; Wageman, Nunes, Burruss & Hackman, 2008; Yukl, 2002) identify five basic sources of power: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power.

Reward power reflects the ability of leaders to control resources and rewards. Coercive power reflects the ability of the leader to administer punishment or to give negative reinforcements. Legitimate power reflects the actual position that a person holds, giving that leader the right (power) to do certain things. Referent power reflects the power that a person has based upon their being a role model because people personally identify with them and like them. Expert power refers to the individuals who have expertise regarding information or skills.

Behavioral theories attempt to define and explain specific behavior that leads to effective leadership (Bensimon et al., 1989; Yukl, 2002). These theories describe what leaders actually do, and how much time they spend doing it. Much of the research in this area investigated how managers cope with demands, constraints, and role conflicts in their jobs.

Different leadership behaviors became associated with different leadership styles such as task oriented and relationship oriented. An authoritarian type (directive) leader will demonstrate task oriented behaviors. A more democratic type (supportive) leader will demonstrate relationship oriented behaviors. While numerous studies have been done to define which behaviors lead to effective leadership, there is much disagreement among researchers—mostly due to the question of causality. As Bensimon et al. (1989) stated, “it is relatively easy to call certain behaviors of leaders ‘effective’ once the desired outcomes are observed but much more difficult to stipulate in advance the behaviors of leaders that will have the desired outcomes” (p. 14).

Contingency theories attempt to explain leadership functions by assuming that different situations will require an effective leader to exhibit different traits and behaviors as they are presented with changing situations. Since the effective leadership is contingent upon the situation, these leadership theories are known as contingency theories (Bensimon et al., 1989; Wageman et al., 2008; Yukl, 2002).

Various contingency theories have been put forward by various researchers, but they generally have three basic assumptions: (a) There is no universal or best way to manage or lead; (b) The design of an organization and its subsystems must fit well within its environment and the subsystems themselves; and (c). The needs of an organization are better satisfied when it is properly designed and the management style is appropriate to both the tasks undertaken and the nature of the work group.

The least preferred coworker or LPC contingency model suggests that leaders are motivated to be either task or relations oriented. The cognitive resource theory further develops early contingency models by taking into consideration a leader’s intelligence,

competence, and experience. Situational leadership theory relates a leader's behavior to the maturity and motivation of followers. The path-goal theory suggests that followers' satisfaction and productivity will increase as a leader clarifies the path necessary to achieve goals (Yukl, 2002).

The model of decision participation is sometimes tied to normative decision models of leadership. These models are based upon analyses of how a leader's decision-making behavior affects the quality of the decision and the followers' acceptance of the decision. The multiple-linkage model suggests that any short-term effect of a leader's behavior will be countered by intervening (situational) variables (Yukl, 1989).

Cultural and symbolic theories "propose that leadership functions within complex social systems whose participants attempt to find meaningful patterns in the behaviors of others so they can develop common understandings about the nature of reality" (Bensimon et al., 1989, p. 21). These theories attempt to explain how leaders think and process organizational data. Additionally, they propose that a major factor in the success of a leader is the degree to which the leader can articulate and influence cultural norms and values.

Cognitive theories are closely aligned to symbolic theories because of their emphasis on leadership arising from social cognition or as a social attribution (Bensimon et al., 1989). These theories points to leaders as role-fillers that are expected to do and represent certain things at different times and places. Leadership, as viewed through this lens is "associated with a set of myths, reinforcing organizational constructions of meanings that helps participants to believe in the effectiveness" (p. 23) of the leader.

Transformational leadership, according to Yukl (2002), motivates and influences followers by making them aware of important task outcomes, by inducing them to put their own self-interest aside for the sake of the organization, and by activating their higher-order needs. Various authors state that transformational leadership can take on various forms such as charismatic and visionary. The central focus of this kind of leadership is the commitment and capacity of leaders to create and promote desirable visions or images of their institution. Essentially, they must alter others' perceptions, attitudes, and commitments through their symbolic actions while arousing strong follower emotion and identification with the leader (Bensimon et al., 1989; Leithwood et al., 2000).

Transformational leadership has four components: charismatic leadership; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leadership is said to take place when leaders behave in of those four ways to obtain superior performance from employees (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Bass, 1996; Bass, 1998; Sorenson & Goethals, 2004; Yukl, 2002).

Charismatic leadership, also known as idealized influence, is exhibited by leaders who behave in such a way as to serve as a positive role model for followers. Such leaders are admired, respected and trusted to such an extent that followers identify with them and strive to emulate their behavior. How leaders treat and value their followers is key to understanding the influence that charismatic leaders have on them. Charismatic leaders consider the needs of others over their own personal needs. They are viewed as consistent, constant, and stable rather than arbitrary. They share risks equally with their followers and can be counted on to “do the right thing, demonstrating high standards of

ethical and moral conduct” (Bass, 1996, p. 5). Most importantly, they use power sparingly and never for personal gain. The personal traits of self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-determination are essential for charismatic leaders but such traits are tempered with an unfailing consideration of others. By virtue of their personal example, charismatic leaders become role models for the people who work for them (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Bass, 1998; Bensimon, et al., 1989; Sorenson & Goethals, 2004; Yukl, 2002).

Inspirational motivation is apparent in transformational leaders as they behave in such a way as to motivate and inspire followers by providing them with meaningful and challenging work, while communicating appealing goals and a shared vision that focuses everyone’s efforts. Team spirit is aroused through optimism, enthusiasm, and actual participation (modeling) by the leader. Clear and open lines of communication are established between leaders and their inspired followers (Bass, 1996; Yukl, 2002).

Intellectual stimulation is exhibited by transformational leaders as they encourage innovation and creativity in followers by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. Whether flawed or successful, no attempt at innovation is ever criticized by the leader, and new ideas and creative solutions are always solicited from followers. Followers, whether their ideas differ from the leader’s or not, are integral and actively involved in the process of addressing problems and finding solutions (Bass, 1996; Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 2004; Yukl, 2002).

Brassard and Ritter (1994) advocated the use of tools which promoted intellectual stimulation. Such tools as “brainstorming” (p. 19), “affinity diagramming” (p. 12), and various “tree diagrams” (p. 156) stimulate creative and logical ideas without fear of

criticism or failure. Morgan (1997) described some aspects of intellectual stimulation through his “double-loop learning” (p. 86) metaphor. Double-loop learning, like intellectual stimulation, advocates a double look at a situation or problem by questioning relevance and challenging previous assumptions and paradigms.

Transformational leaders demonstrate individualized consideration by paying special attention to every individual’s need for personal growth, achievement and direction. A typical outcome of this behavior is the leader acting as a mentor or guide while developing the follower at various levels depending upon their needs. This type of leadership appears to be closely aligned to the Hersey/Blanchard situational leadership model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). Both theories advocate the leader to interact with and direct followers based upon the follower’s ability (competence) and willingness to perform.

This situational leadership stance accounts for two degrees of interaction between the leader and follower. In the directive leadership stance, the follower is given specific instructions and needs to be closely monitored and supervised by the leader. In the nondirective leadership stance, the leader can totally turn over responsibility for decisions and implementation. The type of leadership behavior displayed by the leader is dependent upon each follower. Ideally, followers feel continual support from the leader and do not feel as though they are constantly being monitored (Bass, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Moral leadership models suggest that values and ethics are a central part of all leadership and administrative practice (Leithwood et al., 2000; Willower & Licata, 1997). Researchers exploring moral leadership attempt to articulate and define the nature of the



values used by leaders in their decision making while trying to determine how conflicts among values can be resolved. Some researchers have attempted to identify the role that gender and race play in moral leadership paradigms (Banks & Powell, 2000; Chemers & Ayman, 1993; Young, Mountford, & Skrla, 2006), although such factors can have an effect in all leadership theories and models.

Participative leadership refers to the decision-making process within a group or team. Participative leadership and organizational effectiveness are closely interconnected. Site-based management and various forms of democratic (shared) leadership are becoming popular, especially in schools where the curriculum should “directly reflect the values and preferences of parents and the local community” (Leithwood et al., 2000, p. 13). This type of leadership is frequently tied to varying views of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership generally relates to the behavior of teachers and administrators as they engage in activities related affecting the growth of students (Bensimon et al., 1989; Leithwood et al., 2000; Sergiovanni, 2000; Yukl, 2002).

In 1992, Abraham Zaleznik wrote an article for the Harvard Business review entitled “Managers and leaders: Are they different?” He argued that managers and leaders are different kinds of people. He stated “a crucial difference between managers and leaders lies in the conceptions they hold, deep in their psyches, of chaos and order” (p. 74). He believed that both leaders and managers are needed in organizations if they are to be successful, but developing them both requires fostering an environment that creates an environment that cultivates creativity and imagination.

Zaleznik additionally believed that managers view goals impersonally, as opposed to leaders who develop goals that reflect a deeper meaning based on beliefs. He stated, “The manager’s conception of work involves a combination of people and ideas interacting to establish strategies and make decisions” (p. 76), while leaders try to excite, inspire and support. On the other hand, Evers and Lakomski (1996) argued that it is difficult to discern the difference between management and leadership tasks.

It is also difficult to discriminate between transactional and transformational leadership behaviors. Leithwood and Duke (1999) as well as Bass (1997) acknowledged the difficulty they experienced in providing evidence for transformational leadership. Leithwood and Duke (1999) stated, “we can really only tell the difference if we know the nature of the purposes and their effects which, of course, depend on how people interpret what they see” (p. 77). Evers and Lakomski (2000) added:

If there is no principled way of telling one leader behavior from another, then any claim to have empirically identified transformational leadership effects is not justified. In the absence of justification, however, claims to leadership are nothing more than personal belief or opinion, which does not carry any empirical status, no matter how many empirical studies are conducted. (p. 79)

Stewart (2006) believed that Evers and Lakomski as well as Leithwood and Duke appeared to be searching for “absolutes” (p. 20) that may never be determined in complex organizations such as schools.

The distinctions between a transactional leader and a transformational leader may be very close to the distinction made between management and leadership. In fact, “one

might argue that the ‘transactional leader’ might be better termed the transactional manager” (Stewart, 2006, p. 14). Using this management and leadership framework, it would appear that the terms leader and manager need not be dichotomous.

Transactional leadership can be divided into two basic forms: contingent reward and management-by-exception (Bass, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 2004). Contingent Reward, a means of positive reinforcement, occurs when a leader assigns or manages to get compliance from followers through the use of promised rewards and incentives, or by actually rewarding followers for carrying out an assignment in a satisfactory manner. This method is usually found to be reasonably effective, but not as effective as any transformational leadership method, and certainly more effective than management by exception, which demonstrates a negative reward system (Bass, 1996; Bass & Avolio 1994; Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Management-by-Exception is itself divided into two categories, passive and active, and both are considered to be corrective in nature. Passive management by exception includes the use of contingent punishments and corrective actions in response to deviations from expected or acceptable performance. In the passive form, the leader waits passively for followers to make mistakes then takes corrective action. In the active form, the leader arranges to “actively monitor deviances from standards” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 4) being made by followers so immediate corrective action can take place (Bass, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 2004; Yukl, 2002).

Leadership is an all-encompassing and dynamic construct and educational leaders who adopt this expansive perspective might be more prepared to deal with the realities of what is demanded of them—as both managers and leaders. Considering the system

realities of modern day schools, many educational leaders may just be doing their best to make it through any given day by managing the diverse needs of the school community and society at large. Stewart (2006) stated:

Knowing about the evolution of the term leadership and understanding how the concept developed through the contributions of key scholars, now forces us to question what makes an educational leader and what effects these individuals have on the teaching and learning that occurs in schools.

(p. 15)

#### *Implications for Educational Leadership*

Fullan (2003) wrote that a strong educational system is the cornerstone of a civil, prosperous, and democratic society and he reminded us that “one of the great strengths one needs, especially in troubled times, is a strong sense of moral purpose” (p. 19).

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2004) stated, “in a democratic society, it is vital that students learn to think reflectively, function at high stages of moral reasoning, and be autonomous decision makers” (p. 156). Hence, the role of the school leader becomes critical in providing the example and environment to nurture such ideals.

Crippen (2005) remarked that the old leadership paradigm of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries suggested three particular beliefs: (a) that leaders were born and not made; (b) good management made successful organizations; and (c) one should avoid failure at all costs, a belief that promoted risk avoidance and fear. Educational leadership was defined in literature as being hierarchical, patriarchal, coercive, and related to wealth and influence (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997; Block, 1993; Hickman, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1992).

Kenneth Leithwood (1991, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2000) and his colleagues have been instrumental in bridging the work of Burns and Bass into the field of educational administration. Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1994) described seven dimensions of transformational leadership as applied to educational leadership. These dimensions included building school vision and establishing school goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; modeling best practices and important organizational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture, and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. This educational leadership model assumes that the principal shares leadership responsibilities with teachers. This leadership paradigm is grounded not on controlling or coordinating others, but instead on providing individual support, intellectual stimulation, and personal vision.

Prawat and Peterson (1999) emphasized “the importance of encouraging members in organizations to learn and develop, realizing that the organizational goals are apt to be met when members of the organization work together to make it happen” (p. 223). They further expanded this issue by explaining that a primary administrative role is to share responsibility with others in the organization who are committed and who play a key role in establishing the organizational agreements and enable learning. This notion of distributed leadership is consistent with various researchers (Stewart, 2006).

Schools today are moving towards a more collegial, cooperative, transformative, service approach in the learning community. Murphy and Seashore Louis (1999) stated the following regarding the changes reflected in today’s educational institutions:

In these new postindustrial organizations, there are important shifts in roles, relationships and responsibilities; traditional patterns of relationships are altered; authority flows are less hierarchical; role definitions are both more general and more flexible; leadership is connected to competence for needed tasks rather than to formal position; and independence and isolation are replaced by cooperative work. (p. xxii)

Leithwood and Duke (1999) conducted a review of the concepts of leadership in educational literature from 1988 to 1995. They found 121 articles specifically dedicated to educational leadership. Using that foundation, as well as exhaustive personal research, Hallenger and Heck (1999) concluded that there was a clear trend toward the accumulation of knowledge regarding school leadership and its effects. They also suggested that the study of school leadership will become increasingly more eclectic, both philosophically and methodologically.

It is apparent that managing effective schools to respond to the increasingly complex demands of society will require the knowledge and technical skills of committed and competent leaders. As the demographics shift regarding the study and application of leadership theory, there is considerable debate on how to best prepare the next generation of educational leaders. However, there is no doubt that “leadership has been, and will continue to be a major focus in the current era of school accountability and restructuring” (Stewart, 2006, p. 2).

Instructional leadership models emerged in the early 1980s from the research on effective schools. In contrast to earlier models, these models focused on the manner in

which leadership improved educational outcomes. This was an outgrowth of the public's desire (demand) for schools "to raise standards and improve students' academic performance" (Stewart, 2006, p. 7).

What emerged from this clamor for increased accountability was the need to link educational leadership and school effectiveness. Adams and Kirst (1999) stated, "the 'excellence movement' was launched and in its wake followed an evolution in the notion of educational accountability commensurate with the movement's challenge to obtain better student performance" (p. 463).

Leithwood, Steinbach, and Jantzi (2002) referred to these initiatives as large-scale school reform. Several other initiatives were implemented as a means of providing accountability. Adams and Kirst (1999) stated, "policy makers, educational leaders, practitioners, and parents also continued to seek better student performance and accountability through management practices, professional standards, teacher commitment, democratic processes, and parent choice" (p. 466).

School reform and accountability movements pressured school principals to improve student achievement, yet little information was provided on best practices for achieving those outcomes. Originally, the principal's role was to focus on the teachers, while the teachers focused on helping the students to learn. The leadership of the school principal was viewed as instrumental in providing an explanation for school effectiveness. Hallinger (2003) conceptualized this instructional leadership process by proposing three dimensions of instructional leadership: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning climate.

Dimmock (1995), on the other hand, believed that such a top-down process of management and leadership was too prescriptive and that a more bottom-up approach was necessary for teaching and learning to improve. Essentially, Dimmock believed that students should be the center of quality schools as principals and teachers together focus on improving student learning and performance. Dimmock (1995) stated, “the traditional top down linear conceptions of leadership and management and their influence on teaching and learning have become inappropriate” (p. 95).

Likewise, Evers and Lakomski (1996) argued that leadership, as it is conceptualized in literature, is not helpful in meeting the challenges of current educational systems. They suggested that several components of effective leadership theory fall short and that “schools can be thought of as being made up of intricate nets of complex interrelationships that criss-cross formal positions of authority and power and carry knowledge and expertise in all directions, not just downwards” (p. 72). They believed that transformational leadership models relied too heavily on the transformational skills of the leader. Instead, the organization should develop feedback loops to learn from its mistakes. In this model, the school becomes less bureaucratic and becomes its own transforming agent. Rather than empowering select individuals, the organization becomes empowered as a collective unit.

Much of the literature relating to educational leadership is dominated by studies that critically examine the central role that the principal assumes in the school. Hallenger and Heck (1999) stated:

By way of illustration, the preoccupation with documenting if principals make a difference has subtly reinforced the assumption that school



leadership is synonymous with the school principal. Scholars have, therefore, largely ignored other sources of leadership within the school such as assistant principals and senior teachers. (p. 141)

Starratt (2003, 2004) indicated that there is a paucity of research that examines the contributions of non-principal leaders in the school. For example, in many schools people such as department heads, counselors, and district-level administrators can provide leadership within the school and in the community.

One common problem with instructional leadership paradigms is that in many schools the principal is not the educational expert. Additionally, some principals view their role as strictly administrative and purposely distance themselves from the classroom environment (Crippen, 2005). Hallinger (2003) suggested that in many cases, principals have less expertise than the teachers they supervise.

When this situation is combined with the hierarchical structure of a school system where the ultimate authority exists with senior administrators in the district office, then principals become wedged between the expectations of classroom teachers, parents, district managers, and the community itself. Principals placed in this situation struggle to maintain a balance between conflicting demands from various stakeholders. They become so engrossed in the managerial and administrative tasks of daily school life, that they rarely have time to actually lead others in the areas of teaching and learning (Stewart, 2006).

Along with the movement towards greater accountability was the increasing number of research studies attempting to measure the impact of school leadership. New terms began to emerge in literature such as: shared leadership, teacher leadership,

distributed leadership, and transformational leadership. According to Hallinger (2003), “the emergence of these models indicated a broader dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model, which many believed focused too much attention on the principal as the center of expertise, power, and authority” (p. 330).

The effects of transformational leadership on organizational learning in the context of school improvement efforts were examined extensively by Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach in 2000. They concluded that “transformational leadership practices were helpful in fostering organizational learning; in particular, vision building, individual support, intellectual stimulation, modeling, culture building and holding high performance expectations” (p. 37). Furthermore, evidence about the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational improvement and effectiveness were found more than any other effects. The evidence suggested that transformational leadership stimulates improvement. However, according to Stewart (2006), “despite the research conducted by Leithwood and his colleagues, there remain many unanswered questions and undeveloped ideas” (p. 18).

Marks and Printy (2003) stated that there have been few studies that have empirically studied how transformational leadership and instructional leadership compliment one another and contribute to student learning. They suggested that there is a need for more research to evaluate how leadership contributes to quality education. Marks and Printy conducted a national study relating to the restructuring of schools. They studied the relationship of transformational leadership and shared leadership in relation to the quality of teaching and learning. They suggested that in order to improve teaching and learning, then instructional leadership needed to complement the tenets of

transformational leadership. They found that when transformational and shared leadership coexist, the influence on school performance is substantial.

Stewart (2006) concluded that as the study of school leadership is investigated through more diverse lenses and methods, new and often conflicting orientations have and will emerge. Additionally, the question of whether or not leadership can be mandated through accountability efforts in states and individual schools remains to be answered. The authors of leadership studies must “not assume that change is always in the direction of improvement” (Stewart, 2006, p. 22). Senge (1990) reminded us that systems in a constant state of change require a variety of leadership types at different times in organizational development.

*Calls for Educational Reform and Accountability*

On September 21, 2009, President Barack Obama, speaking to students and faculty at Hudson Valley Community College, stated:

We know that the nations that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow. The ability of new industries to thrive depends on workers with the knowledge and the know-how to contribute in those fields.

Unfortunately, today, our primary and secondary schools continue to trail many of our competitors, especially in the key areas of math and science.

So all along that education pipeline, too many people—too many of our young talented people—are slipping through the cracks. It's not only heartbreaking for those students; it's a loss for our economy and our country. (p. 2)

This call for reform of public education came on the heels of earlier remarks by President Obama in a speech regarding the perceived current inadequacies of public education. On July 24, 2009, he stated:

We also know that today, our education system is falling short. We've talked about it for decades but we know that we have not made the progress we need to make. The United States, a country that has always led the way in innovation, is now being outpaced in math and science education. African American, Latino students are lagging behind white classmates in one subject after another—an achievement gap that, by one estimate, costs us hundreds of billions of dollars in wages that will not be earned, jobs that will not be done, and purchases that will not be made. And most employers raise doubts about the qualifications of future employees, rating high school graduates' basic skills as only "fair" or "poor." I'm issuing a challenge to our nation's governors, to school boards and principals and teachers, to businesses and non-for-profits, to parents and students: if you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools—your state can win a Race to the Top grant that will not only help students outcompete workers around the world, but let them fulfill their God-given potential. (p. 3)

Public education remains at the forefront as reformers, policy makers, and politicians engage business and the public in discourse. “Employers, and [college] instructors support a broad reform agenda, including strongly supporting measures that

would raise expectations for high school students, test them rigorously, and require them to take more challenging courses” (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 2005, pp. 2-3). Earlier, Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) reported that the history of high school reform had evolved through an “almost incessant criticism of secondary education and the succession of movements to reform schools” (p. 234). More recently, Cuban (2004) argued that high educational reform “continues to generate and receive scorching censure” (p. 17).

The criticism of public education and the educational reform efforts themselves have a rich history in this country, spanning three centuries. The documented criticism of public education began with a report made in 1893 by the Committee on Secondary School Studies, known as the Committee of Ten (Elliot, 1893). Subsequent reports published in the 20<sup>th</sup> century—by the Carnegie Foundation in 1906, The National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983, the National Commission on Time and Learning in 1994, and other groups—were motivated by the apparent decline in student achievement and its deleterious effect on the nation’s economy (Boyer, 1983; Lagemann, 1983; Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 2005; Powell et al., 1985; Wraga, 1998, 1999). The reform agenda for high schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has followed a call for accountability, higher standards, and restructuring efforts to ensure that students graduate with the necessary skills to be successful in college, the workplace, and a global economy. The criticisms of the high school continue, a major example being the 2005 report *Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?* This report was released during an educational summit sponsored by the National Governors Association and Achieve, Inc. (Peter D. Hart Associates, 2005).

Powell et al. (1985) aptly observed that “life has not stood still in high schools” (p. 234). One constant in the reform agendas has a focus on the ways in which learning and time are arranged. In 1893, the Committee of Ten recommended what subjects should be taught, the sequence of subjects, and the length of instruction. In 1906 the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Foundation defined a course as meeting for a certain period daily and weekly throughout the entire school year. Although the Carnegie Unit—the “credits” that high schools award their students for successful completion of a course—has been characterized as “mechanical” and as a “bookkeeping device,” serving as “the basis on which the school day, and indeed the entire curriculum, is organized,” this unit is still the way that secondary schools organize the curriculum within their instructional program (Boyer, 1983, p. 60).

With the furor caused by the Sputnik launch in 1957 and the concern that high school students were not prepared with enough “hard subjects,” school reform was nationally pushed to the forefront to ensure the international competitiveness of U.S. high school students (Conant, 1959). As a way to restructure the day, time was organized differently in many high schools in the late 1950s and early 1960s, most notably through the work of Trump (1959), who introduced flexible modular scheduling. Flexible modular scheduling was a way to eliminate lock-step class time meetings by varying the length of class time based on the predicated needs of the subject matter (Canady & Rettig, 1995). The flexible modular schedule was abandoned for a variety of reasons, including problems with student discipline. In part, this was because 30% to 40% of the school day was allocated “to unscheduled student time to be used for independent study and individual tutorials” (p. 14), which neither teachers nor students could manage.

The flexible modular schedule gave way to other alternate forms of scheduling in the 1980s and the 1990s, especially after the release of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This report launched the educational reform efforts in the U.S. which extend to the present day. The framers of *A Nation at Risk* emphasized that “the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future” (p. 3). This report called for numerous reforms geared primarily towards high schools. They included setting high standards by focusing more time on learning, having higher expectations for students, and increasing graduation requirements to four years of English, four years of math, three years of science, three years of social studies, and a half-year of computer science.

Following the release of *A Nation at Risk* and adding to the tenor of accountability debates were a proliferation of reports, national summits, and legislation aimed at tackling the “tide of mediocrity” sweeping America’s high schools. A timeline of accountability efforts and reform movements is attached as Appendix A and provides details about the national focus on accountability, standards, and reform movements that have emerged over in the last three centuries.

Portrayals of high schools in need of reform were found in several books, including *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* (Boyer, 1983); *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* (Goodlad, 1984); *Horace’s Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (Sizer, 1984); *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace* (Powell et al., 1985); and *Horace’s School: Redesigning the American High School* (Sizer, 1992). Each of these

books addressed the use of time by examining numerous issues related to the state of affairs in high schools.

Goodlad (1984) emphasized that reform in high schools needed to include the creation of smaller schools, the development of a core curriculum, the elimination of tracking systems, and the reexamination of time because “time is virtually the most important resource” (p. 30) available to schools. Sizer (1984) asserted that “the clock is king,” and there is “a frenetic quality to the school day, a sense of sustained restlessness” in which “the student rushes from class to class to collect knowledge” (pp. 79-80). Similarly, Boyer (1983) reported that “just as the arrangement of space is standardized in the American classroom, so is the use of time. If ideas are to be thoughtfully examined, time must be used wisely. Time is the student’s treasure.” (p. 141)

Both Goodlad (1984) and Sizer (1984) called for restructuring how students interact with their subject matter and their teachers, eliminating the meaningless exchanges that characterized teaching and learning. Although Goodlad and Sizer were not championing any form of organizational change or scheduling system, they sought systematic reform of the current practices used to educate young people. Goodlad’s (1984) message was clear:

We must not stop with providing only time. I would always choose fewer hours well-used over more hours of engagement with sterile activities.

Increasing [time] will in fact be counter productive unless there is, simultaneously, marked improvement in how time is used. (p. 283)

On February 24, 2009, President Obama stated the following to a joint session of Congress,



In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity, it is a pre-requisite. That is why it will be the goal of this administration to ensure that every child has access to a complete and competitive education, from the day they are born to the day they begin a career. (p. 4)

The president followed this statement up on March 10, 2009, by making this statement, "Reform in America's lowest-performing schools must be systemic and transformational. For some, partnerships and additional support can bring about change and drive improvement. Others may need to move beyond the late 19th century and expand the school day" (p. 1). He further stated, "I know longer school days and school years are not wildly popular ideas... not in my family, and probably not in yours. But the challenges of a new century demand more time in the classroom" (p. 3).

Expanding the school day and restructuring the time students actually spend in school is not a new issue, but it is one that is now being considered and actively pursued in the highest levels of education. In a recent interview, the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2009), stated "Our school calendar is based upon the agrarian economy and not too many of our kids are working the fields today" (p. 2). He further stated that kids in the United States need more school because kids in other nations have more school, and that "Young people in other countries are going to school 25, 30 percent longer than our students here, I want to just level the playing field" (p. 1).

### *High Stakes Accountability*

Many accountability schemes are exclusively based on high-stakes standardized testing, which is typically incongruent with what most educators recognize as effective

ways of measuring quality teaching and learning. In Missouri, high stakes testing has evolved and increased dramatically in the last few years. In 1993, the Outstanding Schools Act (Senate Bill 380) was passed by the Missouri legislature. This law called for the development of a new assessment system for public schools in the state.

The Show-Me Standards, with their commensurate content and process standards were part of that hallmark legislation. There are 40 content standards (what students should know) and 33 process standards (what students should be able to do) included in the Show-Me Standards. To measure a child's performance or success in school in relation to these established standards, the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) was created. MAP testing began in 1997 and was fully implemented for all students in grades 3-11 by 2001 in the areas of Math, Communication Arts, Social Studies, Health/PE, and Science. The tests consisted of several selected-response questions (multiple choice), a few constructed-response questions (short answer) and at least one long-answer essay question called a performance event (DESE, 2009a, 2009b).

In 2001, the Federal Government approved the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) began making revisions to its MAP tests to comply with the federal mandates established in NCLB. The ultimate goal was to increase student performance and to make schools accountable for their student's academic achievement. All 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were required to develop standards and assessments that would comply with NCLB and begin implementation by the 2005-2006 school year. The stated purpose was to set high educational and achievement standards for all students

and to help them grow into responsible and confident individuals and community members who can function to the best of their abilities (DESE, 2009a, 2009b).

As a result of the accountability standards in No Child Left Behind, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has had to remove accreditation status from three school districts in the last few years. The Wellston school district was unaccredited in 2003, and was put under total DESE control in 2007 because, according to Missouri's Commissioner of Education Kent King, it had "long-standing and deep-seated problems. It has bounced between provisionally accredited and unaccredited status for more than 10 years. Too many students have paid the price for the district's inability to focus on its fundamental academic needs and priorities" (DESE, 2005, p. 1). The River View Gardens and St. Louis City school districts were unaccredited in 2007, both of which remain on unaccredited status. On December 17, 2009, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education announced that it would totally close the Wellston School District in 2010. The Wellston school district had been operating under state oversight for several years. To date, two school districts in Missouri (Wellston and Wyaconda) have been totally closed due to "ongoing academic and financial difficulties" as well as the inability of each district to "provide adequate educational facilities" (DESE, 2009c, p. 1). This trend is sure to continue as more and more schools fail to meet higher federal and state benchmarks established in No Child Left Behind legislation (DESE, 2009b; DESE, 2007a, DESE, 2007b).

When a school becomes unaccredited, a special administrative board (three-person panel) is authorized by state law to govern the district on an interim basis. The special administrative board replaces the local board of education, but answers to state

education officials. The board consists of a paid chief executive officer, who serves as chair of the board, and two unpaid members who must be residents of the school district (DESE, 2005).

Beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, additional elements were added to Missouri's mandated assessment and accreditation program. Specific end-of-course (EOC) tests were required for students completing the following high school courses: Algebra I, Biology, English II, and Government. Because of the implementation of end-of-course exams, MAP testing in grades 9-12 was discontinued starting in the 2009-2010 school year. The goal of the end-of-course exam testing regimen was to determine student's proficiency in individual courses at the high school level, rather than demonstrating proficiency in more non-specific subject areas (DESE, 2009b).

According to DESE (2009a, 2009b), the assessment data obtained from MAP testing was designed to help students become more successful. Several groups, both at the state and individual school district level, use the assessment results. These results play a major role in holding the state, the schools, the teachers, and administrators accountable for providing the best education possible. State officials use the assessment information to identify schools in need of improvement. According to DESE (1998), "any school being considered for the academically deficient rating shall be examined by an audit team to determine the cause of the school's poor performance. If warranted, a management team will identify methods for improvement" (p. 8).

The testing data helps the state determine what resources and help each school needs. They also compare Missouri's testing results with the results of schools in other states to see how Missouri students measure up nationally. School districts use the

results to set goals or create plans to improve in areas where expectations are not met. Although individual students are not held accountable for their MAP test scores, individual schools and school districts face varying degrees of sanctions if their students do not improve their scores or meet state performance expectations (DESE, 2009a, 2009b).

Starting in 2009, federal funds from The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, “provide a unique opportunity to jump start school reform and improvement efforts while also saving and creating jobs and stimulating the economy” (ARRA, 2009, p. 1). According to the federal government, these one-time resources will be spent “in ways most likely to lead to improved results for students, long-term gains in school and school system capacity, and increased productivity and effectiveness” (ARRA, 2009, p. 2). The stated goal of this program is ensure that:

All students graduate from high school prepared for college and a career and have the opportunity to complete at least one year of postsecondary education. This means that we must dramatically improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. ARRA identifies four core reforms that will help the nation meet that goal: (1) adopting rigorous college and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments; (2) establishing data systems and using data for improvement; (3) increasing teacher effectiveness and equitable distribution of effective teachers; and (4) turning around the lowest-performing schools. (ARRA, 2009, p. 2)

What some educators are finding out is that the funds coming from The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act have many strings attached and include punitive

measures for those schools held accountable for not improving student achievement. One of the stated goals of ARRA is to turn around persistently low-performing schools, which “is likely to require a significant overhaul of school staff, leadership, instructional program and calendar, and for the most distressed schools, school closing or consolidation” (ARRA, 2009, p. 13). The ultimate goal of ARRA is to “Aggressively restructure or close a district’s persistently lowest performing schools and reopen with new leadership and staff, a new research-based instructional model, longer school day and year, and intensive job-embedded professional development for teachers” (ARRA, 2009, p. 13).

Faced with this level of accountability, it is no wonder that educational leaders are actively looking for methods and mechanisms to reform their schools and increase student achievement. Administrators must find ways to aggressively restructure their schools using research-based instructional models to improve student achievement, or they will be replaced with someone who will.

It is in this era of high stakes school accountability that educational leaders must be trained to function—to implement positive instructional and educational changes—or the teachers and administrators will be replaced, and eventually the school will be closed. Calls for reform, change, and leadership are not new, but these most recent calls come with sharp accountability teeth. Organizational (school) restructuring, in the form of new scheduling systems, has appeared to be the fix-all in the eyes of many educators desperate to find a way to improve their school (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006).

*Structural Reform: Agent of Change and Catalyst for Leadership?*

As the accountability bar rises, schools continue to explore avenues for increasing student achievement. As a result, some school leaders have examined new teaching methods, emerging technologies, and new organizational structures in the form of alternative scheduling patterns to improve the teaching and learning process. Change is the constant companion and clarion call heard by most school administrators. Unfortunately, successful and lasting educational change does not come easily. In fact, structural reform that leads to effective change “requires a well orchestrated, integrated design that responds to the needs for learning” while bearing in mind the entire organizations’ needs as well (Bolman & Deal, p. 339).

According to Bolman and Deal (1997), “authors and consultants spin out a steady flow of new answers and solutions” in an effort to improve organizations (p. 8). However, different organizations “need very different structures to be effective in their respective environments” (p. xiv). One thing is clear, organizational structure greatly impacts “morale, productivity, and effectiveness” (p. 38), and ultimately will directly impact an individual’s ability to lead.

Many school administrators are constantly looking for ways to improve student achievement. If they can do this, as well as enhance a school’s educational climate and improve the productivity and effectiveness of teachers, then they have achieved an educational win-win situation. Bolman and Deal’s (1997) structural perspective of organizational change perfectly described what such leaders are looking for, “a pattern of roles and relationships that will accomplish collective goals as well as accommodate individual differences” (p. 40). Some educational leaders use Bolman and Deal’s

structural lens of organizational change in an attempt to bridge the gap between the need for systemic organizational change and the need for improved student achievement. Some administrators attempt to do this by implementing a different scheduling system in their school.

Scheduling systems at the secondary level take many forms, but one thing is clear, the entire organizational structure of the school is built around its scheduling system. What is also clear is the fact that change of this magnitude cannot be successfully implemented without effective organizational and instructional leadership. Perhaps no educational reform initiative, affecting the entire organizational and educational structure of a school has generated more debate at the secondary level than that of block scheduling (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Canady & Rettig, 1995; Zepeda & Mayers, 2006).

The literature and proponents supporting block scheduling boast increased student achievement (Fletcher, 1997; Khazzaka, 1997), decreased student referrals (Duel, 1999; Stader & DeSpain, 2001), increased student attendance rates (Creamean & Horvath, 2000; Queen et al., 1996), and improved school climate (Buckman et al., 1995). Equally persuasive, however has been the research saying that the impact of block scheduling was negative relative to increases in student achievement.

According to Knight, De Leon, and Smith (1999), advanced placement (AP) examination scores dropped after block scheduling was implemented; and Cobb et al. (1999) reported that standardized test scores of students on a block schedule dropped significantly. However, Lare, Jablonski, and Salvaterra (2002) reported that academic achievement remained constant after implementation of a block schedule. Fletcher (1997), as well as Pisapia and Westfall (1997), concluded that block scheduling had no



effect on attendance, while Hamdy and Urich (1998) reported that classroom management was more stressful in a block schedule. Although research results on the effects of block scheduling are mixed, it is still being implemented in high schools across the United States.

The 1994 report, *Prisoners of Time*, exhorted that “learning in America is a prisoner of time” (National Education Commission on Time and Learning, p. 7). Observing that the perennial problem of schools running on a fixed clock continued to promote educational inequalities, the Commission urged schools to “reinvent [themselves] around learning, not time, and to fix the design flaw [by using] time in new and better ways” (p. 29). In a study examining time in the school restructuring process, Watts and Castle (1993) found that:

The schedule is God. You can implement any innovation you want in your classroom as long as you don't mess with the schedule. Traditional, inflexible scheduling is based on administrative and institutional needs. New, more flexible scheduling patterns are based on pedagogical practices, the educational needs of students, and the professional needs of teachers. (pp. 306-307)

Block scheduling reforms offered hope for altering the way in which teachers taught and students learned. Block scheduling as a total school restructuring effort emerged as a means to accomplish many things, and a tool through which time in schools could be maximized (Canady & Rettig, 1995).

Some of the things that administrators hoped to accomplish by implementing a block schedule were to include more “hard subjects” in the curriculum, increase

graduation requirements, implement more rigorous standards, promote smaller learning communities, reduce the number of students for whom teachers must prepare for and interact with each day while also reducing the number of classes, assignments, tests, and projects that students must address during a single day and semester (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006).

Administrators also hoped that traditional laboratory and vocational classroom teachers would use active (hands-on) teaching strategies. Using such strategies would hopefully increase student involvement in the teaching/learning process. It also would allow students variable amounts of time for learning without lowering standards, and without punishing those who need more or less time to learn (Hottenstein, 1999; Zepeda & Mayers, 2006).

Schlechty (1997) asserted that “the way time, people, space, knowledge, and technology are organized clearly determines what students will be likely to do” (p. 44). Zepeda and Mayers (2006) studied 58 empirically based research reports and articles to examine the potential merits or pitfalls of block scheduling as a reform strategy for high schools. Their research and analysis was done under the premise that educational reform is the implementation of change with the purpose of improving teaching strategies, and student learning. They stated that successful change starts and ends at the individual level. In order for block scheduling to be considered real reform, “then it should produce convincing statistical evidence of such change as well as documented behavioral change in teacher and students” (p. 142). Empirical findings were inconsistent at best. Typically, the research failed to provide the evidence necessary to declare unequivocally that teachers’ practices and student learning had changed and, therefore, that block

scheduling was a real or successful reform initiative (Schlechty, 1997; Zepeda & Mayers, 2006).

Veal (1999) wrote an article entitled *What Could Define Block Scheduling as a Fad?* Veal, like Wronkovich (1998), defined a fad as something that tends to fade away after time. Veal (1999) found that the use of block scheduling was almost certainly not a fad, because existing schools continue to use it, some for as many as 20 years, while new schools continue to implement it. He noted, however, that many schools, having attempted a block scheduling system, have reverted back to using a traditional schedule. Block scheduling is certainly a mechanism that many educational leaders have used to implement change in their schools. It also appears likely that others have reverted back to a traditional scheduling system because expected results were not realized. Either way, leadership is exercised by a school administrator to institute change with increased academic achievement as the ultimate goal (Zepeda & Mayers, 2006).

#### *Summary*

The definitions of leadership are as varied as the researchers and theorists who write about it (Yukl, 2002). However, at its core, leadership involves individuals making decisions that in some way effects change in either people or organizations (Gorton, 1987). Bass and Avolio's (2004) most recently defined paradigms of leadership appear to be widely applicable to the current challenges faced by individuals tasked with reforming schools while being held strictly accountable for doing so.

The demands for change, accountability, and high academic achievement in today's public secondary schools are coming with more frequency and force from a variety of sources (Boyer, 1983; Cuban, 2004; Lagemann, 1983; Peter D. Hart Research

Associates, 2005; Obama, 2009a; Obama, 2010; Powell et al., 1985; Wraga, 1998, 1999). As recently as November of 2009, the Leaders and Laggards national report summarized what many have believed and stated for some time:

Change is essential. Put bluntly, we believe our education system needs to be reinvented. After decades of political inaction and ineffective reforms, our schools consistently produce students unready for the rigors of the modern workplace. The lack of preparedness is staggering. Our school system needs far-reaching innovation. It is archaic and broken. If anything, we have had too much of such educational innovation over the years, as evidenced by the sequential embrace of fads and the hurried cycling from one new ‘best practice’ to another that so often characterizes K-12 schooling. States and school systems, in other words, have too long confused the novel with the useful. (p. 7)

This statement succinctly summarizes what critics have said for years regarding public schools and those who lead them. Obviously, high schools are bearing the brunt of these demands for leadership and change in an effort to better prepare students to succeed in professions beyond high school. The administrators who are tasked with making these changes in pursuit of reform react to these calls for change in a variety of ways.

One commonly implemented reform program that secondary school leaders make is the adoption and implementation of a different type of scheduling system. Many researchers (Buckman et al., 1995; Duel, 1999; Fletcher, 1997; Khazzaka, 1997; Queen et al., 1997; Snyder, 1997; Stader & DeSpain, 2001; Veal, 1999) believe that a high

school's scheduling system has an overarching and pervasive impact in a variety of areas (i.e., what subjects are taught, what techniques are used by teachers to teach, improved discipline and school climate, and success on standardized tests). Regardless of the reforms administrators make, leadership in enacting that reform is a key ingredient in its ultimate success.

True leadership is not necessarily a style individuals verbally espouse. Leadership can most successfully be determined by what individuals actually do. The primary leadership styles addressed in this study are transformational, transactional and laissez-faire. While every leader is different, most can be identified as portraying attributes of a specific style. However, it is possible for a single individual to display qualities of all three types of leadership at various times and circumstances (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Transformational leaders raise the awareness of their associates to what is important, and move them to see themselves and the opportunities and challenges in a new way. They proactively seek to optimize individual, group and organizational development and innovation. They do this by not just achieving at expected performance levels, but by constantly striving for higher levels of potential while espousing increased levels of moral and ethical standards.

Transactional leaders respond to external demands with constructive and corrective transactions. They clarify specific goals and objectives and provide recognition or other rewards for those who perform at the expected level. Rather than focusing efforts on individuals and the attainment of established goals and higher standards, these leaders tend to focus on the mistakes and errors that others make as they fail to meet the standards.

Finally, some individuals may respond to external calls for change, accountability, and improved academic achievement by not responding at all. Laissez-faire leadership at its core is the demonstration of no leadership at all. These individuals avoid making decisions, do not respond to questions, and ultimately let matters take their own course without their interference (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

Using block scheduling as a common organizational reform initiative implemented by school administrators, this research will explore the types of leadership involved as administrators implement or maintain different organizational structures in their schools. Research will also determine the reasons that school administrators give for changing or not changing their scheduling system. While it is possible for an administrator to espouse and generally implement a certain type of leadership style, there may be circumstances beyond that individual's control that prohibit that leadership style from being actively demonstrated in a reform process.

Regardless of the reform initiative that an administrator chooses to implement, that leader will be required to exercise some form of leadership to bring that reform to successful fruition. However, unless leaders "can think flexibly about organizations and see them from multiple angles, they will be unable to deal with the full range of issues that they will inevitably encounter. Like surfers, leaders must always ride the waves of change" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 379-380).

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study is to fill the void in current research by identifying the leadership style of administrators who choose to change or not to change their school's scheduling system. The current study is not an analysis of the benefits or problems associated with one type of high school scheduling system. However, this study does view the adoption or continued use of a school's scheduling system as an indicator of an administrator's willingness to make significant changes in their school to promote academic achievement. Additionally, through this study, it will be determined what, if any, outside factors beyond the control of the school administrator impact the decision-making ability of school administrators who might otherwise successfully implement or attempt to implement change in their school. Ultimately, this targeted lens through which transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership can be viewed will allow determinations to be made regarding what type of leadership styles are most closely associated with the willingness to make or not make significant changes in a school—specifically as they relate to a high school's scheduling system.

National attention has recently become focused on the plight of public education. Calls for academic accountability and change are on the upswing (Leaders and Laggards, 2009). New federal mandates and initiatives (i.e. Race to the Top, No Child Left Behind, American Reinvestment and Recovery Act) have brought additional attention to the need to rethink the American educational system and for state leaders to show the political will to pursue reform through mandated high standards, accountability, and progress

measures. Some believe that “the key to improving results will be to help schools not only avoid mistakes, but to position themselves better to adopt imaginative solutions” (Leaders and Laggards, 2009, p. 8). Through this study, the leadership styles exhibited by educational leaders which are most likely to result in educational reform will be identified. External factors that play into that leader’s ability and willingness to initiate reform in their school will also be illuminated.

The combined lenses of leadership style, organizational structure and educational reform will form the framework for this study. This is a new and important construct in today’s reform-minded educational setting if practitioners are to learn what type of leadership styles are most associated with actually implementing or not implementing innovative reforms in high schools. As the Leader and Laggards report (2009) stated, “educational innovation is not a fad, but a prerequisite for deep, systematic change, the kind of change that is necessary and long overdue” (p. 9).

In chapter one of the current study, the various calls for educational reform and change were explored. In chapter two, those calls for educational change and structural reform were paired with a demonstrated need for leaders and leadership in our secondary schools as calls for accountability and higher standards increased.

Changing a high school’s scheduling system is a widely-used catalyst for educational reform in secondary schools. Chapter three will pair educational leadership styles with the ability and willingness to change or not change a school’s scheduling system to answer various research questions. In that process, the instrumentation, data collection, research questions, procedures, data analysis, are explained and summarized.



### *Research Questions*

Within the context of this study, the following six research questions were posed as they relate to the constructs of leadership style, leadership experience, and implementation of a school's scheduling system:

1. What is the leadership style (transformational, transactional, laissez-fair) of the following secondary school administrators?:
  - a. Those who have changed their school's scheduling system.
  - b. Those who have not changed their school's scheduling system.
2. Are the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire) of secondary school administrators who have and have not changed their school's scheduling system significantly different?
3. Is there a correlation between the number of years that a secondary school administrator has held a position and the type of leadership style they exhibit?
4. Who is primarily responsible for changing or not changing a secondary school's scheduling system?
5. What are the factors (as derived from an open-ended response) that precipitate secondary school administrators to change or not change their class scheduling systems?

### *Instrumentation*

While analyzing the literature relating to leadership in chapter two, the researcher was able to develop constructs relating to three types of leadership identified by Bass and Avolio (2004): transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. From those constructs, the Full Scheduling Leader Questionnaire (Full SLQ) was designed by the researcher to

identify the leadership styles of those individuals most responsible for establishing and/or maintaining a high school's scheduling system.

To ensure that the Full SLQ contained reliable questions relating to the three leadership styles, 30 questions were created that would identify leadership attributes and behaviors associated with individuals exhibiting transformational, transactional, and laissez-fair leadership. The Preliminary Scheduling Leader Questionnaire (Preliminary SLQ) was created (Appendix B) and contained 30 leadership-descriptive statements (10 questions each) relating to the three types of leadership being assessed. The 30 statements were randomized prior to being listed and numbered in the Preliminary SLQ. Respondents were asked to use the provided scale to rate the 30 leadership profile statements. They were to do this, keeping in mind, an individual person in a leadership position that they have known. They then marked one of seven possible blocks or choices for each question relating to this person. The available response blocks for each question were strongly agree, disagree, slightly disagree, neutral, slightly agree, agree, or strongly agree. Forty-two individuals responded to the Preliminary SLQ.

Using version 17 of SPSS (2009) as a statistical analysis tool, the responses were entered for each questionnaire returned. Then, using statistical analysis procedures, the ten questions relating to the three types of leadership were analyzed for reliability and inter-item correlation using Cronbach's alpha measurements. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items measure a single characteristic or unidimensional construct. "These characteristics are called constructs (or dimensions) because they are constructed by researchers to explain behavior and are not directly observable" (Green & Salkind, 2003, p. 319).

Cronbach's alpha is not considered to be a statistical test in and of itself, it is a coefficient of reliability or consistency. In the case of the Preliminary SLQ, the unidimensional constructs that were measured separately, using 10 items each, were transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. Item analyses using Cronbach's alpha were conducted to decide which items to include or exclude from a scale based upon its reliability and inter-item correlation. The objective of the analysis was to select a set of items that yielded a summed score that was more strongly related to the construct of interest (type of leadership) than any other possible set of items. A reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha score) of .70 or high is considered acceptable in most research situations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; UCLA Academic Technology Services, 2009).

When the ten questions or items relating to the single construct of transformational leadership were analyzed, a Cronbach's alpha score of .895 was attained. After repeated reliability and correlation analyses were completed, the three most unreliable items were removed relating to this construct. As a result, a Cronbach's alpha score of .916 was obtained when the remaining seven items were analyzed together.

When all of the ten questions pertaining to the construct of transactional leadership were analyzed together, a Cronbach's alpha score of .751 was achieved. After removing the three most unreliable items, a Cronbach's alpha score of .853 resulted when the remaining seven items were analyzed as a group.

Finally, the ten questions for the construct of laissez-faire leadership were analyzed and a Cronbach's alpha score of .940 was attained when they were analyzed as

a group. When the three most unreliable items were removed relating to the construct of laissez-faire leadership, a Cronbach's alpha score of .946 resulted when the remaining seven items were analyzed. In this manner, high Cronbach's alpha scores and subscale reliability were achieved for each leadership construct (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) as they related to the seven questions pertaining to each leadership style in the questionnaire.

The resulting 21 questions relating to each of the three leadership constructs were used to create the final instrument used in this study, the Full Scheduling Leader Questionnaire or Full SLQ (Appendix C). Due to the item analysis and reliability data obtained from the Preliminary SLQ, the Full SLQ contained extremely reliable questions relating to the three types of leadership. The constructs relating to transactional, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership had Cronbach's alpha scores of .916, .853, and .946 respectively. These scores show very strong reliability, which could be difficult to achieve because it is common and expected that the same leader may exhibit all three "types of leadership at different times and different situations" (Bass & Avolio, 1993, p. 211). The high Cronbach's alpha scores obtained in the Preliminary SLQ will result in decreased standard errors of measurement obtained in the final results from the Full SLQ (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Gay, 1996).

The Full SLQ begins with questions relating to general demographic information about the school and its scheduling system. It continues with questions relating to demographic information about the person most responsible for the high school's scheduling system. The remaining two questions are open-ended and ask respondents to state their opinions regarding the reasons that the scheduling system in their high school

has changed or remained the same. As a whole, the Full SLQ contains 10 demographic or open-ended questions which are labeled A-J. After the demographic section, the Full SLQ then lists 21 questions relating to the three leadership constructs (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire), seven questions each, as they apply to the person in question. These 21 questions were derived from the results obtained in the Preliminary SLQ.

Like the Preliminary SLQ, respondents were asked to mark one of seven possible blocks for each of the 21 questions which are labeled 1-21. The available responses to each question were: strongly disagree; disagree; slightly disagree; neutral; slightly agree; agree or strongly agree. Subscale scores were assigned to each response from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with the lowest possible total subscale score for each leadership style being 7 (1 point x 7 items) and the highest being 49 (7 points x 7 items).

#### *Data Collection and Sampling*

The data for the current research was collected through the use of the Full Scheduling Leader Questionnaire (Full SLQ). The University of Missouri's Internal Review Board (IRB) approved the questionnaire used in the study which allowed the questionnaire to be sent to potential respondents. After IRB approval, the information from the Full SLQ was transferred to an internet-based survey collection system called Survey Monkey. This on-line survey system was used to retrieve the data from all respondents.

There are 524 superintendents in the state of Missouri, but 74 of them are from K-8 school districts (A. Hartsfield, personal communication, November 25, 2009) that do not have secondary schools and were therefore excluded from the study. An email was sent to the remaining 450 superintendents of K-12 school districts. The email contained a

letter regarding informed consent as well as a link to the Full SLQ on Survey Monkey itself. In this manner, a comprehensive sample of all applicable superintendents in the state of Missouri was achieved.

The sampled secondary schools will fall in two categories, those schools that have changed their scheduling system and those that have not. For the purposes of this study, if a school's scheduling system has changed within five years, then a scheduling change has occurred. If a school has had the same scheduling system for six years or more, then a change has not occurred. The survey was sent to superintendents, but the superintendent may not be the individual who is primarily responsible for the high school's scheduling system changing or remaining the same. In that case, the superintendent filled out the survey, describing the leadership style of the person who was most responsible.

#### *Data Analysis*

Statistical procedures for this study varied according to the analysis needed for each research question. As this is a mixed-design study, both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used. Quantitative analyses were used for research questions one through four, while qualitative analysis was used for research question five.

For both parts of research question one, mean subscale scores derived from the Full SLQ were used to create a leadership profile for those leaders that changed or didn't change their school's scheduling system. The profile showed what type of leader style (transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire) was most closely associated with change. Likewise, it showed what type of leadership style was indicative of a leader who maintained the status quo regarding their school's scheduling system.

For research question two, independent sample *t*-tests compared the mean subscale scores on the Full SLQ for the two groups of administrators—those who changed their scheduling system versus those who did not. Three separate analyses were accomplished using the three leadership style subscales relating to transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership. For these analyses, the independent variable was the type of leadership exhibited. The dependent variables were the types of scheduling systems or change in scheduling systems that this leader implemented. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), “it is customary in educational research to view as unlikely any outcome that has a probability of .05 or less” (p. 253). For this reason, the alpha level for determining statistical significance in this study was .05, which means that the probability of obtaining the projected outcome is only five times (or less) in 100 (Allison, 1999; Gay, 1996; Green & Salkind, 2003).

For research question three, correlation coefficients (Pearson *r*) between item H (How many years has the person most responsible for the high school’s schedule [identified in the previous question] been in their current position?) in the Full SLQ and the subscale scores relating to leadership style were attained. Once again, three separate analyses were done relating to the three types of leadership. Correlation coefficients express the degree of relationship that exists between two sets of scores. All correlation coefficients fall somewhere between +1.00 and -1.00. An *r* of .00 indicates that no relationship exists, while a +1.00 or a -1.00 indicate a perfect positive or negative (inverse) relationship. According to Gay (1996), “since the Pearson *r* results in the most reliable estimate of correlation, its use is preferred even when other methods may be applied” (p. 302). In typical educational research, a correlation is considered significant

with an alpha of .05 or less, which was used in this study. Since Pearson  $r$  values approaching 1.00 or -1.00 are considered very strong, for the purposes of this study,  $r$  values ranging from 1.00 (-1.00) to .70 (-.70) were considered strong. Pearson  $r$  values ranging from .69 (-.69) to .40 (-.40) were considered moderate, while  $r$  values of .39 (-.39) to .10 (-.10) were considered weak. Pearson  $r$  levels below the .10 (-.10) level showed insignificant correlation existing. (Allison, 1999; Gay, 1996; Green & Salkind, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

For research question four, a descriptive analysis was done using items G (Who do you believe is most responsible for the high school's schedule changing or remaining the same?) and H (How many years has the person most responsible for the high school's schedule—identified in the previous question—been in their position?) on the Full SLQ. Frequencies and percentages were derived relating to the position of the individual most responsible for a school's scheduling system. The mean number of years that the person has held the position was also reported (Green & Salkind, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

Finally, an analysis was done for research question five relating to the open-ended questions asked in items I (If your high school's scheduling system has changed in the last five years, why do you believe the scheduling system changed?) and J (If your high school scheduling system has remained the same for five years or more, why do you believe the scheduling system has remained the same?) in the Full SLQ. Emerging themes were explored and reported regarding the reasons or rationale for changing or not changing a school's scheduling system (Gay, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Thomas & Brubaker, 2000).



### *Summary*

Upon completion of the review of literature, it became apparent that few studies had viewed educational leadership in the context of educational reform efforts at the secondary level. However, the review of literature did highlight the need for leadership if such efforts are to be successful. Bass and Avolio's (2004) constructs of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership were essential in identifying and studying various leadership behaviors that would lead to successful and innovative educational change.

The research design and methodology used in this study were dictated by the study's purpose and research questions. The purpose of the study was to determine the leadership style of those individuals most responsible for changing or maintaining a high school's scheduling system and what internal or external factors might effect the ability of a person to make meaningful changes in a high school setting. The three types of leadership identified and studied were transformational, transactional and laissez-faire. The researcher viewed the adoption or continued use of a school's scheduling system as an indicator of an administrator's willingness to make significant changes in their school in response to the never-ending calls for accountability, reform and improved academic achievement.

The analysis began with the development and use of the Preliminary Scheduling Leader Questionnaire. The data and information gathered from analyses of this preliminary questionnaire allowed for the use of only highly reliable questions in the Full SLQ relating to the constructs of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership. The Full Scheduling Leader Questionnaire gathered demographic, descriptive

and open-ended response data from educational leaders across the state of Missouri. Using SPSS as a statistical analysis and predictive research tool, the data was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, mean subscale scores, independent sample t-tests, Pearson correlations, frequencies and percentages. Additionally, emerging themes were gathered and analyzed from opened-ended responses.

The ensuing chapters of the dissertation are organized in such a way as to analyze the data in chapter four and draw inferences and conclusions from the analyses in chapter five. These chapters offer limitations of the study as well as inferences that may be drawn and conclusions that may be made as a result of the research. Recommendations for future research will also be addressed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of the study was to determine whether an administrator's leadership style (transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire) impacted their willingness or ability to change aspects of their school which have a direct impact on student achievement. The study's purpose was also to determine what, if any, additional factors impacted the decision-making process of such leaders as they contemplated implementing change in their school as a result of incessant calls for educational reform and increased accountability.

The study specifically applied to administrators and education initiatives aimed at improving student achievement in the state of Missouri. Jay Nixon, the governor of Missouri, was interviewed in February of 2010 by representatives of the Missouri School Boards Association regarding these issues. In that interview, Governor Nixon acknowledged the constant attacks on public education that schools and administrators have dealt with and the inadequacy of quick fixes to problems in education. He stated:

It's really challenging to run local school districts. A lot of folks think, in essence, that they can fix public education. There are these folks that want these sound bite fixes to solve the real challenges. Criticizing education is cheap. Supporting education is expensive, but worthwhile. There is clearly a tax on public education right now. There are political issues coming at public education. It's important that we stay united together to

improve public education in this state, and I'm confident that we're going to do just that. (p. 1)

The constant desire to fix and improve education was addressed in this study. As a result, it is hoped that a clearer picture of the leadership challenges facing educators, as well as potential solutions facing education, can be addressed and resolved so a less taxing educational environment will be possible for students, teachers, and administrators alike.

Every high school must use some type of scheduling system to organize their instructional day. The type of schedule will determine the number of classes in the day and the length of each class. Additionally, every leader will display a leadership style to a certain extent. This study paired the leadership style (profile) of administrators to the type of schedule they used in their school to determine their willingness or ability to impact student achievement through their school's scheduling system (Bass and Avolio, 2004).

Demographic and descriptive data were obtained through a questionnaire. The data was analyzed using the software program SPSS, version 11. The results of these analyses were quantified and reported as percentages, means, subscale scores, Pearson  $r$  correlations and thematic patterns derived from the open-ended responses.

#### *Demographic Data*

The population of this sample was limited to public school districts in the state of Missouri. There are 524 school districts in the state. However, of those 524 districts, there are 74 districts that do not educate secondary students. These K-8 school districts were excluded from this study. There is also one non-traditional school district that

educates only severely handicapped students. This district has no scheduling system per se, so it was also excluded from the study. That left 449 school districts eligible to participate in the study. There were 195 responses to the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 43%.

Since the questionnaire was sent to superintendents, it was unsurprising to find that 99% of respondents were superintendents. One respondent was both the principal and superintendent, and one respondent was an assistant superintendent. All other respondents were superintendents. The average number of years that the respondents had been in their current position ranged from 1-14. The average number of years that the respondents had been in their position was 4.5 years. These same individuals had an average of slightly over 23 total years per person working in education.

The 195 schools districts used various types of scheduling systems in their high schools. The type of scheduling systems implemented in the 195 school districts has been summarized in Table 1. The traditional 7-period day, with its standard seven classes meeting from 45 to 50 minutes each, was the scheduling system of choice. Slightly over 63% of respondents stated that they were currently using this scheduling system. In total, the two non-block scheduling formats, the standard 7-period day and a modified 7 or 8-period day, accounted for 82% of the surveyed schedules currently in use in Missouri's high schools. That left only 18% of the surveyed high schools using some form of block scheduling.

Table 1

*Type of Scheduling System Currently Used*

Schedule Type	Response Count	Response Percentage
Standard 7-Period Day	123	63.1%
Modified 7 or 8 Period Day	37	19.0%
8 Block (A/B schedule)	21	10.8%
4 Block	1	0.5%
Modified Block	11	5.6%
Other	2	1.0%

*Note.* N = 195.

Each superintendent who responded to the questionnaire was asked how long their high school had used their current scheduling system. Responses indicated that nearly 14% of high school had changed their scheduling system in the last three years and 37% had changed their scheduling system in the last nine years. Nearly half (49.2%) of all high schools have changed their scheduling system in the last 12 years. However, a significant percentage of high schools (39%) have not changed their scheduling system in the last 21 years. Table 2 summarizes the responses regarding how long high schools in Missouri have used their current scheduling system.

Table 2

*Length of Time Using Current Scheduling System*


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Years Using Current System	Response Count	Response Percentage
1-3 Years	27	13.8%
4-6 Years	26	13.3%
7-9 Years	20	10.3%
10-12 Years	23	11.8%
13-15 Years	12	6.2%
16-20 Years	11	5.6%
21+ Years	76	39.0%

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*Note.* N = 195.

Respondents were also asked to indicate what type of scheduling system, if any, was in place prior to what they were currently using. This information indicated whether or not attempts to effect change in this aspect of their school had been made, and if so, how long ago. While nearly 34% of schools had not recently changed scheduling system, more schools changed their schedules from a standard 7-period day (37.9%) than from any other single scheduling type. The next-highest scheduling type from which schools changed was the 8-block (alternating A/B day) schedule, with nearly 12% of schools having changed from using this type of scheduling system.

The results demonstrating changes to scheduling systems are summarized Table 3.

Table 3

*Type of Former Scheduling System*

Schedule Type	Response Count	Response Percentage
Standard 7-Period Day	74	37.9%
No Change in Schedule	66	33.8%
8 Block (A/B schedule)	23	11.8%
Other	16	8.2%
Modified 7 or 8 Period Day	10	5.1%
4 Block	3	1.5%
Modified Block	3	1.5%

*Note.* N = 195.

Several respondents (8.2%) chose the other category. These respondents were asked to specify why they chose this category. The typical response was “unknown” or “don’t know what was used in the past.” While the “other” category may have ranked fourth highest in response rate, it typically didn’t represent a certain scheduling system that had been used—it was usually marked when the superintendent filling out the questionnaire didn’t know what scheduling system had been used in the past.

*Research Questions*

The following research questions were examined during this study:

1. What is the leadership style (transformational, transactional, laissez-fair) of the following secondary school administrators?:



- a. Those who have changed their school's scheduling system.
  - b. Those who have not changed their school's scheduling system.
2. Are the leadership styles (transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire) of secondary school administrators who have and have not changed their school's scheduling system significantly different?
  3. Is there a correlation between the number of years that a secondary school administrator has held a position and the type of leadership style they exhibit?
  4. Who is primarily responsible for changing or not changing a secondary school's scheduling system?
  5. What are the factors (as derived from an open-ended response) that precipitate secondary school administrators to change or not change their class scheduling systems?

#### *Findings for Research Questions 1-4*

The following data is organized in such a way as to address each of the research questions individually. Various statistical analysis tools were used to obtain data relating to each research question.

For both parts of research question one, mean subscale scores were derived from the results of the questionnaire relating to whether the leader in question displayed the attributes of a specific leadership style (i.e. transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire). Respondents were asked to mark one of seven possible blocks for each of the 21 questions. The available response blocks to each question were: strongly disagree; disagree; slightly disagree; neutral; slightly agree; agree or strongly agree. Subscale scores were assigned to each response from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree),

with the lowest possible total subscale score for each leadership style being 7 (1 point x 7 items) and the highest being 49 (7 points x 7 items).

These leadership profiles were analyzed looking at those who had initiated change (scheduling system) and those who had maintained the status quo (not changed) regarding their scheduling system. Of the 195 total questionnaire respondents, only 154 responded or had complete (usable) responses to this non-demographic, leadership style portion of the survey. Of the 154 respondents, 49 (31.8%) indicated that they had changed their school's scheduling system while 105 (68.2%) indicated that they had not changed their scheduling system in the last five years. The Table 4 summarizes and compares the mean subscale scores of those who changed and those who didn't change their scheduling system. The data is broken down in Table 4 in such a way as to compare the mean scores and standard deviations associated with each type of leadership—demonstrating a leadership profile using mean subscale scores.

The mean subscale scores of those leaders who changed their scheduling system (the first part of research question one) were almost identical to those who exhibited transformational (mean = 38.92) and transactional leadership (mean = 38.63). The mean subscale score for leaders who changed their schedule and exhibited a laissez-faire leadership style was noticeably less (mean = 18.22) than the mean scores of the other two leadership style profiles (transformational and transactional).

The 105 respondents that had not changed their scheduling system (the second part of research question one) showed varied mean subscale scores for each leadership style. Leaders who had not changed their scheduling system had a mean subscale score

of 40.08 for transformational leadership, a mean of 38.64 for transactional leadership, and a mean of 15.10 for laissez-faire leadership.

Table 4

*Leadership Profile Means (Changed Schedule vs. Unchanged Schedule)*

Changed vs. Not Changed	Transformational	Transactional	Laissez-Faire
Changed Schedule (Mean)	38.92	38.63	18.22
Standard Deviation	7.29	5.51	8.26
N	49	49	49
Unchanged Schedule (Mean)	40.62	38.65	15.10
Standard Deviation	6.22	5.17	6.66
N	105	105	105
Total	40.08	38.64	16.10
Standard Deviation	6.61	5.26	7.32
N	154	154	154

Comparing the 49 respondents who had changed their school’s scheduling system to the 105 respondents who had not, leads to research question two which was to determine differences (if any) in leadership style between those who had and had not changed their scheduling system. The data showed clear differences in mean scores and

standard deviations between the two groups. The individuals who had not changed their scheduling system had a noticeably higher mean subscale score (40.42) relating to being a transformational leader than those who had changed (38.92) their scheduling system. However, the mean subscale scores of those individuals who had changed compared to those who had not changed their school's scheduling system were virtually identical when looking at a transactional leadership profile (38.63 for those who changed, 38.64 for those who had not changed). The mean subscale scores of those demonstrating a laissez-faire leadership profile differed substantially for those who had changed (18.22) scheduling systems compared to those who had not changed (15.10) their school's scheduling system.

For research question two, independent sample *t*-tests compared the mean subscale scores for the two groups of administrators—those who changed their scheduling system versus those who did not. Three separate analyses were done using the three leadership style subscales relating to transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership. These analyses are summarized in Table 5.

At the .05 level of significance, there were no statistically significant differences between the transformational and transactional leadership for leaders who changed and did not change their scheduling systems. However, Laissez-Faire leadership demonstrated a .013 level of significance, which shows that there is a significant difference for these leaders. The mean difference was 3.12.

Table 5

*Independent Sample t-Test for Equality of Means Comparing Schedule Leaders*

Leadership Type	<i>t</i> -values	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.
Transformational Leader	-1.49	152	.137	-1.70
Transactional Leader	-0.02	152	.987	-0.02
Laissez-Faire Leader*	2.50	152	.013	3.12

Note. \*Significant at the .05 level.

For research question three, correlation coefficients (Pearson *r*) between item H (How many years has the person most responsible for the high school's schedule [identified in the previous question] been in their current position?) in the Full SLQ and the subscale scores relating to leadership style were attained. Three separate analyses were done relating to the three types of leadership. Correlation coefficients express the degree of relationship that exists between two sets of scores. All correlation coefficients fall somewhere between +1.00 and -1.00. An *r* of .00 indicates that no relationship exists, while a +1.00 or a -1.00 indicate a perfect positive or negative (inverse) relationship. A correlation is considered significant with an alpha of .05 or less, which was used in this study. Since Pearson *r* values approaching 1.00 or -1.00 are considered very strong, for the purposes of this study, *r* values ranging from 1.00 (-1.00) to .70 (-.70) were considered strong. Pearson *r* values ranging from .69 (-.69) to .40 (-.40) were considered moderate, while *r* values of .39 (-.39) to .10 (-.10) were considered weak. Pearson *r* levels below the .10 (-.10) level showed insignificant correlation existing. The statistical findings are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

*Correlation Between Leadership Style and Years in Position*


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Type of Leader	Years of Scheduler in Current Position
Transformational Leader	
Pearson Correlation	-.048
Sig. (2-tailed)	.527
Transactional Leader	
Pearson Correlation	-.063
Sig. (2-tailed)	.409
Laissez-Faire Leader	
Pearson Correlation	.144
Sig. (2-tailed)	.058

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*Note.* N = 175.

Given a Pearson  $r$  of .144, the analysis indicates that those individuals who have been in their position the longest are more likely to demonstrate a laissez-faire leadership style ( $p = .058$ ). The Pearson  $r$  values of -.048 for transformational leadership, and -.063 for transactional leadership are not significant. As a result, there is no statistical correlation between the number of years holding a leadership position and demonstrating either a transformational or transactional leadership style.

For research question four, both statistical and descriptive analyses were done pertaining to the results obtained from items G (Who do you believe is most responsible for the high school's schedule changing or remaining the same?) and H (How many years

has the person most responsible for the high school's schedule—identified in the previous question—been in their position?) on the Full SLQ. Frequencies and percentages were derived relating to the position of the individual most responsible for a school's scheduling system. The mean number of years that the person has held the position was also reported.

As can be seen in Table 7, the high school principal was deemed to be the individual most responsible for initiating change through the school's scheduling system (124 out of 195—63.6%) responses), with the superintendent being selected with the second highest percentage at 12.8%). However, several respondents (10.8%) marked the "Other" category, and further specified their response. The majority of these "other" responses stated that they felt that a combination of the individuals listed were responsible for the scheduling system in place. Others specified that a committee, made up of individuals from the list, was responsible for changing or maintaining the high school schedule.

Some examples of specified "other" responses included the following: "a combination of above listed parties," "central office cabinet plus board," "both administrators and teachers working together," "a committee of stakeholders," "combination of counselors, principals, teachers, and the community," "committee including all of the above." A couple of respondents listed DESE (the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) as the party responsible for scheduling in their school. No respondent felt that students, parents, or community members alone were primarily responsible for the scheduling system in the high school. These three choices

all received zero votes on the questionnaire, but were mentioned often as being part of decision-making process in the specified statements from the “other” category selection.

Table 7

*Person(s) Responsible for High School’s Scheduling System*

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Responsible Person(s)	Response Count	Response Percentage
Principal	124	63.6%
Superintendent	25	12.8%
Other (please specify)	21	10.8%
Teacher(s)	10	5.1%
Counselor	6	3.1%
School Board Member(s)	4	2.1%
Other Central Office Administrator	3	1.5%
Other Building Level Administrator	2	1.0%
Parents(s)	0	0.0%
Community Member(s) (PTA, etc.)	0	0.0%
Student(s)	0	0.0%

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*Note.* N = 195.

After naming the individual most responsible for implementation of the scheduling system, respondents were then asked to state how long that individual had been working in that position. Their responses are summarized in Table 8.



Table 8

*How Long Person Responsible for Schedule Has Been in Their Position*

Years in Position	Response Count	Response Percentage
1-3 Years	85	43.6%
4-6 Years	47	24.1%
7-9 Years	29	14.9%
10-12 Years	13	6.7%
13-15 Years	8	4.1%
16-20 Years	0	0.0%
21+ Years	13	6.7%

*Note.* N = 195.

A significant percentage (43.6%) of the individuals (primarily principals) responsible for the high school scheduling system had been in their position from 1 to 3 years. Almost 68% had been in their position for six years or less. A relatively small percentage of individuals had been in their position from 10-15 years (10.8%). No individual had been in their position from 16-20 years, but 6.7% had been in their position for 21 years or more.

*Findings for Research Question 5*

The results for research question five, detailing the factors that precipitated secondary school administrators to change or not change their class scheduling systems, were obtained by examining the responses related to the open-ended questions asked in two questions on the survey. These questions were in items I (If your high school's

scheduling system has changed in the last five years, why do you believe the scheduling system changed?) and J (If your high school scheduling system has remained the same for five years or more, why do you believe the scheduling system has remained the same?) in the Full SLQ.

Additional informative data was extrapolated from the open-ended responses in combination with the demographic data obtained from questions D (What type of scheduling system does your high school use?) and F (What type of high school scheduling system, if any, was being used prior to what is currently in place?). Emerging themes were explored and reported regarding the reasons or stated rationale for changing or not changing a school's scheduling system.

Of the 195 respondents to the questionnaire, 52 gave specific responses as to why their school's scheduling system had changed in the past five years (question I). Table 9 summarizes this data for how scheduling systems were changed during the past five years. Besides stating why they chose to change their scheduling systems, the combined demographic and open-ended response data, as shown in Table 9, also demonstrated what scheduling system each school had used prior to making the change and what system was put in place as a result of the scheduling system change.

Table 9 shows that 44.23% (23 of 52 schools) of those who changed their schedules in the past five years actually changed from a standard 7-period day to a modified 7 or 8- period day. In fact, exactly 50% (26 schools) of all changes were made from a standard 7-period day to some other form of scheduling system. In total, nearly 60%, 31 of the 52 total schools that changed actually did so from a traditional scheduling format (a standard 7-period or modified 7-8 period day) rather than from some form of

block scheduling. Of the 31 schools that changed from a traditional schedule, only 3 schools (9.68%) actually chose to change to a form of block scheduling while all others chose another traditional scheduling format—some form of a 7 or 8 period day.

Table 9

*Schedule Changes in the Past Five Years*

Previous Schedule	New Schedule	Number Changed	Percent
7-Period Day	Modified 7/8 Period Day	23	44.23%
8 Block	7 Period Day	10	19.23%
8 Block	Modified 7/8 Period Day	5	9.62%
Modified 7/8 Period Day	7-Period Day	4	7.69%
Modified Block	7-Period Day	2	3.85%
7-Period Day	8 Block	2	3.85%
7-Period Day	Modified Block	1	1.92%
8 Block	Modified Block	1	1.92%
6 block	Modified Block	1	1.92%
Modified Block	Modified 7/8 Period Day	1	1.92%
4 Block	Modified 7/8 Period Day	1	1.92%
Modified 7/8 Period Day	Modified 7/8 Period Day	1	1.92%

*Note.* N = 52.

Since 60% of the schools that changed schedules did so from a traditional scheduling format, the remaining 40% (21 schools) of the schools that changed did so from a block scheduling format. Of those 21 schools changing from a block scheduling

system, slightly over 90% (19 schools) chose to change to a traditional schedule rather than to another form of block scheduling.

As seen in Table 9, 47 of 52 (90%) of those schools that changed their schedules chose to change to some form of traditional scheduling system (7 or 8-periods per day). Only 5 schools (10%) chose to change their scheduling system to a block scheduling format. Of those five schools which changed to a block schedule, two had already been using another form of block scheduling.

The open-ended responses obtained from the individuals explaining why they had changed their scheduling system in the past five years can be grouped into three main categories:

1. Those that changed in order to improve student achievement through improved instruction and greater course selection.
2. Those that had problems with the previous scheduling system itself.
3. Those that changed due to an internal leadership position and/or philosophical change.

The first group, those that changed in order to improve student achievement through improved instruction and greater course selection, was by far the largest. Of the 52 responses, 36 fell within this category. Twelve of the 36 responses which fell in this category specifically mentioned that they changed due to a desire to build in more collaboration time between teachers because they were trying to adopt a Professional Learning Community (PLC) philosophy and focus. Two responses, typical of this group, were “teachers were implementing PLCs and trying to incorporate tutoring during the

school day,” and “we were looking for ways to embed collaboration time and intervention time into the regular school day.”

Another sub-category within this group of 36 were four schools that were required to change their schedules because of the time constraints involved in sharing teachers through interactive television (ITV) classes. A typical response from this group was “to match other schools in our ITV Consortium.” A substantial number of responses (14 out of 36) mentioned the need to change scheduling systems in order to offer students more classes due to the statewide changes in graduation requirements. Typical responses included “with new graduation requirements, students were unable to take elective classes,” “mandatory graduation requirements have changed the course of study for most students resulting in less choices of electives,” and “it changed due to the additional mandatory core courses required by the state.”

A recurring theme represented by the majority in this first group of responses was the desire to improve student achievement by making changes to the scheduling system. Most respondents were initiating changes in their high schools in some way (i.e. adding course offerings, providing for increased teacher collaboration, moving towards a professional learning communities (PLC) philosophy, using response to intervention (RTI) strategies, implementing ITV classes, etc.) which required a change in the scheduling system. However, in this first group represented by 36 of the 52 schools, the scheduling system itself was not the mechanism of change. The change in the scheduling system was a resultant requirement of some other overarching educational program change that was being made.

It is interesting to note that 22 of the 36 schools in this category changed from a traditional 7-period day to a modified 7/8-period day. These schools did not change to a block schedule format, they chose instead to add an additional course in the instructional day and shorten each class to accommodate the additional course offering. The most frequently stated reason for making this particular change was “to allow students to take more elective classes due to DESE graduation requirements.”

Nine of the 36 schools changed from an 8-block schedule back to a 7-period day. A typical response from this group was “we are changing to a 7 period day next year, more instructional time for students, less missed instructional time when gone and more student contact are our biggest reasons to go back.” The remaining two schools changed from a modified 7/8-period day to a traditional 7-period day due to reasons associated with “student achievement.”

The second group of schools, those that changed because they had problems with the previous scheduling system itself, were represented by eight of the 52 schools that listed reasons for changing their scheduling system. Unlike the first group, all eight of these schools had changed from a form of block scheduling. Not one chose to implement another form of block scheduling, all chose to implement a traditional 7 or modified 7/8 period day. Typical responses included, “teachers and students wasted too much time,” “did not care for the 8-block,” and “home work issues, procrastination.”

The final group of schools that changed their scheduling system did so because of a local change in leadership. This group was represented by 7 of the 52 schools. Five of the schools changed from an 8-block format and two changed from a traditional 7-period day scheduling format. Six chose to change to a traditional 7 or modified 7/8 period day,

while only one chose a form of block scheduling. This one school had been using an 8-block system and chose another modified block scheduling system. Typical responses from this group of eight schools included, “changed leadership in district,” “Superintendent did not believe that an 8 block system was educationally sound for all course areas,” and “we are changing to an 8-period day next year, new principal this year.”

The second part of research question five involved obtaining responses regarding why individual high schools had decided to maintain their current scheduling system for at least the past five years (question J in the survey). Of the 195 respondents to the questionnaire, 125 gave specific responses to this question. The open-ended responses obtained from the individuals explaining why their scheduling system had remained the same for five years or more fell into three main categories or thematic groups:

1. Because the current schedule met their needs, worked well, and they liked it.
2. Because of an unwillingness to change and/or comfort with the status quo.
3. Because of staffing and/or budgetary concerns.

The largest group of respondents, 85 of 125 responses (68%), fell within the first category who had kept their current schedule because it worked well and they liked it. The second largest group representing 25 of 125 respondents (20%) fell within the second category who were opposed to any change because they were comfortable with the status quo. The final group, which maintained their current schedule due to staffing and/or budgetary concerns, were represented by 15 of the 125 respondents, or 12% of the total. Besides stating why they chose to keep their current scheduling system intact, the

data also showed what scheduling system each school had used or maintained for at least the past five years.

Overall, of the 125 schools that chose to maintain their current schedule, 106 (85%) did so by choosing to keep their traditional 7-period day or a modified 7 or 8 period day. Only 19 of the 125 schools (15%) that had maintained a schedule for at least five years did so using a block scheduling format. Table 10 summarizes this by showing how many schools chose to retain their schedule and what type of schedule it was.

As shown in Table 10, 68% of those who kept their schedule did so because they liked it and it met their needs. Twenty percent maintained their current schedule because they liked the status quo and were opposed to change in general. Only 12% of the schools kept their current scheduling system due to staff or budget concerns.

The percentage of schools maintaining their schedule (using either traditional or block formats) were very comparable in the first two categories (86% and 88% for traditional schedules, and 14% and 12% for block schedules). However, those schools that listed staffing and budgetary concerns showed a marked difference in comparison to the first two categories— 74% for traditional and 27% for block schedule.

While many of the open-ended responses were merely short comments like “it works” and “no desire to change,” or “staffing,” many respondents gave multiple reasons for maintaining their current schedule. These responses could have fit into two or all three categories. For example, one response related to the challenges inherent in sharing teachers, the difficulty of making any successful change, and the lack of need for change because their students were performing well. This respondent stated “Sharing of employees throughout the district. Example: Art teacher teaching at both elementary and



high school. Change is difficult. If district is performing at a high level compared to the state average, why change?" Several schools listed multiple reasons for maintaining their current scheduling system, but the majority fell wholly within one of the three categories.

Table 10

*Why Schools Maintained (Not Changed) Their Current Scheduling System*

Why Schedules Stay the Same	Type of Maintained Schedule	Number of Schools in Category	Percent in Category	Percent of Total
Meets Needs:				
	Traditional Schedule	73	86%	58%
	Block Schedule	12	14%	10%
	Total	85	100%	68%
Like Status Quo:				
	Traditional Schedule	22	88%	18%
	Block Schedule	3	12%	2%
	Total	25	100%	20%
Staff Concerns:				
	Traditional Schedule	11	73%	9%
	Block Schedule	4	27%	3%
	Total	15	100%	12%

*Note.* N = 125.

The open-ended responses from the schools in the first category (the schools that maintained their current schedule because it met their needs and worked well) were all

closely aligned regarding their stated rationale for doing so. Some examples were, “it has stayed the same because of the success we have with it,” “It works! It provides a variety of course exposure to this smaller population, and the community is supportive of the class offerings for students,” “Teachers, students and parents like the block system, and money has not been a problem even though it is more expensive to run than a 7-period day, that may change soon with the current economy,” and “the schedule works for us. The district builds a schedule similar to another school. The vocational students attend a different school.” The common theme among these schools was that they liked their current schedule because it met their needs as demonstrated through their students’ academic success.

The 25 respondents that fell within the second category (those who did not change scheduling systems because of an outright unwillingness or desire to change) had many telling remarks. Some of these were, “people are used to the status quo,” “staff’s reticence to change,” “this is the way it has been done forever,” “fear of change and complacency,” and “traditional, economical, and comfortable.” A popular theme within this group was summarized by one person who stated that they had not changed their scheduling system “because we live in a very conservative community where people generally feel that if it was good enough then, then it is good enough now.”

The final group of 11 respondents listed several common reasons for maintaining their schedule, mostly dealing with personnel (staffing) and budget considerations. Some of the responses obtained from this group were, “district cost, personnel issue (certified teachers), area expectations,” “class sections, sharing of teachers with the middle school,” and “budget, difficult to fund staffing for an 8 block schedule in a school our

size.” All four of the schools that were maintaining the block scheduling system in this category listed “staffing” concerns as a reason for not changing. This same rationale was indicated by the majority of the schools that were maintaining a traditional 7 or 8 period day. None of the block scheduling schools listed cost considerations as a reason for maintaining their current schedule, while many of the schools using a traditional schedule listed “budget” and “cost” as a reason for not changing to another scheduling system.

### *Summary*

The purpose of the study was to determine whether an administrator’s leadership style impacted their willingness or ability to change aspects of their school which have a direct impact on student achievement. An additional purpose was to determine what additional factors impacted the decision-making process of leaders as they contemplated changing or maintaining their scheduling system.

The data was collected by sending out a questionnaire to every superintendent in the state. There were 449 eligible respondents, 195 of which did respond to the questionnaire. An analysis of the data began by organizing and reporting the basic demographic information about each respondent and their school district. Leadership profiles were then determined based upon the leadership portion of the questionnaire. The individuals in charge of the high school schedule were found to have a transformational, transactional or laissez-faire leadership style.

An analysis of the data showed that there were no significant differences between transformational and transactional leaders’ willingness or ability to change their schools scheduling system. However, there was a significant difference in the laissez-faire leader’s willingness or ability to initiate change in a school by changing its scheduling

system. It was also found that more experienced leaders were more likely to manifest a laissez-faire leadership style.

High school principals were found to be the individuals most responsible for the high school's scheduling system, while superintendents were found to be the second most responsible. A combination or group of individuals (administrators, teachers, counselors, board members, etc.) were found to be the third most likely decision-maker responsible for the school's scheduling system either changing or remaining the same. It was found that the individuals responsible for the scheduling system had typically held their position for a short period of time.

The final portion of the questionnaire and resultant analysis dealt with open-ended responses regarding the reasons given for changing or not changing scheduling systems in each school. There were 52 schools that gave reasons for changing their scheduling system while 125 schools gave reasons for not changing. It was found that the vast majority (90%) of schools that changed their scheduling systems, actually changed to some form of traditional scheduling system. Likewise, 85% of those schools that chose to not change their scheduling system continued to use a traditional rather than a block scheduling format.

The reasons that schools gave for changing their scheduling system fell into three categories: (a). Those wanting to improve student achievement through improved instruction and greater course selection; (b). Those that had problems with the previous scheduling system itself, and (c). Those that changed due to an internal leadership position and/or philosophical change. The majority (69%) of those that changed schedules fell within the first category.

The reasons that schools gave for not changing or maintaining their current scheduling system also fell into one of three categories: (a). Because the current schedule met their needs, worked well, and they liked it; (b). Because of an unwillingness to change and/or comfort with the status quo, and (c). Because of staffing and/or budgetary concerns. Once again, the majority (68%) of those that gave reasons for not changing their school's scheduling system fell within the first category.

Demographic, statistical, and thematic patterns derived from the open-ended responses were reported and analyzed in this chapter. In Chapter 5, the possible reasons for obtaining these results will be discussed. Additionally, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study will be addressed.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Design and Procedures*

While calls for educational change began more than 100 years ago and have continued since that time (Elliot, 1893; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1906; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Commission on Time and Learning, 1994), a major premise of this study was that current educational leaders face unprecedented criticism and calls for accountability for the performance of their students from the highest echelons of state and national government (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009; DESE, 2009c; Duncan, 2009; Herbert, 2009; Obama, 2009a; Obama, 2009b). As educational and achievement standards are raised, penalties are put in place for not meeting those standards (No Child Left Behind, 2002; DESE, 2007a). As a result, many secondary school leaders are eager to find and implement educational initiatives that will promote student learning in order to respond in this new era of reform and accountability.

As recently as March of 2010, President Barack Obama outlined new educational priorities and directives, calling it his *Blueprint for Reform*. He stated these objectives in order to announce his intention to change and reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind, 2002). In the introduction to this document, President Obama stated:

A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their

students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow. We must do better. Together, we must achieve a new goal, that by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in college completion. We must raise the expectations for our students, for our schools, and for ourselves – this must be a national priority... This effort will require the skills and talents of many, but especially our nation’s teachers, principals, and other school leaders. (p. 1)

Educational reform does not happen in a vacuum. It requires talented educational leaders, working with and through numerous stakeholders in a school and community, who are willing to initiate change and educational reforms within a school. As President Obama (2010) summarized, this reform effort requires “our best thinking and resources – to support innovative approaches to teaching and learning; to bring lasting change to our lowest-performing schools; and to investigate and evaluate what works and what can work better in America’s schools” (p. 2). Innovation...change...reform—this is the mantra continually heard by educators across this country, a mantra which they are expected to agree with, perpetuate, and follow in their elusive struggle to produce higher achieving students.

Several researchers have shown that the organizational structure of a high school impacts many aspects of the learning environment, including student achievement (Fletcher, 1997; Goodlad, 1984; Knight et al.; 1999; Sizer, 1984; Stader & DeSpain, 2001; Zepeda & Mayers, 2006). Due to the apparent strong ties between organizational structure and student achievement, many educational leaders have adapted or changed the

organizational structure of their school—their scheduling system—to implement educational reform initiatives to promote learning and increase student achievement (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Canady & Rettig, 1995; Cobb et al., 1999; Hallinger, 2003; Morgan, 1997).

Another premise of this study was that every educational leader would have an identifiable leadership profile. This profile would be determined by how others viewed them in the performance of their various leadership duties defined by their leadership position in the organizational structure. This demonstrated leadership profile would determine whether each leader exhibited the attributes and traits of transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leaders. This leadership profile could be determined by responses obtained from a questionnaire about each leader and how they were perceived by others as they fulfilled their leadership duties (Avolio, 1999; Avolio & Bass, 1991; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994).

A Preliminary Scheduling Leader Questionnaire (Preliminary SLQ) was developed and used to determine which leadership criteria were most directly related to the three types of leadership in question. Using the established leadership criteria from the Preliminary SLQ, the Full Scheduling Leader Questionnaire (Full SLQ) was developed. This questionnaire was used to determine the leadership profile of those individuals who are primarily responsible for initially establishing or maintaining a high school's scheduling system.

The Full SLQ was sent to every superintendent in the state of Missouri that had a high school. These superintendents were asked a variety of demographic questions about themselves, their high school's scheduling system, and the person they felt was most



responsible for that scheduling system. Over 40% of eligible superintendents in the state responded to the questionnaire, providing ample information and data which was analyzed. The demographic information was generally reported and analyzed using frequencies and percentages, while the more complex data was analyzed using SPSS and was reported using a variety of statistical tools. The open-ended responses from the Full SLQ were reported using frequencies and percentages and by exploring emerging themes which became apparent as the responses were analyzed and categorized.

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be reviewed and discussed. Conclusions will be drawn regarding what was found and what might be inferred from those conclusions. Limitations of the study will be addressed and implications for future practice and research will be identified and discussed.

#### *Discussion of Findings*

The initial data gathered in this study related to basic demographic data about each high school and the school's educational leaders. Almost 100% of the survey respondents were superintendents of K-12 school districts. While the majority of these individuals had slightly over 23 years working in education, the average number of years that they had worked in their current position was only 4.5 years. Since the majority of respondents had not even been in their current position for five years, the responses they gave regarding why their high school had changed or not changed their scheduling system in the past five years may reflect what they had heard but not actually experienced personally in that school district.

One of the first questions that the superintendents were asked was what type of scheduling system their high school was using. In 1996, Simpson, Gordon, and

Valentine found that 163 high schools (approximately 36%) in the state of Missouri were using some form of block scheduling. Canady and Rettig (1995) found that approximately 50% of high schools had implemented or were considering the implementation of block scheduling. While the data from this study showed that nearly 50% of high schools had changed their schedules in the last 12 years, only 18% of the responding high schools in the state were currently using a block scheduling system. The data from this study clearly shows that the use of block scheduling is not nearly as popular as it once was in the state of Missouri because fewer and fewer schools are using it.

What the use of block scheduling systems may have done was to open administrators' eyes regarding possible innovations directly impacted by changing a school's scheduling system. While many schools may have tried a different scheduling system at some time, it's clear that not all reverted back to a traditional 7-period day. This study found that 19% of high schools were currently using a modified 7 or 8 period day. These schools may have found that they liked things about both a block scheduling format as well as a traditional schedule. In fact, many previous researchers found mixed results in many areas relating to the educational and other outcomes of block scheduling (Buckman et al., 1995; Cobb et al., 1999; Coeyman, 2002; Khazzaka, 1997; Maltese et al., 2007; Murray, 2008). As a result, many schools may have combined and modified what they liked from each system and created their own individual system which better met their needs. Having already made the initial change of trying a new scheduling system, perhaps educational leaders were more willing to change again to something else that they thought would work better.

Past and current research shows that many schools have changed their scheduling systems for a variety of reasons. However, this study found that a substantial number of schools in Missouri (39%) had not changed their scheduling system in 21 years or more. In fact, almost 45% had not changed their scheduling system for at least 16 years. The majority of these schools had probably never used a substantially different scheduling format than what they were using at the time of this study. This data shows that tradition and an overall reluctance and/or resistance to change are still very much entrenched in the educational mindset of many schools and school leaders in Missouri. As several respondents said, regarding why they hadn't changed scheduling systems, "because that is the way it has always been done!" It is one thing to keep a schedule because it meets all of your needs, but it is quite another matter if the scheduling system is only kept because that is the only way it has always been done. If leadership itself is the process of persuasion leading to change, as many researchers state (Bensimon et al., 1989; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2000; Yukl, 2002), then it may be concluded that a lack of change demonstrates a lack of leadership in an organization.

The remainder of the findings, obtained from both demographic and open-ended data, were reported in response to the five research questions posed in the study. The first research question was asked in order to find out the leadership style (transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire) of the school administrators in charge of their school's scheduling system. Responses were differentiated between those leaders who had and had not changed their scheduling system in the last five years.

The three leadership styles addressed in this study were first fully created in Bass and Avolio's Full-Range Leadership Theory (Avolio, 1999; Bass 1996; Bass & Avolio,

2004). Atwater et al. (1994) found that this leadership model can be used to explain how leaders successfully initiate change at various levels. Avolio and Bass (1988), as well as Bass and Avolio (1994, 2004) specified that in the organizational change process, a transactional leader dealt with the basic needs of the organization while the transformational leader encouraged commitment and fostered change by dealing with people. Most agree that successful initiators of change demonstrate both transformational and transactional leadership. However, since laissez-faire leadership is actually the demonstrated absence of leadership, this would not be a style conducive to implementing successful change (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Sorenson & Goethals, 2004; Stewart, 2006).

This study demonstrated that those individuals responsible for a school's scheduling system do have a demonstrable leadership profile. These profiles were examined and compared between those who were more or less inclined to change their school's scheduling system. Knowing these leadership profiles was important to the study because it was anticipated that individuals demonstrating transformational and transactional leadership would be more likely to initiate change regarding their school's scheduling system, while those exhibiting laissez-faire leadership would be more likely to maintain the status quo.

The study found that the differences in mean subscale scores between the transformational and transactional leaders were very similar when looking at whether or not they were more inclined to change or not change their scheduling system. Unexpectedly, laissez-faire leaders were also found to be more likely to change than not change their schools scheduling system based upon the mean subscale scores for each

group. However, the mean subscale scores for both laissez-faire groups (those that changed versus those that did not change) were not extremely dissimilar (18.22 and 15.10). What may be implied from this information is that there may have been influential outside factors which strongly impacted those laissez-faire leaders that changed their schedules. Those outside factors might have outweighed the expected inclination of laissez-faire leaders to maintain the status quo.

A similar rationale could apply to transformational and transactional leaders as well. The data implies that there may be other internal or external factors, besides the leadership style of the person in charge of the scheduling system, impacting the decision to change or not to change the scheduling system. Table 4 shows that transformational leaders were slightly more likely to not change their scheduling systems. That data indicates that there may have been influential internal and external factors, outside the control of the educational leader, who normally would have been predisposed to initiate change had those factors not influenced them to do otherwise.

While looking at the data for research question two, some interesting statistics came to light as *t*-tests were performed to determine whether the differences in leadership styles were actually significant at the .05 level. It was found that the mean subscale scores relating to leadership style did decrease for transformational and transactional leaders in both groups. However, the decrease was not found to be significant. Once again, this may imply that there may have been other significant factors at play (besides a person's leadership style) when the decision was made to change or not change a school's scheduling system. If leadership style alone had been the determining factor in deciding whether or not an individual chose to change or not change their scheduling system, the

data would certainly have found that significant differences did exist, but they did not show this.

It was also found that the mean subscale scores of transformational and transactional leaders who changed and didn't change their scheduling systems were very similar. Bass and Avolio (2004) stated that successful leaders may exhibit both types of leadership, so this data is in line with previous researchers' findings. The similar mean subscale scores were most likely found because both types of leaders, whether or not they had changed their scheduling system, were exhibiting attributes of both transformational and transactional leaders.

In contrast to the transformational and transactional leaders, this study found (in Table 5) that there was a significant difference (.013) regarding those leaders who exhibited laissez-faire leadership. Laissez-faire leaders who changed their scheduling system were significantly different from those laissez-faire leaders who did not change their schedules. The statistically significant mean difference between these two groups of leaders was 3.12. This finding is inconsistent with what was expected—that laissez-faire leaders would be significantly more likely to maintain the status quo than initiate change in their school. Goodnight (2004), found that laissez-faire leaders typically maintain a standard practice of non-interference, avoid making decisions, and demonstrate a passive indifference to potential tasks. Given the typical nature of laissez-faire leaders, the data from this study shows that influential factors leading to change outweighed these leaders' natural inclination to not change.

The data found while responding to research question three (Is there a correlation between the number of years that a secondary school administrator has held a position

and the type of leadership they exhibit?) was surprising and informative. Just as Rome was not built in a day, successful leadership does not develop without effort, knowledge and experience. Burns (1978) wrote extensively about individuals he considered to be good leaders such as Gandhi, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and James Polk. It took time, experience, and a history of decision-making for them to eventually be influential enough to initiate change. It stands to reason that the older and more experienced an individual becomes, the better leader they become also. However, the data from this study indicated that this was not always the case.

When comparing the leadership styles of the individuals responsible for the scheduling system to their years of experience in that position, there was found to be no statistically significant correlation for transformational and transactional leaders regarding whether or not they changed their school's scheduling system. This finding was very surprising because many would assume that years of experience in a position would help an individual progress on the leadership continuum from laissez-faire, to transactional, to transformational. However, this was not found. There was no significant positive or negative correlation between years of experience and whether that individual exhibited transformational or transactional leadership.

What the data did indicate was a weak but not statistically significant correlation between laissez-faire leaders and years of experience. The data showed that those leaders with more experience in their position were more likely to demonstrate a laissez-faire leadership style than those who had less experience. This data would imply, comparatively, that the less experienced leaders were more dynamic and successful instigators of change than the more experienced individuals who were more complacent

and unwilling to initiate change. This demonstrated difference in leadership style, as it relates to years of experience, could be a reflection of generational differences. It could also be an indication of how these leaders were prepared and educated in their college and preparatory programs that qualified them to become educational leaders.

In response to this data, school districts that desire to hire an individual in a leadership position with the intent of initiating change, may want to look twice when considering individuals with many years of experience. Such individuals may be stuck in an educational rut and tied to what they have traditionally done in the past. Instead, those schools might look for individuals with less experience because they may be more likely to embrace change and try new things.

In order to respond to research question four, it had to be determined who was primarily responsible for making the decision to change a school's scheduling system or maintain what was currently in use. The data obtained from this question was both anticipated and surprising. In a traditional leadership hierarchy, one individual can normally be named as having responsibility over certain areas. In their book titled *School Leadership: Handbook for Excellence in Student Learning*, Smith and Piele (2006) wrote extensively regarding the hierarchical structure of school leadership and decision-making. They stated that schools, like "most organizations continue to rely heavily on leadership that is hierarchical" (p. 85). These rigid structures are called various things (top-down, directive, autocratic), but are all similar in nature.

Bolman and Deal (1997) believed that both proper structure and proper leadership within that structure are necessary for organizations to be effective. To do this, they suggested viewing the organization through multiple frames or lenses—structural, human



resource, political, and symbolic. However, in their research, they found that only one quarter of the educational leaders that they have studied used more than two frames. In fact, only 1% of all leaders employed all four frames in leading their organization. Smith and Peile (2006), like Bolman and Deal, believed that schools which used a hierarchical structure were limited in their ability to grow, develop, and improve because such a structure led to engendering an “affinity for the status quo” (p. 88). Smith and Peile believed at a school’s hierarchical structure “assumes that organizational goals are clear” and that “if changes are needed, they are likely to be small scale and incremental [and that] major restructuring threatens the rules that define everyone’s jobs” (p. 88).

What this study found was that there still exists a very hierarchical structure in schools that demonstrates a top-down leadership approach when decisions about organizational change are contemplated. With that in mind, it was unsurprising to learn that 81% of the individuals responsible for determining whether or not to change their school’s organizational structure—their scheduling system—were high school principals (63.6%), superintendents (12.8%), other district administrators (2.5%), or the school board itself (2.1%). While this high percentage does represent individuals in the top tiers of a school leadership hierarchy, it still leaves 19% unaccounted for.

The data showing which individuals were represented by the remaining 19% was very surprising, primarily because that 19% did not represent a single individual, but rather a group of individuals collectively. While teachers (5.1%) and counselors (3.1%) were specifically represented in the results, the “other” category was actually the third most selected category (10.8%) on the questionnaire indicating who was responsible for the high school’s scheduling system.

When respondents selected the “other” category, they were asked to specify what they meant. Typical responses included a variety of stakeholders in the school and community making up a “committee” responsible for this decision. The data and comments indicate that many schools may be shifting from a top-down (hierarchical) leadership philosophy to a more shared-leadership paradigm, or what Smith and Peile (2006) and Spillane (2006) call distributed leadership.

Spillane (2006) has written extensively about distributed leadership. He stated:

A distributed perspective is first and foremost about leadership practice.

This practice is framed in a very particular way, as a product of the joint interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation such as tools and routines. This distributed view of leadership shifts focus from school principals and other formal and informal leaders to the web of leaders, followers, and their situations that gives form to leadership practice. Distributed leadership means more than shared leadership. From a distributed perspective, it is the collective interactions among leaders, followers, and their situation that are paramount. (p. 3)

From the individual comments received from respondents regarding this issue, it’s clear that some schools are shifting their leadership practices to include a broader representation in the decision-making process.

This finding was substantiated in responses pertaining to research question five (What factors precipitated secondary school administrators to change or not change their school scheduling system?) as well. A sizable number of responses to this question related to the desire to change their scheduling system in order to increase the available

time and opportunity for collaboration at all levels. The data indicated that some schools are making a concerted effort to increase communication, collaboration, and involvement in the decision-making process. This philosophy is in direct contrast to the traditional top-down, hierarchical leadership philosophy of the past when a “my way or the highway” mentality was the expected norm.

An ancillary part of the data corresponding to research question four was a determination of how many years each leader in charge of scheduling had worked in their current position. The data from these responses led to some interesting possibilities and findings. When looking strictly at the number of years that scheduling leaders had been in their positions, it was found that over 43% had been in their positions for three years or less. Almost 68% had been in their position for six years or less. There was a five year gap (from 16 to 20) where no scheduling leaders had been continuously employed in their position, but 6.7% had actually been in their position for 21 years or more. Several questions arose from this data:

1. Why is there such a high turn-over rate among the leaders responsible for the high school’s scheduling system?
2. How many years does it take to successfully implement change in a school’s scheduling system? Can it be done in three years or less—the amount of time that nearly 44% of scheduling leaders stay in their school?
3. How much knowledge and background do the individuals responsible for the schedule have regarding the implementation and application of the schedule itself?

4. Are schedules being changed merely because personnel are changing and new personnel are not committed to a scheduling format that they have not experienced in the past or implemented themselves?

In responding to the first question, it must be remembered that the highest percentage of individuals responsible for a school's scheduling system are principals and superintendents. So the question might well be: Why is there such a high turn-over of superintendents and principals in Missouri's schools? This study only indirectly addressed this issue. It did so by frequently referencing the accountability measures and increased student performance standards that administrators are required to meet. Under No Child Left Behind (2002) legislation, one of the initial measures taken when a school continues to not meet benchmark standards is to fire the principal of that school. Not only have there been school principals who have lost their jobs for this reason alone, but entire school districts have been closed which has resulted in all teachers, principals, and the superintendent losing their jobs. Faced with that kind of pressure and lack of employment stability, it is possible that potential quality individuals don't aspire to attain administrative positions.

The second question has no definite response, but an outline of the change process which occurred in other schools, summarized by Mass Insight Education and Research Institute (2007) and Springboard Schools (2009), is demonstrated below:

1. Year one. Debate and input occurs regarding a general issue of concern.
2. Year two. A committee or task force researches possible solutions to the issue of concern.

3. Year three. A solution is decided upon and plans are made to implement it so it will best meet the local needs.
4. Year four. The solution is implemented in its infancy.
5. Year five. The solution is progress monitored and adapted accordingly.
6. Year six. The solution is fully implemented in its completed form.
7. Year seven. After full implementation, the solution's outcomes are fully monitored and tested to ensure that the solution is meeting the anticipated expectations.
8. Year eight. The solution continues to be progress monitored, with anticipated objectives measured. If anticipated objectives are not apparent, then debate and input will occur which will start the entire cycle over again.

Using this educational change process as a basic guide, it is apparent that full implementation of an educational reform initiative would take at least seven or eight years. If more than 67% of the individuals responsible for a school's scheduling system are typically in their position for less than six years, it would be impossible for many of these individuals to actually facilitate and lead the entire process through to fruition. When individuals responsible for initiating change leave a school, it would be impossible to assume that the individuals replacing them are equally committed and versed in seeing that change through to successful completion. As a result, it is probable that many initiated changes are dropped as new individuals bring new and different ideas to the position.

In response to the third and fourth questions stated above, it is no wonder that so many schools have reverted back to their traditional "status quo" schedule—there's not

been a leader in place long enough to learn a new system and implement successful change. This rationale not only applies to changes made to a school's scheduling system, but to any other educational change initiative as well. Lasting change takes time, commitment, leadership, and buy-in from all shareholders. Without this winning combination of key ingredients, the change initiative is destined to fail. Obviously, there remain many unanswered and unanswerable questions regarding this issue with the data at hand—leaving the door wide open for additional data to be collected and analyzed.

Research question five asked for open-ended responses pertaining to the reasons that scheduling leaders gave for choosing to change or not to change their scheduling systems. Supplementary demographic data was used in conjunction with these responses to produce the findings listed in chapter four. The data showed that 60% of all schedules that were changed in the last five years, were changed from a traditional scheduling format (50% from a standard 7-period day) to some other scheduling system. The data unexpectedly indicated that of those schools (those 60% that had changed schedules in the last five years), less than 10% had actually changed to a block scheduling format. From this data, it can be inferred that while there may be some dissatisfaction with traditional scheduling systems among those schools that have recently used it, such scheduling systems (traditional) are preferable—if adapted—than any form of block scheduling.

Since 60% of schools changed from a traditional scheduling system, that left 40% that changed from a block scheduling format in the last five years. Unlike the majority of schools that had been using a traditional schedule and just chose to adapt it in some other traditional system, the majority of block scheduling schools that chose to change (90%)

did not stick with a block scheduling format. Instead, they chose to totally revert to some new form of traditional scheduling—either a 7-period day or a modified 7/8-period day. Cumulatively, the data indicated that when schools chose to change their scheduling systems in the last five years, they chose traditional scheduling systems much more often than they chose a block scheduling system. If this trend and ratio of change continues, it would appear that the use of block scheduling systems will become more of a rarity in Missouri’s high schools.

Additional interesting data from the study related to the rationale of the decision-makers as they made the choice to change their scheduling system in some way. The specific reasons for making the decision to change were interesting to note and fall in three categories. The first category, representing 69% of all responses, referred to those educational leaders which chose to change scheduling systems in order to improve student achievement through enhanced course selections and improved instruction.

A substantial number of these schools changed their scheduling system, not because they didn’t like the system itself, but because they were implementing another educational reform strategy that was easier to incorporate or implement with a different scheduling system in place. Several respondents stated that they were attempting to “incorporate Professional Learning Communities,” “increase collaboration time,” “implement RTI”, and incorporate “common ITV class time” into their schedules. These schools, rather than using the scheduling system itself as a mechanism and agent of educational change and reform, were using it as a necessary tool through which some other change could be facilitated and implemented.

The educational leaders who implemented these changes, whether consciously or not, were using Bolman and Deal's (1997) structural frame view to implement organizational change by changing their scheduling systems. However, they were also using some combination of the other frames (human resource, political, and symbolic) to lead and direct educational reform in their schools. As stated earlier, Bolman and Deal (1997) believed that both proper structure and proper leadership within that structure are necessary for organizations to be effective and that this can only be successfully accomplished if the leader views the organization through multiple lenses and adapts to what is seen and experienced.

Perhaps so many schools have decided to abandon block scheduling as a stand-alone reform initiative because it was determined that changing the school's scheduling system alone was too narrow and single-faceted of a view to actually create lasting and meaningful educational change. It is possible that the data and explanatory information found in this study is indicative of a different leadership mindset in this new era of mandated educational reforms and accountability. The newest educational reform initiatives may, in part, require structural changes in a school that can only be accomplished by changing the scheduling system. However, the reform itself must go deeper and further than that because it is not only the school structure or schedule that must be changed for true reform to occur. Perhaps leaders are attempting to incorporate collaborative and cohesive leadership and educational philosophies in their schools. Under these revised guiding principles, their schools will hopefully flourish and meet the increasing demands placed upon them. It is possible that unlike the 1990s, we are entering an educational era when, more than 1% of educational leaders must be able and



willing to view their schools through multiple frames to successfully implement change. Perhaps this current era is demanding more and different things from its educational leaders—indicative of a generational and philosophical shift.

Another interesting response given by a substantial number of respondents from the first category was the need to change because of requirements established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In 2005, DESE announced new minimum graduation requirements for every student in the state (DESE, 2005a). The new requirements added significantly to the number of core classes (English, Math, Science, Social Studies) that a student must take, while also adding to the total number of credits that a student must earn to graduate from high school (22 to 24 credits). These new requirements were to be implemented incrementally, until they were fully in place by 2010.

These new requirements precipitated changes to several high schools' scheduling systems. This occurred because under their previous systems, many students would be unable to earn enough total credits, or enough credits in mandated areas, to graduate. The data from this study indicated that many of the schools that had been using a traditional 6 or 7-period day, transitioned to an 8-period day scheduling system in order to offer students enough classes to graduate using the new criteria from DESE.

This reason alone could account for a great number of schools in this study that had changed their schedule in the last five years. In fact, 32% of the schools from the first category listed this as a factor in why they changed schedules. A typical response from this group was: "Mandatory graduation requirements have changed the course of study for most students resulting in less choice of electives. I do not believe some of the

mandates help our students who wish to enter the workforce, and for most students a college prep course of study was already in place.” Many schools which made a scheduling system change were probably happy with their old scheduling system, but were forced to initiate change due to mandated state graduation requirements. Rather than significantly changing what they had always done, and what had always worked for them, they chose instead to just incrementally shorten the length of their existing periods in order to add one more traditional period to their school day.

The second category of individuals that chose to change their scheduling system (15%) did so because of perceived problems with the previous scheduling system itself. These schools and individuals just didn’t like the previous scheduling system for a number of reasons. Amazingly, every school which fell into this category had been using a form of block scheduling and chose to change. Likewise, every school in this category chose to implement a traditional schedule rather than remain using some other block scheduling format after making the change. It would be easy to surmise that these schools jumped on the reform bandwagon described by Willower and Licata (1997) when block scheduling was a popular reform initiative. Willower and Licata stated:

New nostrums will appear, new bandwagons will be created, and the current fix will become passé. Administrators who want to be associated with the current remedy, including some who like to be seen as using the latest regimen, whatever it might be, will jump on the new bandwagon.

(p. 2)

These individuals either did not make an informed decision about the change or they were not committed to making the numerous additional changes necessary to make this

reform work. They did not look and prepare before they leaped. They did not demonstrate leadership, they just followed the crowd.

The third and final group of individuals that chose to change their scheduling system did so because of a leadership position change within the school itself. This group represented almost 14% of the schools that changed their scheduling system. All but two of these schools changed from a block schedule and all but one actually changed to a traditional scheduling system. This data indicates that if a school's scheduling system is not part of the ingrained philosophy of the organization itself, it is susceptible to change when individual leaders change. In other words, in order to sustain change the resultant ideals and knowledge must have been created and internalized by the organization itself.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) "the need for organizations to change continuously...has been the central concern of organizational learning theorists" (p. 44). Just like individuals, organizations are confronted with a variety of circumstances requiring it to solve problems. Hanson (2001) stated that organizational learning is the sum total of an organizations' individual knowledge and that organizations, like individuals, learn from mistakes. He also stated that an organization's learning is tied to its culture which is:

A set of values, beliefs, and feelings, together with the artifacts of their expression and transmission (such as myths, symbols, metaphors, rituals), that are created, inherited, shared and transmitted within one group of people and that, in part, distinguish the group from others. (p. 641)

If true institutional learning has not taken place, then organizations—like these schools which changed their scheduling systems—are susceptible to change as frequently as they change individuals within their organizational and leadership structure.

The second part of research question five related to the data obtained from those schools which chose to maintain their current scheduling system for at least the past five years rather than change. It was found that 125 of the 195 respondents in the study had been using their current scheduling system for at least five years. Of those 125 schools, 85% were currently using a traditional scheduling system while only 15% had maintained a block scheduling system for five years or more. The data from which these findings were obtained came from open-ended responses matched with the demographic data from each school. The demographic numbers alone indicate a distinct preference for maintaining a traditional schedule over a block schedule, but three main reasons given by individuals who choose to maintain their current scheduling system rather than change.

The data indicated that the largest number of schools (68%) had maintained their current system because it met their needs and they liked it. They were willing (and wanting) to maintain the status quo, because the system was adequately fulfilling its role in supporting student achievement and learning. Obviously, any disadvantages of the scheduling system were outweighed by the advantages because teachers were teaching and students were learning at performance levels deemed adequate by the school leadership. This rationale was summarized in a typical response from this group: “If the district is performing at a high level compared to the state average, why change?” These leaders had built and nurtured a system over the years in their school that was bearing the fruits of student success. In this case, a lack of change did not demonstrate a lack of

leadership. The leaders in these schools were merely reaping the rewards of their active leadership which had led to this point.

The second group of schools that had maintained their scheduling system, representing 20% of respondents, did so because of an outright unwillingness or desire to change. Fear of change, complacency, and being used to the status quo were representative of the comments from this group. Rather than having a specific reason tied to student success, these leaders would be viewed as the quintessential *laissez-faire* leaders.

As Bass and Avolio (2004) stated, *laissez-faire* leadership is a hands-off style which is typified by the manager providing little or no direction and giving employees as much freedom as possible. All authority or power is given to the employees and they must determine goals, make decisions, and resolve problems on their own. The decision-makers in this group demonstrated either an unwillingness or inability to initiate change—not because they thought they were using the best scheduling system possible for their schools, but because they did not want to take the steps necessary to initiate change.

The findings from the study found that as scheduling leaders spent more time in their position, they eventually hit a threshold year where rather than becoming more of a transformational or transactional leader, they just grew more complacent. This complacency manifested itself in the *laissez-faire* leadership style they exhibited. As several stated, they made the determination to keep their scheduling system because of “tradition” and a desire to “maintaining the status quo”—not because of the apparent value or benefits of the scheduling system itself.

The final group of schools that chose to maintain their scheduling system represented 9% of the respondents. These schools maintained their schedules due to internal staffing and budget concerns. What is implied by the findings is that they would rather have changed scheduling systems, but had not done so because of internal resource limitations. These leaders would be in a very frustrating position—believing that a better system was available, wanting to initiate change, but being unable to do so because of factors outside of their control. Since school staffing is a direct reflection of a school's budget, this group of leaders had their hands tied due to limited funding. Since every public school district in the state is currently losing funding due to a drop in tax revenue and state funding, it is likely that more and more schools may fall into this category in the future.

The data and findings show a multiplicity of reasons for scheduling leaders to change or maintain their scheduling systems. Many of these reasons were based upon internal school factors, personal philosophical factors, as well as any number of outside influences and considerations. Many of the stated rationales were indicative of a specific leadership philosophy or profile, while others demonstrated an apparent lack of demonstrated leadership. While the data and findings in the study answered many specific questions, they also led to additional questions being asked. The majority of these could not be answered due to the limitations of the study, but they could be fully answered through additional research and the collection of supplemental data. The possibilities for new research abound and many of the questions raised in this study will, in large measure, remain unanswered until further research is accomplished.

### *Limitations of the Study*

This study, like all studies of its kind, had several limitations. The scope of the study was narrowed to the 449 school districts in Missouri that have at least one high school. Of those school districts, 195 responded to the questionnaire used in this study. While some wider generalizations may be inferred from the data obtained, the study and its findings were bound by this narrowed scope.

The population of the sample in this study was limited to superintendents. These superintendents were asked to provide demographic data about themselves and their school district. Additionally, they were asked to respond to questions regarding the leadership style of the individual most responsible for the high school's scheduling system. The data indicated that 13% of the reporting superintendents were themselves responsible for the scheduling system. As a result, these superintendents self-reported regarding their own leadership style which was used to determine a specific leadership profile for each person. As Merriam (1998) stated, self-reported data can be biased as it is a reflection of how individuals view themselves and not how others view them.

The criteria for inferring cause and effect relationships are difficult to establish because of statistical measurement errors (Singleton et al., 2004). While several cause and effect relationships were inferred from the findings in this study, they are only as accurate as the tools used to derive the findings from the data. Since the data was derived from a specific instrument, then the data is only as valid and applicable as the instrument allowed (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The instrument used in this study was sampled and tested for reliability as it was being developed. However, all samples and tests are limited in scope.

One specific limitation of the scope of this study was found. The questionnaire used in the study asked respondents to choose the single person most responsible for the high school scheduling system. A significant number of respondents chose the “other” category in response to this question because they felt that no single individual was responsible. Instead, they thought a specified group of individuals collectively made that decision. One respondent actually stated that the survey used in the study didn’t work well for them and wasn’t indicative of their situation because they used a collaborative decision-making process that involved multiple people. Having the scope of the survey limited to responses about a single person was a definite limitation of the study if more than one person was actually responsible for making such decisions.

One way that the study mitigated some of these limitations was by including both qualitative and quantitative portions in the data collection process. As a result, participants that encountered difficulties in responding accurately to the single-answer survey portion were given an opportunity to further explain their responses. However, since several of the findings in the study were obtained through the qualitative portion of the survey, it is possible that a different researcher, with a different focus, could have drawn different conclusions from the qualitative data.

#### *Implications for Practice*

In a recent letter, the Commissioner of Education in Missouri told all superintendents in the state of Missouri that they should pay close attention to the new federal blueprint for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which will overhaul existing No Child Left Behind legislation. The Commissioner was adamant that all educational leaders pay attention to the proposed plan because it allows



the federal government to play a leading role in encouraging educational reforms and sets high standards that will be the impetus for change needed in local schools and school districts across the country. The commissioner added that a high bar will be set for all students and schools, and that major provisions of the plan will ensure that every classroom has a great teacher and every school has a great and effective leader (C. Nicastro, personal communication, March 19, 2010).

Obviously, in the eyes of many national leaders, effective leadership is essential in order to initiate effective educational change. This study looked at the practices and profiles of educational leaders to answer questions regarding their ability and willingness to initiate change in their schools through their school's scheduling system. As Lipham (1960) stated years ago, the essence of leadership is to accomplish organizational goals. As the educational goals and accountability measures for Missouri's students and educational leaders increase, a commensurate increase in the level of demonstrated leadership will be required at all levels in the educational process. If a school is to improve its effectiveness and achieve the new standards placed upon it, then administrators must initiate and lead the changes which will make that happen.

This study found that many schools, in order to achieve these new and higher educational benchmarks, are making changes to their scheduling systems. However, in many cases these scheduling changes are not made in order to lead and direct the reform effort, they are only taking place in response to or as a corollary part of other changes or reform initiatives being made. It is apparent that few school leaders view a change of scheduling system as the educational panacea that will cure any and all deficiencies in need of improvement in their school. As one respondent in the study stated, "it really

isn't about the schedule as much as it is about the quality of instruction that is taking place in the classroom.” Teaching and learning must take place in the classroom, no matter what scheduling system is used. A true educational leader will ensure that effective teaching and learning are taking place, and initiate changes accordingly.

This study concentrated on three leadership styles, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. As expected, when looking at these leaders' ability to successfully implement change, a substantial differences were found between transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leaders regarding their willingness and ability to initiate change in their schools. The data indicated that transactional and transformational leaders must be wary of a growing complacency as they fulfill their duties for several years. This study found a slight tendency of leaders to demonstrate a more laissez-faire leadership style the longer they hold their leadership position. This could be explained by generational and leadership preparation differences, rather than individual changes in leadership philosophy over time. It could also be explained by laissez-faire leaders staying longer in their leadership positions. Perhaps leaders with a less laissez-faire leadership style leave their position or advance more often than laissez-faire leaders.

The study also found that many schools were finding success as they transitioned from a hierarchical (top-down) to a more collaborative or distributed leadership approach. Leaders in these schools were initiating changes by allowing more individuals to have an influence in the leadership process. They were, in essence, allowing more stakeholders to become part of the decision-making process so more individuals would feel committed to seeing the changes successfully made. In so doing, they were not only sharing the burden

of accountability, but were generating new and different approaches that would hopefully increase student achievement.

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

During the discussion of findings, several recommendations for future research were specifically stated or alluded to. This was a study of leadership and its effect on change in secondary schools of Missouri. While numerous data was compiled through the study regarding the demonstrated leadership style of individuals, no questions were asked and no data was compiled regarding the actual knowledge base that individuals holding these leadership positions had regarding the principles of leadership itself. Future research may be able to demonstrate a link between a person's knowledge of leadership and the actual leadership style he or she demonstrates. With that information, a researcher could determine whether a person's attributable leadership style or their knowledge of leadership was more predictive of successfully initiating change.

While this research was based upon the principle of change directed from administrators who demonstrated a particular leadership profile, it was found that several external factors beyond the control of these leaders played an influential part in their decision of whether or not to implement change. Additional research could further detail these external factors and measure their influence on a leader's willingness or ability to initiate reform in their school.

The data and findings of this study indicated a slight correlation between demonstrated laissez-faire leadership and years of experience in a position. Future research could determine the peak years of demonstrated transformational and transactional leadership as they apply to the years of leadership experience or experience

in a certain position. Likewise, additional research could determine whether a threshold “year of experience” exists, after which a person may be more inclined to demonstrate more of a laissez-faire leadership attitude.

The data obtained from this study indicated that a traditional top-down management or leadership mindset was still prevalent among educational leaders in Missouri’s schools. However, there were indications that a collaborative leadership philosophy was making headway and appeared to be responsible for new reform initiatives being attempted in some schools. Future research could track and measure the educational leadership philosophies of individual school leaders and determine which leadership philosophies, when put into practice, are inclined to produce the best results regarding any number of measurable outcomes—including student achievement.

One of the most interesting statistics to come from this study was the relatively short time that scheduling leaders actually work in any one position. While the data and findings were irrefutable, several questions remain unanswered and unanswerable with the current data. Most of these questions relate to the number of years that educational leaders actually spend in any one position, and how that time frame affects the changes they are able to successfully implement during that time. Some questions for future research include:

1. Why is there such a high turn-over rate for leaders responsible for the high school’s scheduling system?
2. How many years does it take to successfully implement change in a school’s scheduling system? Can it be done in three years or less—the amount of time that nearly 44% of scheduling leaders stay in their school?

3. How much knowledge and background do the individuals responsible for the schedule have regarding the implementation and application of the schedule itself?
4. Are schedules being changed merely because personnel are changing and new personnel are not committed to scheduling format that they have not experienced in the past?

While attempts were made to answer some of these questions in this study, additional data and research will be necessary to fully and correctly answer them.

Additional inquiry and research could be made regarding one of the major themes of this study: change. This research could focus on drawing comparisons between schools that changed and didn't change their scheduling systems in the last several years. Different measures of success, probably through various indications of student academic achievement, could be used to compare similarly situated schools with the only variable being whether or not they changed scheduling systems.

Ultimately, it will take additional and ongoing research to determine what educational reform initiatives will be most successful in attaining and sustaining the levels of students achievement that are required in this new era of mandated educational reform and accountability. Since individual schools and their leaders are being held accountable for achieving these standards, future research could show whether or not various accountability measures (i.e. firing teachers, replacing principals, closing schools, combining school districts, etc.) are successful in eliciting improved student achievement and other desired outcomes. Without such research, many unsuccessful and possibly harmful accountability measures will continue to be perpetrated against individual

educators and entire schools alike. As Governor Nixon (2010) recently stated, there are lot of folks (including politicians) that think they can fix public education.

Unfortunately, these people think short sound bites and accountability mandates will solve the real challenges facing public education. As he said “Criticizing education is cheap. Supporting education is expensive, but worthwhile” (p. 1). Educational researchers can help by answering questions and finding meaningful and workable solutions that leaders can successfully implement in their schools.

### *Summary*

This study began with a report from 1983, in which the National Commission on Excellence in Education determined that there was a “widespread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our education system” (p. 2), especially our high schools. They listed a “lack of leadership” (p. 4) and challenged principals and other educational leaders to enact reform that would lead to students achieving at higher levels. A decade later, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994) stated that “learning in America is a prisoner of time” and as a result, students are prisoners to an archaic educational system in need of revamping. They also called for educational reforms because the quality of education provided in America was perceived to be lacking far behind the rest of the world.

While merely stating that a problem exists may draw attention to the problem itself, it is a far cry from actually solving that problem. This is true for education also because nearly three decades after the initial criticisms of public education were brought to the fore, complaints with corresponding recommendations for reform, innovation, accountability and leadership continue to be heard. There is obviously no fix-all solution

that educational leaders can use to fully address the issues and solve the problems facing public education. The problems and challenges faced by administrators are as diverse and complex as the schools and communities in which they are found. It is likely that the solutions will be just as diverse and complex as the problems themselves.

Changing a school's scheduling system was a popular mechanism used by educational leaders to initiate change in their schools for many years. However, it is obvious that this reform initiative alone (like many others) was and is not the sole answer to the problems facing schools today. Administrators have been implementing different scheduling systems in their schools for years, yet the same systemic educational complaints continue to be heard. The problems must go deeper than a school's scheduling system alone can fix. As a result, educational leaders must now look at solutions that make even deeper and more systemic changes in their schools. Perhaps it is time for a change in leadership philosophy, a change that will redirect schools and their leaders from traditional ways of thinking. This may lead to new and different approaches being tried that will go further toward solving the perceived problems with public education.

The findings from this study indicate that as schools and their leaders are being held accountable to higher and higher standards, many are responding by broadening their leadership horizons by including as many people as possible in a collaborative process to find and implement solutions. While transformational educational leaders do exist and can make an enormous difference in individual schools, these leaders are few and far between. If learning is indeed a prisoner of time, then perhaps a group of collaborative leaders working together to find solutions that will work in their specific

circumstances hold the keys that will unlock the academic gates leading to greater student success and achievement.



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## APPENDIX A

### Historical Perspective of Educational Reform Movements and Accountability Standards Adapted from Sass (2009) and Zepeda and Mayers (2006)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reform Movement or Activity</b>
1893	Committee on Secondary School Studies (Committee of Ten). Criticism of secondary schools that recommended the standardization (college-prep oriented) of secondary school curriculum, school day (hours) and school term (number of days per year)
1906	Carnegie Foundation. Created the “Carnegie Unit” which is still used today as a standard measure of the time that a student has studied a particular subject in order to award “credit” to that student.
1916	John Dewey publishes his book <i>Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education</i> , which seeks to make public education an effective agent of democracy.
1919	The Progressive Education Association is founded with the goal of reforming American Education.
1954	The Supreme Court announces its decision on <i>Brown vs. Board of Education</i> which begins the journey of reform in creating equality in American education.
1957	The Soviets launch <i>Sputnik</i> which spurs the United States into funding scientific research and science education.
1965	The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is passed which provides federal funds for educating low-income students.
1968	Bilingual Education Act is created to ensure adequate education of students who speak languages other than English. This was repealed and replaced in 2002 with the No Child Left Behind Act.
1970	Author Ivan Illich publishes <i>Deschooling Society</i> , which sharply criticized traditional public schools and called for the end of compulsory school attendance.
1972	<i>Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972</i> becomes law, which requires equal treatment of girls and boys in all aspects of public education.
1975	<i>Education of All Handicapped Children Act</i> (PL 94-142) becomes law, which requires a free and appropriate education be provided to all students with handicaps.
1975	<i>Newsweek</i> publishes a story called <i>Why Johnny Can't Write</i> criticizing literacy in America and initiates the “back-to-the-basics” educational reform movement.
1983	The National Commission on Excellence in Education publishes <i>A Nation at Risk</i> which calls for sweeping educational reforms.
1986	The National Governor’s Association publishes <i>A Time for Results</i> suggesting educational benchmarks to assess results.
1989	The First National Education Summit produces the National Education Goals which sets competency goals for grades 4, 8, and 12.
1991	The Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills produces <i>What Work Requires of School</i> , challenging schools to develop student competencies required for success in the workplace.
1993	Creation of the <i>Massachusetts Education Reform Act</i> , which creates the first state-wide high stakes testing program which is soon followed in other states.

1993	<i>Senate Bill 380</i> (The Outstanding School’s Act) is created in Missouri which calls for state wide assessments of students across the state.
1997	The Missouri Assessment Program started high-stakes standardized achievement testing of students in Missouri.
1994	Congress passes the <i>Educate America Act</i> which was an expanded version of the National Education Goals adopted in 1989.
1995	The Carnegie Corporation publishes <i>The Current State of High School Reform</i> which calls for numerous educational reforms.
1996	The Second National Education Summit, sponsored by the National Governor’s Association and the Education Commission of the States, calls for competitive education standards, assessments to measure those standards, and accountability systems.
1999	The <i>High Education Act</i> is reauthorized requiring institutions to produce “report cards” regarding teacher education.
1999	The Third National Education Summit makes a commitment to improve teacher quality in order to provide every student with the opportunity to meet the previously established educational standards.
2002	The No Child Left Behind Act is approved requiring “adequately yearly progress” based upon high-stakes testing for students in grades 3-8, and requires every teacher to be “highly qualified”.
2004	The National High School Alliance publishes <i>Crisis or Possibility? Conversations About the American High School</i> , which identifies seven key “levers” for transforming high schools.
2004	The Alliance for Excellent Education publishes <i>Profiles in Leadership: Innovative Approaches to Transforming the American High School</i> , which recommends assessment-driven instruction and developing leaders for change.
2005	<i>An Action Agenda for Improving America’s High Schools</i> is published by the National Governor’s Association and Achieve, Inc. The report calls for redesigning high schools and measuring progress.
2005	The Policy Evaluation and Research Center of the Educational Testing Service publishes <i>One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities</i> , which reports the need for educational reform to address the rising dropout rates.
2005	A study by Hart Research Associates for Achieve, Inc., called <i>Rising to the Challenge: Are High School Graduates Prepared for College and Work?</i> , is published calling for increased expectations for high school students and more rigorous testing.
2007	The Congress passed changes to <i>No Child Left Behind</i> , but the bill is vetoed by the president, leaving needed changes to the law unmade.
2009	The <i>American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009</i> is approved which provides 90 billion dollars for education and other reforms.
2009	4.3 billion dollars of federal grant money called <i>Race to the Top</i> , is promised to states that will develop bold educational innovations in the areas of standards and assessments, data to support instruction, teacher and leader quality, and turning failing schools around.

## APPENDIX B

### Preliminary Scheduling Leader Questionnaire (Preliminary SLQ)

Using the following scale and thirty leadership profile statements, please rate an individual person in a leadership position that you know

or have known by marking the box in the category which best represents this person.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. This person avoids getting involved when important issues arise.							
2. This person uses incentives to motivate others.							
3. This person is charismatic.							
4. This person is a top-down manager.							
5. This person delays responding to urgent questions.							
6. This person creates a productive and positive school climate.							
7. This person expresses satisfaction when others meet expectations.							
8. This person demonstrates that problems must become chronic before action is taken.							
9. This person does not engage others.							
10. This person is a positive role model.							
11. This person shows a firm belief in "if it's not broken, don't fix it".							

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
12. This person clearly defines expectations of others.							
13. This person is unavailable to others.							
14. This person talks about important values and beliefs.							
15. This person rewards others for compliance.							
16. This person is passive towards tasks.							
17. This person withholds rewards for lack of compliance.							
18. This person instills pride in others.							
19. This person offers recognition when goals are achieved.							
20. This person avoids supervising.							
21. This person provides assistance in exchange for effort.							
22. This person is visionary.							
23. This person tracks mistakes of others.							
24. This person displays a sense of power and confidence.							
25. This person postpones or avoids making decisions.							
26. This person sets challenging expectations for others.							
27. This person defines responsible parties for achieving performance targets.							
28. This person talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished.							
29. This person demonstrates high ethical and moral conduct							
30. This person is absent when needed.							

## APPENDIX C

### Full Scheduling Leader Questionnaire (Full SLQ)



**Don F. Christensen**

612 E. Prairie Lane  
Ash Grove Missouri, 65604

Phone: (417) 838-4752 Fax: (417) 751-2283

Superintendent  
Ash Grove R-IV School District

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January 25, 2010

Dear Superintendent:

I'm a doctoral student at the University of Missouri and am inviting you to participate in a research study regarding educational leadership, change, and high school scheduling systems.

During the course of the study, confidentiality will be maintained in the following ways:

1. You are not to place any personally identifiable or school district identifiable information on the questionnaire,
2. No identifying data will be connected to your responses,
3. The questionnaire is being delivered on a secure server with only password access for the researcher,
4. As surveys are received email addresses will be removed and replaced with a code number, the master list linking the code number and email address will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study, and
5. All findings will be reported in the aggregate which means that no one person's answer or school district will be identifiable.

Any hard copy information will be maintained in a locked file and destroyed upon completion of the study. The results of the study may be published in scientific research journals or presented at professional conferences. However, your name and identity will not be revealed and your record will remain confidential.

Your participation in the study will involve providing responses to several items contained in an electronic questionnaire and, then, submitting your responses. You may access the questionnaire that is available by clicking on the following address: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>. Upon completion, you will click on the "Done" button. It should take you 15 minutes or less to complete the questionnaire.

You can choose not to participate. If you decide not to participate, there will not be a penalty to you or loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Thank you for your time and consideration in answering each question and returning the questionnaire.

**Please reply as soon as possible or no later than February 15, 2010**

If you have questions or comments, or concerns you may contact Don Christensen at (417) 751- 2534(W), (417) 751-9553 (H) or (417) 838-4752. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Cindy MacGregor at (417) 836-6046, or The University of Missouri IRB office at (573) 882-9585.

Sincerely,

*Don F. Christensen*



## Full Scheduling Leader Questionnaire

For the purposes of the study, if a change has been made in your high school's scheduling system in the last five years, then a change has been made.

A. What is your current position in the school district?

- Superintendent
- Other central office administrator
- Principal
- Other building level administrator
- Counselor
- Teacher
- Other (please specify)

B. How many years have you been in your current position? \_\_\_\_\_ years.

C. How many years total have you worked in education? \_\_\_\_\_ years.

D. What type of schedule does your high school use?

- Standard 7-period day (typically seven 50-minute classes per day)
- Modified 7 or 8 period day (typically seven or eight class per day)
- 8-block (typically four 90-minute classes meeting on alternating days/ A/B block)
- 4-block (typically four 90-minute classes meeting every day)
- Modified block (a block schedule four days a week and one day where all classes meet)
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

E. How long has your high school used their current scheduling system?

- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10-12 years
- 13-15 years
- 15-20 years
- 21+ years

F. What type of scheduling system, if any, was being used prior to what is currently in place?

Standard 7-period day (typically seven 50-minute classes per day)

Modified 7 or 8 period day (typically seven or eight class per day)

8-block (typically four 90-minute classes meeting on alternating days/ A/B block)

4-block (typically four 90-minute classes meeting every day)

Modified block (a block schedule four days a week and one day where all classes meet)

Our schedule system hasn't changed

Other (please specify)

G. Who do you believe is most responsible for the high school's schedule changing or remaining the same?

Superintendent

Other central office administrator

Principal

Other building level administrator

Counselor

Teachers

Parents

School Board members

Community Members (PTA, etc.)

Students

Other (please specify)

H. How many years has the person most responsible for the high school's schedule (identified in the previous question) been in their position?

1-3 years

4-6 years

7-9 years

10-12 years

13-15 years

15-20 years

21+ years

I. If your high schools scheduling system has changed in the last five years, why do you believe the scheduling system changed?

J. If your high school scheduling system has remained the same for five years or more, Why do you believe the scheduling system has remained the same?

On the following scale, please rate the single individual that you believe is most responsible for the current scheduling system that your high school is using. If it is a group (i.e. school board, teachers, etc.) please select a representative individual from that group to rate.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. This person avoids getting involved when important issues arise.							
2. This person uses incentives to motivate others.							
3. This person is charismatic.							
4. This person delays responding to urgent questions.							
5. This person creates a productive And positive school climate.							
6. This person expresses satisfaction when others meet expectations.							
7. This person does not engage others.							
8. This person is a positive role model.							
9. This person clearly defines expectations of others.							
10. This person is unavailable to others.							
11. This person talks about important values and beliefs.							
12. This person rewards others for compliance.							
13. This person is passive towards tasks.							
14. This person instills pride in others.							
15. This person offers recognition when goals are achieved.							
16. This person avoids supervising.							
17. This person provides assistance in exchange for effort.							
18. This person is visionary.							
19. This person postpones or avoids making decisions.							
20. This person defines responsible parties for achieving performance targets.							
21. This person demonstrates high ethical and moral conduct.							

## VITA

Don F. Christensen was born (a surprise to his mother) ten minutes after his twin brother on December 26, 1963, in Moab, Utah. He attended elementary school in Nampa, Idaho, but graduated from Stevens High School in Rapid City, South Dakota, in 1982. After graduating from high school he worked as a welder and eventually served as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Bolivia, South America, where he learned to speak several foreign languages.

He married his wife Kristi in 1985 and graduated from Southwest Missouri State University with a bachelor's degree in secondary education in 1988. After graduation he taught Spanish, Biology, and Physical Science at Bolivar high school for four years where he would often fly his airplane to school. He then taught Spanish and English at Republic Middle School for two years. During his last several years of teaching he also owned and operated his own hardwood flooring business.

He received his Master's degree in secondary administration from Southwest Missouri State University in 1992 and in 1995 he became the junior high and high school principal at Ash Grove, a position he held for 11 years. He earned his educational specialist degree from Southwest Missouri State University in 2000. He became the superintendent of schools in the Ash Grove R-IV School District in 2007, where he continues to work. He earned his doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2010.

He and his wife have five children (Cassidy, Allison, Abby, Joseph, and William) whose ages range from 22 to 12. He enjoys reading, gardening, all outside recreational activities, and especially loves building and fixing things.