HOW PRINCIPALS LEAD IN AN ERA OF TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS
LEADING SCHOOLS ON THE CONTINUUM OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND
SANCTIONS

A Dissertation
Submitted to
The Temple University Graduate Board

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in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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by
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May, 2011

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ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Education

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The goal of this study was to better understand the perspective of administrators on accountability and high stakes testing - what effect it has, if any, on his/her ability to serve as building administrator.   Through a series of in-depth interviews and analysis of the perception of principals that lead schools that are on various levels of *No Child Left Behind* sanctions, this study will help the reader to understand how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted the leadership of the school principal. As presented by Allen (2008) are we focusing curriculum on preparation for high-stakes testing versus the philosophy of letting the high stakes testing evaluate the effectiveness of what is being taught as a method for supporting learning?

From budgeting and organizational structure, to local curriculum and classroom instruction, efforts from external sources to ensure "accountability" in public schools have impacted virtually every aspect of school operations in America. *No Child Left Behind* is the initiative most often associated with the current accountability movement. While this study did not aim to measure the effectiveness of initiatives like *No Child Left*

Behind, it did aim to analyze how these measures have impacted the role of the building principal.

This study used a semi-structured interviews with eleven elementary school principals who lead schools on a sampling of the No Child Left Behind sanction continuum. In addition to interviews, pertinent documents and artifacts will be analyzed. The constant comparative method (Glaser & Stauss, 1967) will be used to analyze the data in terms of the study's two theoretical frameworks: Turbulence Theory (Gross, 1998) and Multiple Ethical Paradigm.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wife, Dawn, and children, Gianna, Luca, and Sophia. Their supreme patience, love, and support made this work possible.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The current landscape of accountability and high stakes testing is the culmination

of decades of identified problems and proposed solutions for America's public school

systems. Many school leaders today, not to mention many teachers, view accountability

as a loathsome political monster (Gutsky, 2007). Efforts to make educators more

accountable for results have been under way in some states for more than three decades,

and early movements for high stakes testing and accountability can be traced to the turn

of the 20th century. Most people would agree, however, that what brought education

accountability to the forefront was the No Child Left Behind act which made

accountability its centerpiece. And even the most adamant critics of No Child Left

Behind would concede that regardless of the outcome of future elections, education

accountability in one form or another is likely here to stay (Gutsky, 2007).

The human centerpiece of these developments is the school principal. As a

practicing elementary school principal in an affluent suburban community, high stakes

testing is an aspect of my daily routine that does not receive a significant amount of

attention. Students in this community historically achieve among the best in the state on

the annual standardized state assessment (New Jersey Assessment of Skills and

Knowledge—NJASK). While I am mindful of ensuring that students are prepared to take

the assessment and I take time to analyze results for meaning, the test has little impact on my leadership. At the beginning of my studies in a doctoral program, I began to hear stories of my colleagues in areas within 20-miles of my school in which their roles and routines were consumed with achievement on the state test. This perspective forced me reflect on my own leadership priorities. At the time, I was in the midst of leading a movement to replace our district's long standing practice of parent-teacher conferences with the concept of student-led conferences. The student led conference forces students to think critically, practice metacognitive skills, and have a meaningful voice in what and how they learn.   If I were a leader in one of the schools of my colleagues embattled in making Adequate Yearly Progress in one or more areas, would I be championing these higher order thinking skills, or might my leadership be focused on narrowing the curriculum and test preparation? This kind of reflection provided the motivation for my study.

Through a series of in-depth interviews and analysis of the perceptions of principals that lead schools that are on various levels of sanctions, this study will help the reader to understand how high stakes testing and accountability impact the principal's role.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Today's US principals face unprecedented pressures to improve student performance in their schools (Ylimaki, 2007). Current United State federal legislation requires all states to administer annual standardized tests in reading and math for all students in grades 3–8. Schools that fail to make adequate progress goals on state tests after four consecutive years are subject to corrective action, including conversion to a

charter school or staff restructuring. While movements for greater accountability and testing are nothing new to education, the high stakes associated with the current accountability movement are unprecedented –for principals in terms of salary and job security; for teachers in the form of merit pay, for schools in the form of states having the ability to close low performing schools; and for students in the form of retention and denial of graduation. Ylimaki (2007) states "these accountability pressures are particularly intense for principals leading schools that have histories of poor student achievement and are situated in communities with high levels of poverty, cultural diversity, and neighborhood crime" (p. 11).

The current era of high stakes testing and accountability has weighed heavily on the roles and responsibility of the school principal. In this environment of high stakes testing and accountability, the principal must have a keen understanding of data analysis and a deep pedagogical understanding to effectively translate achievement data into effective instructional practice. In addition, principals must consistently monitor and evaluate the school curriculum and teacher pedagogy. These demanding responsibilities are in addition to the oversight responsibilities already assumed by the principal, including teacher evaluator, public relations officer, disciplinarian, cleanliness supervisor, and traffic controller, among others. Principals who ignore their role in monitoring and improving school performance do so at their own risk (Hallinger, 2005).

The extent to which high stakes testing and accountability have impacted the leadership role of school principal is of much debate. This issue focuses on the philosophy of focusing curriculum on preparation for high-stakes testing versus the

philosophy of letting the high stakes testing evaluate the effectiveness of what is being taught as a method for supporting learning (Allen, 2008). While some researchers believe that it has helped to better articulate and define expectations for learners others believe the results are a "narrowing" of the curriculum.

As written by Popham (2005) high stakes testing currently seems to be constricting the curricular thinking of education leaders. Crocco and Costigan (2007) note that instructional leaders have found their personal and professional identity thwarted, creativity and autonomy undermined, and ability to forge relationships with students diminished; all are a result of high stakes testing and the narrowing of the curriculum. Yet in their multiyear review and analysis of *No Child Left Behind* research, Jennings and Rentner (2006) found that schools are paying much more attention to the alignment of curriculum and instruction. Through a series of in-depth interviews and analysis of principals that lead schools that are on various levels of *No Child Left Behind* sanctions, this study will help the reader to understand how principals perceive the impact high stakes testing and accountability on their roles as school leaders.

Purpose of the Study

This study analyzed how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted selected principals as they perceive their role. The study also analyze these issues from the perspective of principals that lead schools on various levels of No Child Left Behind sanction: good standing, school improvement year one, school improvement year two, corrective action, planning for restructuring, and restructuring (Bush & Department of Education, 2001).

The participants of this study were principals selected from New Jersey elementary schools representing a balance of schools on the No Child Left Behind sanction continuum. The focus was on the impact of high stakes testing and accountably on the role of the school principal, and how these perceptions compare and contrast contingent on the school's placement on the NCLB sanction continuum.

This study helped to clarify how selected principals perceive their role within the broader context of high stakes testing and accountability. The outcome of this study filled in the gaps of previous research by connecting the concepts of high stakes testing, accountability and potential ethical dilemmas, to the role of the principal within schools on various continua of the No Child Left Behind sanctions continuum.

Research Questions

Research questions for this study will address the perception of how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted the principal's role. Interview subjects will be elementary school principals in the southern area of New Jersey. Research questions will address the issues from the perspective of principals that lead schools on various levels of sanction: good standing, school improvement year one, school improvement year two, corrective action, planning for restructuring, and restructuring.

The Research Questions follow:

Has the current era of accountability caused principals to redefine themselves and their self perception of their leadership? If so, in what ways?

- Do selected principals perceive an impact of testing and assessment policies associated with NCLB on their role as a school administrator? If so, how?

- Do selected principals' perceptions of their leadership within accountability and high stakes testing vary based upon the level of NCLB sanction?

Definitions

The following terms and definitions will be used in the study:

1. **Accountability**- the practice of holding educational systems responsible for the quality of their products—students' knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes. (www.rand.org/pubs/notes/N3561/n3561.sec2.pdf).

2. **Instructional leadership**- assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students (Leithworth et al, 1999).

3. **Adequate yearly progress**- under *No Child Left Behind*, each state has developed and implemented measurements for determining whether its schools and local educational agencies are making Adequate Yearly Progress. Adequate Yearly Progress is an individual state's measure of progress toward the goal of 100 percent of students achieving to state academic standards in at least reading/language arts and math. It sets the minimum level of proficiency that the

state, its school districts, and schools must achieve each year on annual tests and related academic indicators.

4. **No child left behind**-the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Authorization Act of 1965.

5. **District factor groups**-The District Factor Groups (DFGs) provide a systematic approach for classifying New Jersey school districts based on the socioeconomic status (SES) observed within the communities served by the district. The department first developed the DFGs in 1975 utilizing data from the 1970 Decennial Census. Since then, the department has updated the DFGs two times to 1) incorporate current data from the Census Bureau and 2) make improvements to the methodology employed. This report represents the fourth version of the DFGs.

Since the department created the DFGs, they have been used in a variety of manners. Three uses are particularly noteworthy: 1) analysis of student performance on statewide assessment examinations, 2) Abbott district classification, and, to a lesser degree 3) the provision of state education aid. From lowest socioeconomic status to highest, the categories are A, B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and J.

 (NJ Dept. of Ed--http://www.state.nj.us/education/finance/sf/dfg.shtml.)

6. *No Child Left Behind* **levels of sanction**- the representative level a particular

school is placed contingent upon successfully making Adequate Yearly Progress.

There are five levels of sanction:

a. *good standing* – Not subject to No Child Left Behind sanctions. Schools

that have met adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are in

Good Standing

b. *school improvement* – This includes the first two levels of sanctions

(School Improvement – Year 1, and School Improvement – Year 2). A

school enters the first sanction level when the school has not met adequate

yearly progress for two consecutive years. If a school in School

Improvement – Year 1 does not meet adequate yearly progress, the school

progresses to School Improvement – Year 2. School Choice and

Supplemental Educational Services options are introduced at these levels.

c. *corrective action* – This is the third level of sanctions. Schools in this

level have not met adequate yearly progress for two years (may be non-

consecutive) beyond the two consecutive years required to enter sanctions.

Initial levels of state intervention begin at this level.

d. *planning for restructuring* – Schools at this fourth level of sanctions

have not met adequate yearly progress for three years (may be non-

consecutive) beyond the two consecutive years required to enter sanctions.

Plans for staffing and governance changes targeted to improve student

performance are developed at this stage.

e. *restructurin*g – This is the fifth and final level of sanctions. Schools at this level have not met adequate yearly progress for four or more years (may be non-consecutive) beyond the two consecutive years required to enter sanctions. Schools at this level are subject to the most severe interventions under *No Child Left Behind.*

7. High-stakes testing: tests which result in serious consequences as a result of the test scores (Lacina-Gifford & Kher-Durlabhji,1992). Madaus (1998) defines a high-stakes test as a test in which the "results are directly linked to important rewards or sanctions for student, teacher, or institutions" (p. 39). Madaus also informs the reader that although these tests were originally developed to formulate information concerning populations of at-risk learners, they are now used to determine "promotion of students from one grade to the next," and "assignment of a student to a remedial class" (p. 38). In addition to this use of the term high-stakes test, this study refers to them as mandated state tests that are administered, scored, and interpreted by the state. These tests have "built-in" sanctions, or a so-called high stake, associated with specific levels of student performance (Airasian, 1988). Airasian also relates to the reader that any individual's test score can be compared across a state and determined to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory in regards to the state's established standards. Many states, Airasian points out, now use these tests as indicators for completion of high school and for purposes of school funding. For the purpose of this project, the New Jersey Skills of Assessment and Knowledge is identified as the high-stakes assessment.

8. *New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK):* With the enactment of the NCLB Act, New Jersey's statewide assessment of elementary students has undergone further change. Under the provisions of this federal legislation, every state is required to administer annual standards-based assessment of all children in grade 3 through 8. Federal expectation is that each state will provide tests that are grounded in that state's content standards and that assess students' critical thinking skills in three content areas: language arts literacy, mathematics and science. All New Jersey third through fifth grade students take the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge in the spring (http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/es/njask/).

Limitations of the study

This study was limited in several respects. The principal interviews conducted may or may not be reflective of other school districts on similar levels of sanctions. The results of this study were based solely on the data gathered from the interviews conducted in this study. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to the experience of other principals. No assumptions were drawn that the identified impacts of high stakes testing and accountability on the principalship are representative of impacts on other principals. In addition, only two female principals were part of this study, which may have resulted in responses more widely attributed to the male perspective. This was not done intentionally; rather, schools were first selected based on the data contained in the New Jersey Department of Education School Improvement Status Summary, which makes no distinction of the principal's name or gender. This study stood alone as a valid and complete picture of this particular population at this time (Caldwell, 2005).

Delimitations of the study

This study only included principals leading elementary schools that complete the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) in either grades three, four, or five (or all three). This was chosen due to the researcher's background and personal knowledge of elementary school leadership. Principals, not vice principals or directors of curriculum, etc., were chosen due to their unique perspective and oversight of all the working of a school. All of the principals came from districts in southern New Jersey. This was due to the proximity of the researcher's home and place of work.

Significance of the Study

The tasks of American's public schools in preparing the children of the nation to meaningfully contribute and thrive in our democratic society have always been filled with challenges and obstacles. While the children are certainly at the center of this task, it is the school leadership that is charged with developing and implementing the vision to help all children reach his or her potential. At the heart of the leadership team is the school principal. Historically, the roles and responsibilities of public school principal have always included significant challenges, and the concept of accountability is not a new phenomenon to education; however, the high stakes associated with the current accountability era are unprecedented in size and scope.

The most important issue for any education-accountability system is producing the desired effects—improving the capacity of schools and teachers to deliver high-quality curriculum and instruction and increasing student learning of valued content (Gutsky, 2007). But what if a school is not producing the desired results? The levels of sanction that are assigned resulting from the results of test scores impact every aspect of

the school's organizational structure. For the first time, results from high stakes testing

may directly correlate with a principal's salary, job status, and professional reputation.

While many principals welcome the challenges of high stakes testing and

accountability, others do not. As written by Guskey (2007):

> Many school leaders today view accountability as a loathsome political
> monster. Looming over educators, insensitive to the many problems they
> face, it wields the carrot of rewards in one hand and the club of sanctions
> in the other. Some educators even blame accountability for perverting
> their noble purposes, twisting their sensibilities, and corrupting their
> integrity (Guskey, 2007). Yet in a study conducted by Jones and Egley
> (2006) that analyzed the perceptions of principals on high stakes testing,
> two-thirds of administrators (66%) reported that Florida's high stakes
> testing program had a positive influence on their ability to improve teacher
> effectiveness (p. 51).

The significance of this study is that it will help the reader to better understand

how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted the leadership role of

principals. This study analyzed this issue from the perspective of principals that led

schools on various levels of sanction: good standing, school improvement year one,

school improvement year two, corrective action, planning for restructuring, and

restructuring (Bush & Department of Education, 2001).

Data gathered from public school principals helped to clarify how principals

perceive their role and responsibilities within the broader context of high stakes testing

and accountability. The outcome of this study filled in the gaps of previous research by

connecting the concepts of high stakes testing, accountability, and curriculum, to the role

of the principal within schools on various continua of the No Child Left Behind sanction

continuum. Previous studies have analyzed these issues, but have not developed a

thorough synthesis of these concepts correlated with the various levels of No Child Left

Behind sanction continuum.

Theoretical Bases

This study was conducted within the two theoretical frameworks including

Multiple- Ethical Paradigm , based on the research of Starrat (1994) and Shapiro and

Stefkovich (2010), and Turbulence theory, as advanced by Steven J. Gross (1998). These

theoretical bases were chosen because the foundational ideas underlying each of these

frameworks effectively blend theory with practice. Principals are required to make

dozens of decisions each day—some decisions can be viewed as rather mundane (should

recess be indoors or outdoors?), some have a significant impact on the organization (our

special needs population failed to make AYP—what's next?). To help address both the

mundane and significant issues facing the school principal, one must have a keen

understanding of his/her own personal and professional values to help make a thoughtful

and ethical decision—thus, multiple ethical paradigm provides a lens with which to

approach the decision making process.

Turbulence theory is an effective lens in this case study as it forces an individual

to analyze the status of the organization from a "bigger picture" perspective. High stakes

testing and accountability impact every school organization, to a greater or lesser degree.

Turbulence theory will help to describe the different degrees of challenge and perspective

of principals leading schools on the continuum of NCLB sanction.

Turbulence Theory

Through the lens of Turbulence theory, this study examined how principals respond to varied levels of disturbance as correlated with levels of sanctions. As assumption can be made that as a school experiences failure in making Adequate Yearly Progress, as defined by NCLB guidelines, the organization, especially the school principal, will respond to the level of turbulence. According to Gross (2004), Turbulence Theory was developed to "describe the tossing and turning that schools face" in times of crisis and uncertainty. School leaders are usually the first to know of the status of their schools' test scores, followed by the board, the professional staff, the parent community, and then the community at-large. Therefore, even if the building principal does not perceive a crisis, he or she must manage the perspectives of the other stakeholders. For example, the building principal may understand that failure to make AYP may mean some challenges to service delivery for a particular subgroup of students—a relatively light form of turbulence; however, if even one of the groups in the school community (teachers, parents, board members, superintendent) believe the turbulence to be severe, that principal will likely have some challenges ahead. Gross also states that this theory was developed in order to "help explain the behavior of people facing organizational potentials and challenges" (2008, p. 9).

Turbulence Theory, according to Gross (Mitra & Gross, 2009) employs four levels of disturbance (modeled after those used in flight instruction) to describe its intensity: light (where little or no disturbance is experienced); moderate (where a constant or buffeting disturbance is experienced but where enough stability exists to continue); severe (where disturbance is so elevated that stability is lost, at least for a brief period of

time and where the flight is threatened); and extreme (where disturbance is so significant that structural damage to the craft occurs). While light or moderate levels of turbulence can lead to positive outcomes for individuals and organizations, severe and extreme levels of turbulence threaten the foundational structure of an organization.

Turbulence is inherent in principals leading schools in today's era of accountability. The source of the turbulence can come from a variety of places, including students, staff, parents, and supervisors. It can be argued that the turbulence attributed to the sanctions of standardized test scores can be an extreme source, given the relationship of scores and job security. Table 1 shows a possible correlation of the NCLB sanction continuum and the four levels of turbulence.

Table 1. Correlation of the NCLB Sanction Continuum and the Four Levels of Turbulence

Level of Turbulence	No Child Left Behind Sanction Continuum
Light—Little or no disturbance	Good standing
Moderate—some disturbance but stability is not compromised	School improvement year 1
Severe—stability is lost, flight is threatened	Corrective action
Extreme—structural damage	Plan for restructuring

Gross (Shapiro & Gross, 2008) explain that turbulence is not experienced by everyone in an organization in the same manner; this is referred to as positionality. One's position has a great deal to do with the perceptions one has of a given situation, including the critical issues of power in relationships (Mitra & Gross, 2009). For instance, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* publishes a special insert each year entitled The Annual Report Card on Schools. In this publication, test scores results of area schools are reported; depending on the results, there are various levels of turbulence felt. Given the nature of how scores are reported (by school/grade level), school administrators are much more likely to experience greater levels of turbulence than classroom teachers, and superintendents may experience greater levels than both groups. Therefore, positionality is an important lens to understand when gauging the turbulence within an individual and/or organization.

> A previous school history of poor or declining standardized test scores can make curricular innovations more challenging. Called cascading in Turbulence Theory literature, according to Gross (Shapiro and Gross, 2007), the concept describes the impact that one turbulent condition has on subsequent episodes of turbulence. For instance, if there have been patterns or poor test scores or external or self-imposed consequences (e.g. principal or teacher firing, reassignments), the next such instance is likely to cause a greater disturbance in the minds of principals and teachers than if there were no recent history of such events. Moderate turbulence may readily cascade into severe turbulence as a result (Mitra & Gross, 2009).

Turbulence can also build on itself, gathering like water at the top of a waterfall. This is the phenomenon of cascading (Gross & Shapiro, 2008), the accumulation of coinciding forces. This gathering of turbulence can become a cascading series of crises that compound, one on top of another.

Stability is the final component of Turbulence Theory. Stability addresses how leaders stabilize their turbulent organization.

Multiple-Ethical Paradigm

The Multiple Ethical Paradigm approach includes four areas of the field of ethics as related to educational administration: the Ethic of justice, the Ethic of Critique, the Ethic of Care and the Ethic of the Profession. The first three paradigms: justice, critique and care were proposed by Starrat (1994) in his book, *Building an Ethical School*. The fourth paradigm, the profession, evolved out of the collaboration between Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001), who also shaped the Multiple Ethical Paradigms approach to viewing ethical dilemmas.

The Ethic of Justice

The ethic of justice deals with laws, rights, and policies. The liberal part of this tradition is defined as a "commitment to human freedom," and the democratic aspect implies "procedures for making decisions that respect the equal sovereignty of the people" (Strike, 1991, p.415). Starratt (1994) describes the ethic of justice as emanating from two schools of thought, one originating in the seventeenth century including the work of Hobbes, Kant, and more contemporary scholars such as Rawls and Kohlberg; the other rooted in the works of philosophers such as Aristotle, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Dewey. The former school sees the individual as central and social relationships as a type of a social contract where the individual, using human reason, gives up some rights for the good of the whole or for social justice (Starratt, p.49). The latter tends to see society as central, rather than the individual, and seeks to teach individuals how to behave

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throughout their life within communities. In this tradition, justice emerges from

"communal understandings" (p.50).

According to Shapiro (2008):

> The ethic of critique, from a contemporary perspective, takes into account a wide variety of issues. Viewing ethical dilemmas from this vantage point, one my raise queries regarding the interpretation of the rule of law as well as deal with the more abstract concepts of fairness, liberty, and responsibility. These may include, but are certainly not limited to, questions related to equality versus equity, moral absolutism versus situational ethics, and the rights of individuals versus the greater good of the community. (p. 22)

Educators and ethicists from the ethic of justice have made a profound impact on approaches to education and educational leadership. Contemporary ethical writings in education, using the foundational principle of the ethic of justice, include, among others, works by Kohlberg (1981), Beauchamp and Childress (1984), Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1988), Goodlad, Soder and Sirotnik (1990), and Sergiovanni (1992). (Shapiro Class notes posted on blackboard— need ref)

Through the lens of the ethic of justice, one would ask questions such as: Is there a law, right, or policy that relates to this case? If so, should it be enforced? If there is not a law or policy, should there be (Shapiro and Gross, 2008)?

The Ethic of Critique

The ethic of critique can be seen as checks and balances mechanism for the ethic of justice. In other words, the ethic of critique is a lens that questions

laws, rights, and policies to determine if they are just. For example, in the early 1900s voting rights were not granted to woman. Analyzing the issue of whether a woman should vote through the ethic of justice, one might conclude that they should not because there did not exist a law or policy to extend this right to woman. In this case, the ethic of critique would beg the question "Is this just?"

The ethic of critique draws much of its philosophical underpinnings from critical theory, which analyzes inequities of social class, race, and gender. In the realm of education, critical theorists often study how societal social structures and inequalities are echoed in the nation's schools. Along with critical theory, the ethic of critique is also frequently linked to critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy has traditionally referred to educational theory and teaching and learning practices that are designed to raise learners' critical consciousness regarding oppressive social conditions. Critical pedagogy is evident in the works of Paulo Freire (1970). For Freire, liberatory education focuses on the development of critical consciousness, which enables learners to recognize connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded ("Key term and concepts"). Giroux (1991) asks educators to understand that their classrooms are political, as well as educational locations and, as such, ethics is not as a matter of individual choice or relativism but a "social discourse grounded in struggles that refuse to accept needless human suffering and exploitation." In this respect, the ethic of critique provides "a discourse for expanding basic human rights" (p.48) and may serve as a vehicle in the struggle against inequality. In this vein, critical theorists are often concerned with making

known the voices of those who are silenced, particularly students (Giroux, 1988; Weis & Fine, 1993).

For Giroux (1991), Welch (1991), and other critical educators, the language of critique is central, but they also believe should be a beginning leading to some kind of action -- preferably political. For example, Shapiro and Purpel (2005) emphasize empowering people through the discussion of options. Such a dialogue hopefully would provide what Giroux and Aronowitz (1985) call a "language of possibility" which, when applied to educational institutions, might enable them to avoid reproducing the "isms" in society (i.e., classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism).opportunities to grow, learn and achieve. Such a process should lead to the development.

In the field of educational leadership, critical theorists believe in the moral imperative of ensuring equity by more closely analyzing disparity between social classes, races, and genders (Shapiro & Gross, 2008; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2010). This is especially important currently, since even our nation's accountability system and NCLB help ensure that the distribution of resources among school districts is exceedingly inequitable. Through the ethic of critique, one might pose the question: Does the inequitable distribution of resources help to level the playing field? Does fairness equal equality?

The questions that help guide the ethic of critique include: Who makes the laws, rules or policies? Who benefits from them? Who has the power? Who is silenced? (Shapiro & Gross, 2008).

The Ethic of Care

The ethic of care places caring as the foundation for ethical decision-making. Noddings (1989) believes that caring should be at the heart of the educational system. This concept extended the original lens of the ethic of care introduced by Gillian (1982) and adapted it to the realm of education. The framework for the ethic of care contrasts with the traditional male dominated view of rules and regulations most commonly associated with the ethic of justice. While the ethic of care is most commonly associated as a feminist point of view, men, too, have ascribed to the importance of this lens, including such prominent male ethicists as Buber (1965) and Sergiovanni (1992).

As Beck (1994) states, "…superintendents and principals have looked to rationally established goals to guide them in their organizational strategies" (p. 79). These strategies emanated from models long established in the world of business and industry. Beck argues that this model is not necessarily helpful or relevant in the field of educational administration:

A caring ethic would lead administrators to look beyond goals to several distinctive values to guide them in developing organization strategies. They would embrace the idea that each person deserves the opportunity to live and learn in a supportive, nurturing environment.

To Beck (1994), caring leaders understand the link between the health of schools and the teachers and students within them and that of the society as a whole. She proposes that caring administrators should undertake three tasks in

order to promote the well-being of their schools: 1). Develop a vision upon which all decisions are based. This vision must emphasize not only how things should be done, but why. 2). Strive to assess the school and system in which they work through meaningful dialogue with others. 3.) These administrators also need to consider "the needs and abilities of various persons, the cultural and moral fabric of organization, and political constraints and imperatives" (p. 79). 3). "Superimpose a vision of the ideal upon the real and seek organizational strategies for moving the latter toward the former" (p. 79).

According to Shapiro (2008):

> This ethic asks that individuals to consider the consequences of their decisions and actions. It deals with loyalty, trust, and empowerment. It asks them to consider questions such as: Who will benefit from what I decide? Who will be hurt by my actions? What are the long-term effects of my decision? And if I am helped by someone now, how can I give back to society in the future? (p. 28)

The ethic of care begs school leaders to balance the competing demands of standards, testing, and accountability with the individuals that comprise their particular educational community. School leaders must not lose the perspective that behind every test score and AYP percentage are teachers and students that have needs beyond the ability to perform well on assessments. Leaders employing the ethic of care will not ignore this perspective in the face of the turbulence that can be caused by high stakes testing and accountability.

Ethic of Profession

Ethics, as related to particular professions, are most notably associated with the fields of medicine, law, and business. Throughout their work on the Multiple Ethical Paradigms, Shapiro and Stefkovitch (2010) believed that ethics need also a foundational element in the work of educational leaders. This belief was supported by a variety of others notable researchers, including Beck (1994), Begley (1999), and Starrat (1991). Shapiro and Stefkovitch found that the ethical paradigms of justice, care, and critique, while essential, lacked a perspective unique to the field of education. Born out of their beliefs was the ethic of profession.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2010) and Shapiro and Gross (2008) document that in 1996 the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed a document entitled Standards for School Leaders. In this document, six standards for the profession of educational administration were established. The fifth standard relates to the ethic of the profession. "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner" (ISLLC, 1996, p. 18, quoted in Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2001, p. 19).

Ethical codes authored by professional organizations, which can at times be at odds with one's own unique ethical lens are sometimes "limited in their responsiveness in that they are somewhat removed from the day-to-day personal and professional dilemmas educational leaders face" (Shapiro & Gross, 2008, p.

31). Shapiro and Gross also recount that many students in educational administration find it more beneficial to write their own professional code of ethics, rather than to use the professional codes established by legal bodies and organizations. This does not mean that these professional codes of ethics should be dismissed. They are still important guideposts for the field and the professionals within them.

The process of development one's own professional code of ethics is far from a clear and linear process, as actions by school administrators are likely to have a strong influence from one's personal values (Shapiro & Gross, 2008). For example, the school in which this researcher works has a very strong presence of character education within all aspects of the school environment; this includes anti-bullying statements posted in all areas of the building, monthly community meeting, good citizenship awards, and a peer mediation program, to name a few. These programs remain because they are supported by the school community, but were initiated from the value that this researcher placed in such programs. While successful in this particular school community, these programs may be perceived as infringing upon values that are to be fostered in the home. A code of ethics that serves an administrator well in one community may not in another. As noted by Shapiro and Gross (2008), an awareness and understating of community standards requires attention and consideration.

Turbulence Theory and Multiple Ethical Paradigms as an Integrated System

According to Gross and Shapiro (2008), the combination of Turbulence Theory and the Multiple Ethical Paradigms helps those facing ethical dilemmas to formulate relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations, and applications to the problem. Shapiro and Gross suggest that there is a three-step process to consider when using multiple ethical paradigms and turbulence theory as an integrated system through which to view the behaviors and actions of school leaders, as well as to solve ethical dilemmas.

First, it is necessary to view the problem in terms of the amount of turbulence there is in relation to the dilemma. In order to estimate the turbulence level, Gross and Shapiro (2008) state that "the four levels of turbulence, in the form of a gauge, are used early in the process to help illuminate the degree of disruption represented by the dilemma" (p. 10). Secondly, a leader should think through each of the ethical paradigms and determine which one best informs the decision to be made. In step three, it is necessary to consider how this decision, based on the ethical paradigms, may affect the level of turbulence. This level is again estimated at the conclusion of the process. Though this approach is cyclical, Shapiro and Gross caution that it is not necessarily a "lock-step" approach.

Through the lenses of Multiple Ethical Paradigms and Turbulence theory, I was able to illuminate the personal and professional challenges as perceived by selected elementary principals in New Jersey. Multiple Ethical Paradigm provided a lens to analyze the research from a foundation of values and priorities,

both personal and professional. Turbulence Theory aided me to better understand how the level of turbulence within the organization impacts the moral and ethical decisions made by the principals in this study.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature surrounding leadership in an era of high stakes testing and accountability. This review will be organized in three major sections. First, the literature review will provided an in-depth developmental history of accountability and high stakes testing. It will begin with a description of the state of education, testing, and accountability at the turn of the 20th century. Subheadings in the first sections will highlight the most significant milestones in the development of high stakes testing and accountability during the first seventy-five years of the 20th century leading will be discussed in the following order: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESAA) of 1965, Minimum Competency Testing, a Nation at risk, 1988 and 1999 reauthorizations of the ESAA, and No Child Left Behind.

The second section of the literature review will describe the impact that high stakes testing and accountability have had on the curriculum. This section will discuss the intended and unintended consequences brought on by high stakes testing and accountability, especially what many believe to be a narrowing of the curriculum, especially in low socioeconomic areas. Finally, the third section of the literature review will explore the impact that high stakes testing and accountability have had on the role of the principal.

Part I: Setting the Stage for the Contemporary Accountability Movement

The Turn of the 20th Century:

"…the effectiveness of the school, the methods, and the teachers must be measured in terms of the results secured." He went on to note that the use of assessment measures represent no passing fad or temporary whim. It is permanent, significant, and fundamental." (Ayres, 1912)

In a time when high stakes testing and accountability in America's public school system is at the center of much debate and discussion, the above quote seems rightly placed in a contemporary discussion. However, it was written almost one-hundred years ago by researcher L.P. Ayres in an article published in the 1912 edition of *The School Review* entitled "Educational Processes through Educational Results." Theories and debates regarding the form and function of high stakes testing frameworks have existed in educational rhetoric in America for well over a century The birth of the latest iteration of the accountability movement beginning with standards reform of the late 1990s and the passing of No Child Left Behind in 2001, parallels similar changes in American education system at the end of the 1800s to the beginning of the 20th century, the roots of which can be traced to the movements of scientific management and Essentialism.

The social and educational doctrine that was borne out of society's desire for stability and predictability was scientific management, which first came in the form of a theory of social efficiency. Sociologist Edward A. Ross authored a series of 27 articles which appeared in The American Journal of Sociology in the 1890s. One cannot exclude the circumstances surrounding the birth of this movement. For example, the late 19th century was a time of great change in America. Immigration was a primary social and political issue in the country; critics of the wave of immigrants to the U.S. blame the

immigrants for causing crimes and contributing to an "un-American" feeling to society (1896 Immigration). The potential cure to this perception of instability was social control.

While education was not a significant focus of Ross's work, he did provide commentary on American's educational system. Ross (1901) believed that "social control is exercised through all kinds of instruments…" (p. 534) and that the crisis represented by modern capitalism required that the schools adopt a much more direct and more pronounced social purpose (Kliebard, 1995). Ross's beliefs for the need for social efficiency provided the foundation for the work of Fredric Taylor. Taylor translated to the world of public education curriculum in the form of scientific management, as pioneered by Fredrick Winslow Taylor. Like Ross, Taylor supported the need for control and structure among the people. By the time Taylor published The Principles of Scientific Management (1911), he was already recognized the leader in a new industrial movement (Kliebard, 1995). Taylor cited three reasons for his work:

> First. To point out, through a series of simple illustrations, the great loss which the whole country is suffering through inefficiency in almost all of our daily acts.
>
> Second. To try to convince the reader that the remedy for this inefficiency lies in systematic management, rather than in searching for some unusual or extraordinary man.
>
> Third. To prove that the best management is a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles, as a foundation. And further to show that the fundamental principles of scientific management are applicable to all kinds of human activities, from our simplest individual acts to the work of our great corporations, which call for the most elaborate cooperation. And, briefly, through a series of illustrations, to convince the

reader that whenever these principles are correctly applied,
results must follow which are truly astounding. (p. 1)

As the national cry for efficiency of American industry grew, so did its influence on the governance of public schools. School leaders used the principles espoused by Taylor to make the curriculum a direct force in the lives of citizens, and, according to Kliebard (1995) an instrument for creating a stable and smoothly functioning society. The scientific curriculum sought to clearly define learning outcomes and attempted to identify the steps to achieve those outcomes in the most efficient manner. This concept bears a great similarity to the standards movement of the late 20th century which also aimed to define the outcomes of what is learned in schools. This concept furthered by Taylor was again picked up in the work of William Bagley in the 1920s and 30s. Bagley was the most prominent leader of the essentialist's movement. Essentialism refers to the traditional or back to basics approach to education, and is named so because it strives to instill students with the "essentials" of academic knowledge and character development. (www.library.eiu.edu/ersvdocs/4458.pdf). Bagley argued the development of uniformity in the curriculum and a "common core" was necessary for democracy in American to survive (Kliebard, 1995). Along with the desire for more social controls and set of clearly defined and rigid learning outcomes, so too were efforts to measure and qualify learning goals.

In 1911, researcher Ralph Carter attempted to analyze the effectiveness of Milwaukee Public Schools. "Without any recognized method of procedure," wrote Carter (1911) it seems like a hopeless task to most of them to undertake to evaluate the educational product of each of their various elementary schools through the high school."

In 1918, E.L. Thorndike wrote that the effectiveness of education could be judged by differences in student behavior from one point to another, and he predicted that a variety of individuals could benefit from such measures, including scientists, administrators, teachers, parents, and students themselves. Thorndike (1918) also wrote about the many uses of the data that was gathered, for example, determine the effects of different methods of teaching or of various features of schools, determining the achievement of school systems, and even provided students with information about their own learning.

Between 1865 and 1965, a true accountability model for state testing failed to take hold (Mazzeo, 2001), however the movements and initiatives that were attempted during this time set the state for current day accountability movements. This highlights the myth that the use of high stakes testing to judge the quality of schools is a contemporary concept.

Between 1865 and 1915, at least twelve states developed and deployed written tests to determine admissions to high schools (Mazzeo, 2001). An example of this type of assessment practice was seen in Kansas in the early 20th century. Beginning in 1905, the Kansas State Department of Education began preparing tests to be administered to students in eighth grade. Promotion to high school was fully dependent upon student performance with a passing rate of 75 percent. Though this exam was employed primarily for promotion to high school, it was also used to allocate funding, shape teaching and learning in elementary schools, and reform rural education (Mazzeo, 2001). This is one of the early examples of state sponsored accountability tests.

Near the end of this time period, city school systems, starting in 1911 with New York and moving soon to other major cities, began to incorporate tests in fledging efforts to evaluate the results of public schools. It was during this time that educational testing evaluation gained its first strong foothold in the United States (Haertel & Herman, 2005). More comprehensive than Kansas's experiment with high stakes testing, the University of Iowa would soon begin a testing program that became a staple in state sponsored testing for the next sixty-five years.

In 1929, the University of Iowa, under the direction of E.F. Linquist, initiated the first major state wide testing program, using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) (Grodsky et. al., 2008). Results were used to evaluate both students and schools, and schools with the highest composite achievement received awards. In addition, Lindquist was among the first to extend the range of student abilities tested. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Iowa Test of Educational Development became tools for diagnosis and guidance in grades three to eight and in high school, respectively. The Iowa program was also a significant demonstration of the feasibility of wide-scale testing at a reasonable cost, with a focus on diagnosis and remediation (Office of Technology Assessment, 1992).

Throughout the next few decades, school districts continued to implement a variety of assessments for one, or both of the following reasons: to provide guidance and grouping, and to help improve the quality of education. Along with Bloom's taxonomy, Robert Mager's (1962, 1975, 1984) Preparing Instructional Objectives helped popularize the idea of using tests for fine-grained instructional management, showing teachers how to formulate narrow learning objectives in measurable terms (Haertel & Herman, 2005).

Despite the continued development of assessments, including the Iowa Test of Basic

Skills, the momentum of whole scale state sponsored assessment did not occur orderly in

the 1940s and 50s, even where state testing was once established. This was soon to

change beginning with the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

Passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), part of

President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty," greatly expanded the use of formal

evaluations of educational programs (Mazzeo, 2001). Under Title I of the ESEA, school

districts received federal funds to provide extra academic support for children from low-

income families. Extensive regulations were put in place to help assure that the money

was spent appropriately. The idea of evaluation was not new, but the mid-1960s brought

federally funded educational evaluations of unprecedented size. This use of evaluation, in

particular of objective test data, for program oversight fit well with the rational

management practices pioneered in the military under the direction of Robert McNamara,

Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy and Johnson administration and former President of

the Ford Motor Company, and then applied more widely under the Johnson

administration (Haertel & Herman, 2005).

In 1968, Congress added the Bilingual Education Act to ESEA, which also

included a requirement that the mean scores of students on various tests should

significantly increase between pre- and post testing (Mobocentrics, 1973). This set the

early foundation for the disaggregation of test scores and the establishment of adequate

yearly progress in the 2002 *No Child Left Behind Law*.

Minimum Competency Testing

For many reasons, the 1970s brought growing discontent with public education. The apparent failure of compensatory education and the seeming intractability of achievement gaps were contributing factors (Haertel & Herman, 2005). There was some experimentation with performance contracting (monetary incentives for teachers whose students reached specified benchmarks) and with accountability systems that tied state funding to school-level test

scores, but these were short-lived (Cohen & Haney, 1980). The approach that caught on was minimum competency testing.

The minimum competency test (MCT) was a basic-skills test, usually in reading and mathematics. Minimum competency testing began in a few school districts as early as 1962. By 1980, statewide minimum competency testing requirements had been implemented in 29 states, most having been initiated in 1975 or later. One of the goals cited by state and local personnel in implementing MCT was that they were a way of introducing the principle of accountability in the management of public schools (Gorth, et. al.,1979). While the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and minimum competency testing were having notable impacts on public education, no other government report in the history of public education in America had such a significant affect as the publication of *A Nation at Risk*.

A Nation At Risk

A *Nation at Risk* is among the most influential public policy polemics in the history of the United States (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). The report was released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education on April 26, 1983. Under the direction

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of then Secretary of Education, T.H. Bell, the commission was charged with developing a

report that would analyze the quality of education in America. The Commission was

created as a result of the Secretary's concern about the widespread public perception that

something was seriously remiss in our educational system (National Commission on

Excellence in Education, 1983).

Many of the recommendations contained in this report helped to set the stage for

current day No Child Left Behind policy. The most notable of these included:

> *Standardized tests of achievement (not to be confused with aptitude tests)*
> *should be administered at major transition points from one level of*
> *schooling to another and particularly from high school to college or*
> *work. The purposes of these tests would be to: (a) certify the student's*
> *credentials; (b) identify the need for remedial intervention; and (c)*
> *identify the opportunity for advanced or accelerated work. The tests*
> *should be administered as part of a nationwide (but not Federal) system*
> *of State and local standardized tests. This system should include other*
> *diagnostic procedures that assist teachers and students to evaluate*
> *student progress.*
>
> *Principals and superintendents must play a crucial leadership role in*
> *developing school and community support for the reforms we propose,*
> *and school boards must provide them with the professional development*
> *and other support required to carry out their leadership role effectively.*
> *The Commission stresses the distinction between leadership skills*
> *involving persuasion, setting goals and developing community*
> *consensus behind them, and managerial and supervisory skills.*
> *Although the latter are necessary, we believe that school boards must*
> *consciously develop leadership skills at the school and district levels if*
> *the reforms we propose are to be achieved (p. 119).*

A Nation at Risk had a substantial impact in creating an enhanced federal

government presence in American education. The report also triggered a move away

from measuring the quality of schools by the resources they receive and onto a plane

where school performance is judged on student outcomes, as measured by standardized tests (Guthrie & Springer, 2004).

The findings and recommendations of *A Nation at Risk* resulted in much debate about the claims made by the authors. For example, Berliner and Biddle (1995) hold that the crisis in education has been carefully and concisely manufactured by big business, government, and the press. They believed that the educational crisis was a myth formulated by skewed statistics and selective reporting on research findings. Valid or not, *A Nation at Risk* influenced public policy and perception, most notably in the reauthorization of the ESEA and enhanced focus on school accountability for positive student results.

America 2000, Goals 2000, and the Reauthorizations of the ESEA

The 1988 reauthorization of ESEA, called the Hawkins-Stafford Act, mandated, for the first time at the federal level, explicit accountability requirements of student performance based on standards. The act contained several provisions aimed at evaluating the performance of individual pupils and schools serving economically disadvantaged students. The Hawkins-Stafford Act also included sanctions for schools that did not demonstrate adequate yearly progress; a feature would be seen as a key feature in the *No Child Left Behind Law*.

The concept for explicit standards for learning can be linked to the work of Taylor and the scientific management movement. Like the tensions that existed in the early 20th century between flexibility and rigidity over curriculum, the opinions over what can be called to most explicit and comprehensive movement to standardize learning outcomes in

the history of American education had its proponents and supporters. Despite what some

perceived a threat to the work of principals and teachers (Cross & Joftus, 1997), most

states were beginning to adopt content standards in the 1990s. While states attempted to

define what students should know and be able to do, the federal government, for the most

part, did not play a significant role, although the state of public education was a focus

politically for lawmakers. The Federal government's role was to become more explicit

with the Charlottesville Education Summit, which was convened by President G.W. Bush

in 1989 (Superfine, 1995).

The Charlottesville Education Summit included the nation's governors; leaders

discussed and criticized the current state of education. The outcome of the summit was a

report that included six goals for the American education system, which included:

- every child would come to kindergarten "ready to learn"
- America would have a 90% graduation rate
- students would master five core subjects before advancing past grades 4, 8, and 12
- America's students would lead the world in math and science

(Department of Education, 1999)

This set the foundation for the federal government's role in education and the

burgeoning standards movement with the drafting of the bill entitled America 2000. The

bill supported the development of assessments to measure student performance, and for

accountability measures at the state and local levels. Grants were provided to states to

help subsidize the cost of developing, field testing, and evaluating State assessments to be

used to measure student performance (Stedman & Library of Congress, 1991). The bill

also called for states to administer the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a national assessment, in each of the five core subject areas (ibid).

Significant political debates occured concerning the unprecedented federal oversight that was called for in America 2000. During congressional debate on the bill, Senator Hatch from Utah stated, "I suggest that a breakthrough by the Federal Government is a breakdown of State and local control, and that is what this bill is" (Library of Congress). Senator Hatch continued, "I am also very concerned about national school delivery standards, which will basically prescribe to every school district in the United States how to run their schools (ibid). Due to the concerns debated by Senator Hatch and others, the America 2000 bill was never enacted. Despite this failure, the national debate concerning the health of America's public schools continued, especially the focus on standards and assessment.

William Clinton of Arkansas was one of the governors present during the Charlottesville Education Summit. I his later role as President of the United States, Clinton furthered the aims of the failed America 2000 bill to enact educational reform in the United States. The incentive to develop state standards linked to assessment was made explicit with the passing of Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994. "At the time of its signing, Goals 2000 represented one of the greatest intrusions of the federal government into education policy, an area traditionally reserved to the states (Superfine, 1995)."

Goals 2000 was the federal government's attempt to connect standards, testing, and accountability at the state level. However, as noted Superfine (1995), Goals 2000, as

was America 2000, was mired in the politics of control between federal, state, and local governments; as a result, the legislation lacked the capacity to implement its objectives. The solution developed by politicians to avoid the same fate as the America 2000 bill was to include language in the bill that made participation of states in Goals 2000 strictly voluntary. The Goals 2000 bill was passed on March 31, 1994.

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1999 focused heavily on the provisions set in Goals 2000. The ESEA reauthorization, also known as Educational Excellence for All Children Act, built upon the previous iterations of ESEA to help make "high standards a reality in America's classrooms. The legislation went on to note that it will hold states, districts, and schools accountable for the quality of education they provide and for student performance (Department of Education, 1999). An interesting parallel is again drawn for the desire for greater social controls at the turn of the 19th century to the standards and accounting movement at the turn of the 20th century, one again label as a control mechanism (Kohn, 2000).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Similarly to the call of Bagley and the essentialists' movement for the curriculum to go back to the basics, the consensus that we need tougher standards, according to Kohn (2000), is closely connected to the notion that we need to go back to basics--what might be called the "bunch o' facts" model of instruction.

According to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, states, schools, and districts must be accountable for ensuring that all students, including disadvantaged students, meet high academic standards. States must develop a system of sanctions and rewards to hold school districts accountable for improvement academic achievement (Bush &

Department of Education, 2001). Critics, however, like Alfie Kohn (2000) and Noble

and Smith (1994), believed that tougher academic standards and testing actually lesson

the quality and rigor of classroom instruction. According to Kohn:

> The problem is that raising standards has come to mean
> little more than higher scores on poorly designed
> standardized tests. The more schools commit themselves to
> improving performance on these tests, the more meaningful
> opportunities to learn are sacrificed. Every hour spent
> drilling students to ace these exams is an hour not spent
> helping them become creative, critical, curious learners.
> Thus, the drive for high scores is tantamount to lowering
> standards--a paradox rarely appreciated by those who
> make, or report on, educational policy.
>
> Children are tested to the point of absurdity in the name of
> "accountability," which turns out to be a code word for
> more control over what happens in classrooms by people
> who are not in classrooms. This has an effect on learning
> similar to the effect that a noose has on breathing.
> Particularly counterproductive is the use of bribes and
> threats to coerce schools and students into raising test
> scores, including "high-stakes" testing that determines
> whether students can graduate or even move on to the next
> grade. (p. 72)

No Child Left Behind strengthened the accountability requirements of the 1994

reauthorization by insisting that states implement statewide accountability systems

covering all public schools and students based on challenging academic content standards

in reading and mathematics; annually assess all students in grades 3–8, plus one high

school grade, relative to established standards; and create annual statewide performance

targets for schools to assure that 100% students reach proficiency in both subjects by the

year 2014 (Haertel & Herman, 2005). No Child Left Behind allows states considerable

flexibility in designing their accountability systems. Tests must be aligned with well-

defined standards in reading, mathematics, and science. Schools and districts that fail to

make adequate yearly progress must provide supplemental services, such as free tutoring

or after-school assistance; take corrective actions; and, if still not making adequate yearly

progress after five years, make dramatic changes to the way the school is run (United

States Department of Education, 2008). But not all agree that a single test can measure

the performance of a school. For example, Casbarro (2006) believes that one's belief

about the efficacy of standardized tests depends on one's assumptions. He wrote:

> If you assume performance on a standardized test is attributed onlv to
> what teachers teach, and that all students come to school equally ready to
> learn, then a school's success would be directly tied to its students'
> performance. However, if you believe that success on standardized tests
> has a lot to do with prior knowledge and family support, as well as the
> extent to which students vary in ability, readiness, and rate of learning,
> then the correlation between a school's success and its students'
> performance may not be so closely linked. (p. 17)

Part II: High Stakes Testing and Impact on Curriculum

One of the underlying principles of the high stakes testing, most prominently

associated with No Child Left Behind, is that being explicit about standards for student

performance and measuring student progress toward them, coupled with sanctions and

incentives, will improve student performance (Haertel & Herman, 2005). However, as

many educators have found, this relationship is not as linear as it sounds. High stakes

testing has impacted the curriculum in a variety of ways; while some of the research has

found that the testing has helped schools align standards and classroom practice, many

have cited unintended consequences of the testing.

Goodwin et al. (2003) provide a summary of the pros and cons of high stakes testing and accountability:

- Focusing schools and districts on learning outcomes, not process or input requirements
- Focusing teachers on helping all students achieve high levels of learning
- Providing schools with data they can use to make improvements in curricula or staffing
- Providing parents with more information about how their children and their children's schools are performing
- Providing the education community with needed data to determine what's working and what's not.

At the same time, however, many educators and researchers have expressed concerns about poorly constructed accountability systems creating a number of negative consequences, including encouraging schools and educators to:

- narrow the curriculum;
- focus on bringing students to proficient levels, but not to advanced levels;
- increase retention rates, place more students in special needs, or provide
- inappropriate accommodations;
- focus more on responding to bureaucratic regulations rather than addressing other issues of greater concern to parents and the public (e.g., discipline, safety, values, workplace preparation); and adopt a compliance mentality, rather than a creative improvement mindset.

(Goodwin et al., 2003)

A particularly troubling unintended consequence of high stakes testing is when those tests become the focus of the curriculum, rather than the defined state standards. In addition, with mandates primarily in the subject areas of Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics, other areas of study, for example science and social students, receive sparse attention in the classroom.

It is also believed that the above consequence is significantly exacerbated in traditionally low-performing school districts. As written by Heartel and Herman (2005):

Traditionally low performing students—the economically disadvantaged, language minority, and students of color, students with disabilities—are

most likely to be negatively affected, since their instruction is most likely to focus intensely on reaching proficiency based on state assessment results. There is the danger of a dual curriculum evolving. Moreover, with the specifics of the test—rather than the essentials of the discipline or meaningful learning—as a primary focus, there also is growing danger of test score inflation. Students may be learning only what is tested, and increases in test scores may not generalize to other situations. Potential mismatches between tests and standards can lead educators and policymakers to misinterpret test results and fail to address genuine needs. (p. 54)

This established another perspective of accountability, perhaps better stated as responsibility, of school leaders to ensure that high stakes testing and the notion of accountability did not skew the aim of schools to provide a high quality education through a guaranteed and viable curriculum, as well as best practice teaching and learning strategies. This requires a principal to embody the notion of principal as instructional leader.

Part III: High Stakes Testing and the Principal

The scope of work and responsibility for school principals across America is as deep as it is wide. Some of the fundamental responsibilities include ensuring a safe and orderly school environment, monitoring and evaluating teacher performance, communicating with and engaging parents, and ensuring the social, emotional, and academic success of all students. Instructional leadership requires a leader to have a conceptual and applied understanding about the teaching and learning process. These leaders must foster a positive culture for collaboration and set clear goals, establish plans to achieve those goals, and use data to monitor progress regularly, and adjust plans accordingly in a cycle of continuous improvement.

According to a synthesis on instructional leadership by Hallinger (2005), the modern

day instructional leader:

- creates a shared sense of purpose in the school, including clear goals focused on student learning;
- fosters the continuous improvement of the school through cyclical school development planning that involves a wide range of stakeholders
- develops a climate of high expectations and a school culture aimed at innovation and improvement of teaching and learning
- coordinates the curriculum and monitoring student learning outcomes
- shapes the reward structure of the school to reflect the school's mission;
- organizes and monitors a wide range of activities aimed at the continuous development of staff
- maintains a visible presence in the school, modeling the desired values of the school's culture.

While principals in the field may believe in the benefits and outcomes of being a true

instructional leader, the demands seldom make managing a school building easy. Adding

to both of these challenges are the external demands of accountability measures,

particularly the ones associated with high stakes testing. According to Reed et al. (2001),

a narrow focus on test results to measure the success of a school, combined with other

roles and responsibilities of the principalship, has led to increased stress among

principals.

The measures built into state school accountability systems elevate the stakes for

educators on several levels. The greater the consequences for not attaining testing goals,

the more threatening and high pressure the school or district becomes as a work

environment. High-stakes environments create a single-minded focus on avoiding

sanctions, accompanied by a fear to attempt anything new or untried. Fear, directly or

indirectly emanating from No Child Left Behind, can become pervasive in schools and

can dictate where and how educators are willing to invest their time and attention (Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008).

In a 2001 study of principals and how testing impacts their roles, Reed et al. (2001) found that principals in high performing schools, as measured on the state proficiency examination, placed less pressure on their teachers to perform well on standardized tests. The study also found that principals leading schools that did not perform as well on the state test were more likely to indicate poor teacher morale and modifications to teaching procedures and curriculum. For example, principals in lower performing schools were more likely to modify their leadership focus to place greater emphasis on test performance. Principals in higher performing schools seemed to focus on educating the whole child rather than simply concentrating on raising test scores. However, the study also found that some principals, even those in poor performing schools, viewed the accountability and sanctions of high stakes tests in a positive light. One of the principals in the study indicated that the results of the test help to define goals and maintain focus for the school. Another principal cited that the level of competition brought on by the testing taught an important skill to children; one that they would need later in life. Overwhelmingly, the principals in the study viewed high stakes testing as a detriment to their schools in terms of teaching and learning as well as their own ability to lead schools. The interview data generally found that the worse a school performed on the state assessment, the more that assessment because the focus of leadership, curriculum and instruction.

There is not unanimous agreement, however, that instructional leadership is a functional or realistic aim of the school principal. According to Evan (1992), the

"instructional leader must go." Instructional supervision, according to Evan, is a

formative process, where the evaluation of teachers for retention and dismissal is a

summative process.

> Therein lies the dilemma of the school administrator, generally the principal, who is charged with the responsibility of the supervision of instruction and the evaluation of teachers. The hallmarks of the supervisory process: collegiality, trust, and reflection practice, are not compatible with the characteristics of evaluation which quite often involve legal mandates, a hierarchy of roles, and concerns related to job security. This bad marriage of formative and summative responsibilities is one reason that neither is particularly well-done in our schools. (p. 3)

The apparent solution, according to Evans (1992), is the supervision of

instruction, most synonymous with instructional leadership, should be

removed from the school principal, and that the principal who believes in

the "mythology" of being the super teacher or instructional leader is

misguided. The following justifications are provided by Evans:

1. Where the phenomenon of instructional leadership does exist, it does not reside with an individual. Rather it is found in a sense of shared ownership of goals in a collective mind set to improve. Such characteristics may have developed partially because of certain behaviors of the school principal, but they could of also occurred in the absence of same.
2. The notion of an instructional leader is the product of an authoritarian model of school administration. It speaks of materialistic/paternalistic conceptions of school leadership and it is demeaning to teachers. The existence of instructional leadership is the sign of a healthy school organization; the existence of an instructional leader is not.
3. It is in the name of being an instructional leader that many principals respond to educational fads and can be found riding the latest bandwagon. Some principals even model the latest methodological "de rigeuer" in

the misguided hope that teachers will emulate such actions in their classrooms.

4. An instructional leader with the power to affects one's job security is not a very positive inspiration for risk taking, creativity, or deviating from the approaches promulgated by those leaders.

5. Principals, contrary to their stated desires, don't actually accord much of their time to instructional supervision. (p. 14)

In summary, the concepts of testing, control, and accountability have been part of the educational landscape for decades. The pendulum continues to swing between pedagogy that is student centered and flexible, to pedagogy that is rigid and mechanistic. It is the building principal who works to implement the policy and procedures make sense of the testing and its results is the building principal. However, at what cost does the principal take on all the roles required of leader, curriculum supervision, evaluator, and standards enforcer? The goal of this qualitative study was to better understand the perspective of administrators on accountability and high stakes testing and what effect it had, if any, on the his/her role as school leader.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

How high-stakes testing and accountability impact the daily lives of principals is important in helping to better understand the principalship is this age of testing. The goal of this qualitative study was to better understand the perspective of administrators on accountability and what effect it has, if any, on the his/her leadership role. Through a series of in-depth interviews and analysis of principals that lead schools that are on various levels of No Child Left Behind sanctions, this study will help the reader to understand how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted the principal's role.

The rationale for such a study was in the unique perspective of principals at a point in the history of public school education where the stakes associated with testing are at unprecedented levels. The questions that guided this research were well suited for a qualitative research design for these primary reasons: 1) there was no control or treatment being applied or withheld, 2) the overarching question that guided this research was a "how" question about a contemporary set of events; the goal in answering the research questions was be to better understand a current phenomenon, 3) the subjects of my interviews constituted the study of a bounded event, and 4) the data gathered from twenty principal interviews, in addition to the research of my literature review, produced a thickly descriptive report from many perspectives and represented their perceptions at one point in time.

Role of the Researcher

I am currently a doctoral candidate at a public Doctoral/ Research One University.
I have been a professional educator for thirteen years; five of those years have been as a
special education teacher, with the remaining eight as an elementary school principal.
My transition from teacher to principal began shortly prior to President G.W. Bush's
signing of the *No Child Left Behind* law and high stakes testing. Therefore I have
firsthand experience with how a variety of stakeholders (principals, teachers, parents and
student) in public education have been affected by high stakes testing and heightened
levels of accountability.

The two school districts in which I have been employed have been in
communities that have been in the upper middle class to affluent socioeconomic range.
The schools that I have led were high achieving schools; among the best in their
socioeconomic group. As a result, the external pressure I have felt in relation to high
stakes testing has been minimal. In turn, the impact of high stakes testing and
accountability on my instructional leadership responsibilities (curriculum development,
instructional innovation) had been modest, at best. However, as the proficiency target of
100% for all students by 2014 as outlined in No Child Left Behind looms nearer, my
perception is that the impact of testing and accountability is increasing in its intensity.
The state of New Jersey is enhancing its systems of accountability through checklists,
reporting forms, and more rigorous proficiency standards. As I reflect on the impact of
high stakes testing and accountability in a historically high achieving school in good
standing, I cannot help but desire an understanding of how other principals perceive the

pressure, especially those who lead schools in more punitive levels of No Child Left

Behind sanctions.

I have possible biases concerning the validity of high stakes testing and

accountability. As educators, we are trained to analyze a variety of data sources to make

instructional decisions. We are also trained to teach students to think critically about

instructional content and value curriculum that challenges and inspires. Yet I have

growing concerns that due to the high stakes nature of testing today, bold and sometimes

sweeping school changes are made as a result of state tests mandated by No Child Left

Behind. I also have an assumption that the pressures, both external and internal, on

principals brought on by increasing accountability standards and high stakes testing are

heightened as a school moves through the various levels of No Child Left Behind

sanctions.

The sincere interest and biases that I have for this subject area may have provided

an ethical challenge to the study. I maintained a neutral perspective of high stakes testing

and accountability measures when interviewing participants in the study. My biases were

recognized and controlled. I strived to overcome these biases by maintaining a neutral

perspective while conducting interviews with principals. I offered respondents an

opportunity to read interview transcripts. Also, I utilized critical friends to review my

interview transcriptions. In addition, I shared my emerging research findings with

respondents and offer them an opportunity to comment on my findings. This not only

validated my analysis of the data when there was agreement, but it also provided a more

in-depth understanding and another layer of research when the respondent disagreed with

my analysis.

Population and Sample

For this study, I used non-probability/criterion-based/convenience selection methods. Since probability sampling allows the researcher to generalize results, non-probability was used since generalization of outcomes is not the goal of a qualitative study (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam (1998):

> The criteria you establish for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases. You not only spell out the criteria you will use, but you say why the criteria are important (p. 61).

The sample of principals for this study was selected through an analysis the New Jersey Department of Education School Improvement Status Summary, 2009-2010. The criteria for participant selection included the following characteristics:

- *Elementary level principals in New Jersey*—this population was chosen for two reasons. First, this is the population with which the researcher is most familiar. This allowed for more insightful questions and ability to follow-up thoughts and ideas of participants. Second, the elements of high stakes testing and accountability in relation to the elementary level principal are distinctly different from that of a secondary principal. For example, the selection of only elementary principals will allow the researcher to compare and contract perspective based on the same high stakes test, the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge, and same set of sanctions and testing requirements.

- *Sites that represent variety in placement on the NCLB sanction continuum*—For example, the sampling of schools represented schools which, according to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards, were in Good Standing and schools

that were, at the time, under some form of sanction. This was chosen to be able to compare and contrast the perspective of principals with varying the sanction status the school which they lead.

- *Sites that represent a variety of socio-economic levels*-- The sampling of schools represented a variety of socio-economic levels as defined by the New Jersey Department of Education's District Factor Groups (DFG). This helped me to compare and contrast the perspective of principals in both high, low, and moderate socio-economic district.

- *Sites that are in relatively close proximity to the researcher*— Merriam (1998) indicates that convenience sampling is often factored into sample selection, but warns that when used alone, it often yields poor results. In this study, convenience sampling was one of three methods used. This characteristic was chosen to increase the probability that my access to the participants was practical. For example, participants were chosen from three surrounding counties relative to the home of the researcher. This represents an 25-mile radius from my home, which provided practical and convenient access to the participants

I included eleven elementary level (K-5) principals in the study, and the schools they led were on various levels of No Child Left Behind sanction.

Once principals that meet the AYP and socio-economic status criteria were selected, I contacted the principals by phone to seek their interest to participate in this project. Phone calls were followed up with e-mails, providing written expectations of

participation. Once consent to participate was received, I arranged for the first round

interviews. The varied responses from the participants in the study allowed me to draw

conclusions concerning how high stakes testing and accountability have affected their

leadership role as principal related to the school's place on the No Child Left Behind

sanction continuum.

Data Collection

Qualitative research methods were chosen for this study for two reasons. First,

qualitative methods provided detailed and descriptive data necessary to understand the

perceptions of principals about the impact that high stakes testing and accountability have

had on their role as instruction leaders, as well as their impact on curriculum. Second,

qualitative research methods are inductive. I gathered data and developed or modified

theory throughout the study.

The data collection procedures for this case included the use of interviews and

descriptive statistics. According to Merriam (1998) "interviewing is the best technique to

use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals" (p. 72). These

data included a description of the affect of the respondent, the interview environment (i.e.

respondent's office), and a brief description of the general setting (respondent's school).

Two practice interviews were conducted. This provided me with an opportunity to

analyze responses to ensure congruency with the overarching research questions. This

also provided an opportunity for me to test the audio equipment and data transfer process.

I implemented a semi-structured interview, with each interview session lasting

approximately 45-minutes. The respondents discussed in the former section were asked

to participate in two interviews. Interview questions were carefully developed and frequently refined, especially following the practice interviews, to ensure they helped to answer the overarching research questions. For example, after listening back to the responses following one of the practice interviews, it was clear that some of the questions yielded the same or similar responses; therefore, some questions were combined to avoid redundancy.

Interviews were recorded using an IPod with an external microphone. Following the interviews, the IPod was connected to a laptop computer, which transferred the interview data into ITunes. Once in ITunes, a CD of the interview was burned. This process ensured that the information was backed-up and facilitated the process of transcription. Interviews were completely transcribed using Dragon NaturallySpeaking speech recognition software. Using the constant comparative method, I refined and developed questions for the second interview questions. This provided questions of extension and/or clarification that emanated from the first interviews.

The interviews occurred in a setting of the respondent's choice. I met with most of the principals in their offices; one principal preferred to meet in my office and another preferred to meet at a local restaurant. Each interview began with open-ended questions that aimed to help me to better understand the interviewees background and past experiences (tell me about yourself, what subjects did you teach, etc.) to put the interviewee at ease with the process. As the interview progressed, I continued with open-ended questions with a focus on obtaining information about the participants perceptions

how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted their roles as instructional

leaders.

All participants received an Oral History Form that was signed prior to their

participation in the interviews. The researcher ensured confidentiality of the participants

in the study by coding and concealing their identity and pseudonyms were created for the

site and participants.

It was originally designed for me to select two of the interview participants to be

"shadowed" for a day. This was to allow me to confirm or enhance the data gathered

during the interviews; however, my obligations to my occupation prevented this from

happening, and I believed that the data I gathered was sufficient in scope.

<div align="center">Documents</div>

I used documents and artifacts to help analyze the data. These documents

included internal and external district communications about standardized testing and

testing results. According to Merriam (1998), "Personal documents are a reliable source

of data concerning a person's attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world" (p. 116).

Information was also mined from the schools' websites about testing and accountability,

as well as data from the school *Report Card*, which was available on the website of the

State Department of Education. Following the first interview with principals, I requested

the sharing of documents and communications that he/she believes will help provide

additional information to the researcher. Only a few of the principals shared such

documents with me. These included public reports to the board of education, student

support plans, and test preparation schedules. Internet searches and reviews of school

and district websites were also conducted.

These data sources were not formally coded, but used primarily in Chapter 4 for

the results section. Documents were collected between September 2009 and June 2010.

Please refer to Table 3.1 on p. 53 for a list of documents used in this study

Table 2. Document Summary

Document Code	Document	Data Gleaned
DOC1	Countdown to the 2010 NJASK	Approach to test prep
DOC2	Supplemental Program Letter	Allocation of resources/data driven placement
DOC3	Memo to Board of Education	Principal's Plan to improve test scores
DOC4	Principal's Annual Report on Test Scores	Insight into principals' communications with community about test scores
DOC5	Ms. Mars' Letter to Parents about State Test	Insight into principal's communication. to parents about state test
DOC6	Mr. Finch's Letter to Parents about State Test	Insight into principal's communication. to parents about AYP
DOC7	State report card letters	Insight into principal's communication. to parents about school culture and priorities
DOC8	CAPA Summary Report	Documentation of problems and recommendations from state agency to a "failing" school

Data Analysis

Merriam (1998) posits that "data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research" (p. 151). As pointed out by Maxwell (2005) "data analysis is probably the most mysterious aspect of qualitative research" (p. 95). This is likely due to the fact that there is no one right way to analyze qualitative data. There is, however, a wrong way, which is to not collect and analyze data simultaneously (Merriam, 1998; Maxwell, 2005). According to Maxwell (2005), "One of the most common problems in qualitative studies is letting unanalyzed field notes and transcripts pile up, making the task of final analysis much more difficult and discouraging." For this project, data was collected and analyzed simultaneously.

In this study, data was analyzed using the constant comparative method of analysis, which was developed by Glaser and Strauss (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 159). The data generated from this study was examined on an ongoing basis for common themes and significant patterns. This analysis led to tentative categories that, according the Merriam (1998), will then be compared to each other and to the other interview data collected. According to Maxwell (2005):

> "reading and thinking about your interview transcripts and observations notes, writing memos, developing coding categories and applying these to your data, and analyzing narrative structure and contextual relationships are all important types of data analysis. Their use needs to be planned (and carried out) in order to answer your research questions and address validity threats." (p. 96)

Each interview was listened to shortly after the interview is conducted. During this listening, I wrote notes and generated voice memos on was heard in the data, which aided in the tentative development of ideas, categories, and relationships.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim using Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition software. Following the transcriptions, I began to complete initial coding of the data. I developed tentative themes, then copy and pasted responses that "fit" under that category. In addition, responses were color coded based on their place on NCLB sanction (e.g. clear = good standing, red = Year 5, green= Year 2). This format of analysis helped me to see patterns in the data and provided a visual method for comparing and contrasting responses according to NCLB sanction.

The data coding was continually refined into categories that aided comparison within and between these categories, and that contributed to the development of concepts of theory. For example, it became evident that in addition to the categories of *Good Standing* and *Level of Sanction*, a third category, *Good Standing with a Recent History of Sanction*, emerged. As noted by Merriam (1995) "the task is to compare one unit of information with the next in looking for recurring regularities in the data" (p. 180). I compared the patterns and relationships that developed in the data during this analysis with the evidence in the literature review and the theoretical background. I compared and contrasted the perspectives of principals that lead schools on similar and varying levels of No Child Left Behind sanction. For example, were there similarities in perspectives of principals on *School Improvement Year 1*? Did principals who lead school *In Good Standing* have different or similar views about accountability and high stakes testing

compared to those who lead school being restructured? The data analysis of this study

expanded the literature based on this particular population. This study stood on its own

as a bounded event and is not generalizable. I do not necessarily believe that new theory

developed from the data analysis of this study.

<div align="center">Methods of Verification</div>

I made a concerted effort to validate conclusions and to accurately portray the

reality of those observed. The following section will describe all of the safeguards and

procedures were used to ensure internal and external validity.

Triangulation

Yin (2004) writes that "a major strength of case study data collection is the

opportunity to use many different sources of evidence" (p. 97). Triangulation refers to

the process of using multiple sources to confirm emerging findings (Merriam, 1998).

This study used multiple data sources, including interviews, public records, documents

and field observations. This helped me to attain multiple perspectives of the phenomenon

being studied (Yin, 1994).

Peer Examination

Peer examination involves asking individuals skilled in educational case study to

comment on findings as they emerge (Merriam, 1998). For this study, I requested for two

peers, both of whom have recently completed their doctorates in education, to

periodically review my research findings. Feedback was also sought from members of

my dissertation committee.

Respondent Validation

Respondent validation, according to Maxwell (2005), is the process of checking the accuracy of information gathered from participants by sharing data and findings with those who provided the information. I helped to ensure respondent validation by sharing the interview transcriptions, field notes and ideas with the participating administrators involved in the study for further clarification through member checks. This ensured that inferences during the analysis phase are accurate and representative of the participant's responses. As written by Maxwell (2005):

> This is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstandings of what you observed. (p. 111)

Rich Data

Maxwell (2005) uses the term rich data to describe data that are detailed and varied enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on (as cited in Becker, 1970, pp. 51-62). Two interviews were conducted with all but one of the participants. Scheduling conflicts prevented a second interview with one of the participants. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Detailed and descriptive note taking were employed to create a clear picture of observations and settings.

Ethical Issues

All of the data collected for this study was coded and pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity in reporting. All of the data, both hard copy and electronic, were maintained in a safe and secure location. Data that were in hard copy form was kept in a

locked filing cabinet in my home. Data that were electronic was kept on a computer that was password protected. Both the filing cabinet and the computer were accessible only by me. Participation in the study was voluntary. All participants who agreed to contribute to the research were fully informed of its purpose, rationale and potential benefit to future school administrators. All participants of the study were required to sign a consent form stating their understanding of the conditions of the study.

Additionally, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Temple University has reviewed and exempted this study from IRB approval, on grounds of Oral History. In keeping with the regulations of the Temple University IRB, and in order to ensure that no harm would come to the respondents, each signed an Oral History form and a permission to audiotape form.

A turbulence gauge was developed that categorized the corresponding levels of turbulence for each of the interview participants. This was used to analyze the level of turbulence unique to their personal situation. Multiple ethical paradigms served as the lenses to analyze responses to help determine the primary lens used by each respondent to perform their duties as principal.

Outcomes of the Study and its Relation to Theory and Literature

The goal of this study was to better understand the perspective of administrators on accountability and what effect it has, if any, on the his/her leadership role. From budgeting and organizational structure, to local curriculum and classroom instruction, efforts from external sources to ensure "accountability" in public schools have impacted virtually every aspect of school operations in America. Between 1865 and 1965, a true

accountability model for state testing failed to take hold (Mazzeo, 2001), however the movements and initiatives that were attempted during this time set the stage for current day accountability movements. No Child Left Behind is the initiative most often associated with the current accountability movement; however there are other more localized initiatives that add additional layers with the intent of ensuring quality public schools for all.

The extent to which the ideals of instructional leadership and accountability have impacted the curriculum is of much debate. These issues focus on the philosophy of focusing curriculum on preparation for high-stakes testing versus the philosophy of letting the high stakes testing evaluate the effectiveness of what is being taught as a method for supporting learning (Allen, 2008). While some researchers believe that it has helped to better articulate and define expectations for learners, others believe the results are a "narrowing" of the curriculum.

As written by Popham (2005) high stakes testing currently seems to be constricting the curricular thinking of education leaders. Crocco and Costigan (2007) note that instructional leaders have found their personal and professional identity thwarted, creativity and autonomy undermined, and ability to forge relationships with students diminished; all a result of high stakes testing and the narrowing of the curriculum. Yet in their multiyear review and analysis of No Child Left Behind research, Jennings & Rentner (2006) found that schools are paying much more attention to the alignment of curriculum and instruction.

I believe this study addressing the perceptions of principals of how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted their role as will help principals to understand the affects of leading in an era of accountability. This study also analyzed this issue from the perspective of principals that lead schools on various levels of sanction: good standing, school improvement year one, school improvement year two, corrective action, planning for restructuring, and restructuring (Bush & Department of Education, 2001).

Table 3. Proposed Timeline for Completion

A. Research state report card data to identify districts that represent a sampling of the NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND sanction continuum	November 2009
B. Prepare interview protocol	Nov./Dec. 2009
C. Make phone calls to at least 12 district principals to gain access and determine the population of interviewees	January 2010
D. Data Collection: Interviews and Documents	January/February 2010
E. Conduct member checks, obtain feedback	February/March 2010
F. Data Analysis	Ongoing—January-May 2010
G. Writing Chapters 4 and 5	June-October 2010
H. Defense	November 2010

Summary

Principals providing leadership in this era of accountability are experiencing aspects of the profession never before experienced. While testing and accountability have been part of the literature in education for over one-hundred years, the high stakes associated with this current era of accountability is unprecedented.   This study added to the literature of the impact that high stakes testing has had on the principal's role as instructional leader, as well as its impact on the curriculum. This study analyzed these affects from the perspective of school principals working in school along the No Child Left Behind sanctions continuum.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Introduction

The goal of this section is to present the data that have been collected in themes that "capture some recurring pattern that cuts across the preponderance of the data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). Chapter Four will open with a section on the data demographics and other relevant related information on the principals that were studied (summarized in Table 4.2). This chapter includes a discussion of the findings of this case study through the eyes of its informants. The findings are supported by verbatim quotes, summaries and interpretations of interview responses, and/or examples from artifacts that were discovered during the research. This discussion is then framed by the research questions, presented in Chapter One, and are repeated below:

Has the current era of accountability caused principals to redefine themselves and their self perception of their leadership? If so, in what ways?

- Do selected principals perceive an impact of testing and assessment policies associated with NCLB on their role as a school administrator? If so, how?

- Do selected principals' perceptions of their leadership within accountability and high stakes testing vary based upon the level of NCLB sanction?

To assist in breaking down the data by the level of NCLB sanction, principal responses have been categorized under three sub-headings:

1) Principals leading schools currently in Good Standing,

2) Principals currently leading schools on NCLB Sanction

3) Principals leading schools currently in Good Standing, but with a recently history (either the school or the individual) on NCLB Sanction.

What follows is a view of the data through the lens of each research question described above. For each question, the data are described in its own section. Following this description, the final section of the chapter is a brief summary of what has been learned from the data. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the interview subjects, including their age, years of experience, gender, NCLB sanction level and socioeconomic level of the schools which they lead.

The eleven participants in this study represented a diverse range of characteristics. The average years of administrative experience among the participants were 15.6, with a median of ten years. Six of the participants lead schools that are in Good Standing, which means that they have met all AYP targets; however, only two of the principals have never worked in a school that did make AYP. Five of the principals were currently on some level of NCLB Sanction. Three of the schools were in Year 1 of not making AYP, one was in Year 2 of not making AYP, and one was in Year 5 of not making AYP. Nine of the eleven participants were male, and ten of the eleven participants were Caucasian, with one subject being African-American.

Table 4. NCLB Sanction Continuum

Status	NCLB Sanction Level
GS	**Good Standing:** Made all AYP targets
Y1	**Early Warning** – Did not make AYP for one year
Y2	Did not make AYP for two years
Y3	Did not make AYP for three years
Y4	**District Corrective Action**: Did not make AYP for four years
Y5	**District Corrective Action**: Did not make AYP for five years
Y6	**District Corrective Action:** Did not make AYP for six years

All of the participants worked in southern New Jersey. All but one of the participants worked in a suburban district, with the exception being an urban district. Socioeconomic status of the districts ranged from an A District Factor Group, to a J District Factor Group, which represents both the lowest and highest ends of the spectrum. According to the New Jersey Department of Education (2010):

> The DFG is an index of socioeconomic status that is created using data for several indicators available in the decennial Census of Population. Socioeconomic status cannot be measured directly. Rather, the literature holds that it is a function of other, measurable quantities (traditionally, the basic three are income, occupation, and education). Therefore, the DFG is a composite statistical index created using statistical procedures, a "model" of socioeconomic status, and input data for various socioeconomic traits. Seven indices were developed from the census data as follows: 1) Percent of population with no high school diploma; 2) Percent with some college; 3) Occupation; 4) Population density; 5) Income; 6) Unemployment; 7) Poverty

It was important for me to include schools on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale that were in Good Standing, as well as at least one school on the higher end of the socioeconomic scale that was not making AYP.

Table 5. Interviewee Summary Data and Keys

Interviewee Pseudonym	NCLB Sanction Level	NJ DFG	Years of Admin. Exp.	# of Interviews	Date of First Interview	Appx. Age	M or F	Interviewee Id. #
Mr. Jim Dugan	Y5	A	23	2	2-2-10	E	M	1-2A-203-10E
Mrs. Cindy Mars	Y1	CD	6	2	2-8-10	C	F	2-2B-208-10C
Mr. Bill Finch	GS	FG	5	2	2-12-10	B	M	3-2C-212-10B
Ms. Pam Fargo	GS	CD	9	2	2-16-10	D	F	4-2D-216-10D
Mr. Chris Oppenheim	GS	J	25	1	2-17-10	F	M	5-1E-217-10F
Mr. Steve Simpson	GS	GH	15	2	2-18-10	E	M	6-2F-218-10E
Mr. Cal Warrington	GS	FG	10	2	2-19-10	B	M	7-2G-219-10B
Mr. Sal Brice	Y2	I	10	2	2-22-10	B	M	8-2H-222-10B
Mr. Stan Sirover	Y1	GH	32	2	3-2-10	F	M	9-2I-302-10F
Mr. Ron Swift	Y1	GH	30	2	3-1-10	F	M	10-2J-303-10F
Mr. Doug Shine	GS	B	7	2	3-5-10	B	M	11-2K-305-10B

Reading Interviewee ID #: First interview # - # of interviews total(with)position letter - date of first interview (with)letter of approximate age

Table 6. Approximate Age Code

Age Code	Approximate Age
A	30 - 35
B	36 - 40
C	41-45
D	45 -50
E	50 – 55
F	56 - 60

Although this study included principals from different backgrounds, varied years of experience, who lead schools with distinctly unique needs, they all share the experience of working within a system that employs the same high stakes test and the same structure of accountability. To what degree these conditions impact their priorities and decision making was the subject I sought to better understand.

The Perceptions and Responses of School Leaders of How High Stakes Testing and Accountability Impact Their Role as Principals

The responses of the principals were centered on four areas:

1) Personal and professional pressure associated with high stakes testing and accountability and the principal's response

2) Special education programming

3) Paradox of high stakes testing and accountability

4) Ethical dilemmas associated with high stakes testing and accountability

1) Personal and professional pressures associated with high stakes testing and accountability and the principal's response

All of the principals discussed the personal and professional pressures encountered in their daily working lives. For some, the pressure was overt and external; for others, it was more about an internal drive to be successful and not associated with any enterprise labeled as failing. The following sections highlight the personal and professional pressures associated with high stakes testing and accountability. First, the professional pressures associated with high stakes testing and accountability is reported in relation to three major sources: a) pressures from boards and central office; b) pressures from the community; and, c) personal pressures generated from within. Principal responses will be grouped under three categories: 1) principals leading school currently in Good Standing, 2) principals currently leading school on NCLB Sanction, and 3) principals leading school currently in Good Standing, but with a recent history on NCLB Sanction.

A common pattern shared by many of the principals in this study was that the

pressure, or lack thereof, from central administrators and board members helped to either

raise or lower the significance placed on the outcomes of high stakes testing and

accountability.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing

For both principals in Good Standing, they did not feel an overt pressure from

central administrators and board members.

> Mr. Oppenheim: I think central administration, you know, there's certainly a focus on how we can do better. And certainly that we make AYP, but it don't feel there is a lot of pressure from district office to improve. I think the board is more concerned that at the high school level that they are doing well by the time they graduate.

> Mr. Simpson: Central office pressure? No, not at all. I don't think it would change if we didn't make AYP for one year. I think it would change if there is a pattern, but I feel more of a sense of pressure from the school board, one of which three children go to this school…they feel like they are the experts.

Principals currently leading school on NCLB Sanction

> Mr. Douglas: They [central office] certainly would be happier if our schools were making AYP. I mean is this old adage of the nail that sticking out gets hammered. I mean, you're the school not making AYP. [We are] under a lot of scrutiny. I already told you before, downtown's [central office administrators] are here a lot. My superintendent is under a lot of pressure from the Board of Education, and from all the politicos in [the capital] to increase test scores to increase the number of schools that are making AYP. So there is a lot of pressure turned on the principals.

Over the course of two interviews, Mr. Douglas shared his experience dealing with the review team from the New Jersey Department of Education. This review process is called the Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement (CAPA). According to state policy, when a school does not make AYP for three consecutive years, the state places the school under CAPA review and assigns teams of individuals to provide schools with "practical, applicable, and helpful assistance, increasing the opportunity for all students to meet the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJ Department of Education, 2006, p. 1)." The school where Mr. Douglas is principal is in year 5 of not making AYP.

During our first discussion, Mr. Douglas talked about being under the microscope from the state.

> Mr. Douglas: That's probably the biggest distraction that we have. Next week, we have the state team coming here for three days; they'll be camped out here for three days interviewing everybody scrutinizing everything, and then they'll leave and give me some recommendations. This is happened a number of times over the last six years.

Mr. Douglas then went on to question the ultimate value of these teams that the state views as means of professional support.

> Mr. Douglas: There recommendations aren't always valuable. Sometimes they're so vague and sometimes you really feel like it's just cookie cutter things, you know they'd done this in [one city], they've done this in [another city] and mean what all these other schools that are failing and all they do is change the name on the report, you know, so we're getting the same recommendations

During our second conversation, Mr. Douglas shared his perspective on the most recent visit from the state's review team. His experience with this visit was markedly different from the others. "It was not the same as other CAPA reviews," said Mr.

Douglas. "I had like five day CAPA reviews and they were a lot more collaborative.

This one was like a SWAT team coming in.**"**

Ms. Mars believes that while the external pressure from her board and

superintendent was relatively low and collegial, she was required to developed specific

plans on how she planned to raise scores. During our second interview, she shared a

memo from the district's assistant superintendent that was written to the board of

education. The memo summarized a meeting between Ms. Mars and the assistant

superintendent during which the focus was on how test scores would be improved. Ms.

Mars contributed the following points: "Clarifying scope and sequence for language arts,

comprehensive NJASK preparation, work with an outside consultant, bi-weekly writing

prompts, and the implementation of a balanced literacy model."   When asked from

where the pressure comes from to have such explicit plans regarding test performance,

she replied:

> Ms. Mars: I think there is pressure that he [superintendent] has. I mean let's face
> it, our scores are being placed in the newspaper, or scores are everywhere...
> people can log on and see you know schools are being judged based on how other
> schools are doing on these tests. It's not the only factor, but it certainly is a big
> one.

Principals leading schools currently in Good Standing, but with a recently history on

NCLB Sanction

In Mr. Finch's school district, the superintendent is in her first year. During our

discussion, Mr. Finch spoke to the new charge that has been placed upon principals by

the new superintendent, and the explicit expectation to raise test scores.

Mr. Finch: The superintendent wants kids to pass, you know, the superintendent absolutely wants kids to pass and is encouraging full force to design clusters of kids push-in teacher, more support, test prep. The superintendent wants all kids to pass because when it's all said and done, I think the superintendent's performance is measured by the board and by the newspaper on how our students compare on the test. New superintendent, first year, she is very much interested in test scores going up.

I do[feel pressure] because the old superintendent had held the position for 19 years. The new superintendent is very much relying on principals to be instructional leaders. She refers to us as instructional leaders. She refers to us as the responsible people for making sure best practices are implemented for designing systems and supports so more kids pass the test. So I feel like I'm being depended upon both directly and indirectly for our test scores to go up. So I am feeling definitely more pressure to have her test scores go up.

Mr. Finch: The new members of the board seem to have more pride in public relations; they want to be able to say that our school district is the best school district.

Mr. Warrington described how despite a drop in standardized test scores, his superintendent did not react in a manner that exacerbated the situation; rather, he led with a more calm and reflective approach, which trickled down to the building principals.

Mr. Warrington: Last year our [standardized test] scores went down. Our scores dipped and we did address it.   [The superintendent said] okay, they went down a little bit.   Let's see what that's telling us, what does that mean, and let's see what happens this year. It's interesting because for as research based and research minded that my superintendent is, it's [test scores] not critical, it's not high on his list of priorities. He was around yesterday and he made an effort to be in all of the buildings when the testing was going on and talking to the test coordinators, I happen to be one in one of my buildings, and his first question was how are the kids doing? How are they handling all this pressure? Are they okay? You know, so we don't necessarily feel that pressure. I think that if we were consistently…well, one of the schools in my district has not been meeting AYP, and we never, at least to my knowledge, never in a group setting have issues or conversations that focus strictly on the [standardized test scores].

However, in Mr. Warrington's former position as assistant principal in a school that was not making AYP, the pressures felt from central administers, specifically the

superintendent, was quite explicit. When asked why he believes this to be the case, he

responded:

> Mr. Warrington: I think there was a lot of emphasis put on that because it was [name of school district], which often found itself in the spotlight and I think it was used as a touchstone for surrounding districts-- meaning that a lot of other surrounding districts compared themselves to us. The superintendent really pushed for test scores. I think that was an important part of the way he wanted the district to look, you know, that was an important part.

b) Pressures from Parents/Community Associated with High Stakes Testing and

Accountability

For most other principals, however, the pressure felt on principals by community

members, mainly parents of school aged children, was not explicit, and in one case, the

principal hoped for it to be more of a value to the community.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing

At the request of his PTA, Mr. Oppenheim, who leads a school in a very affluent

suburb, presents test results annually to the parents in his school.

> Mr. Oppenheim: I believe the community probably focuses a great deal on the results of standardized testing, and expects the principal to decide how best to raise scores, if they're not where there should be. So there is a lot of focus on the test results. The PTA, they want to know where we stand. My presentation is based on my school's results and also how you improve the results. Each year, the PTA likes a presentation. The kinds of questions are, "Can you account for why you have certain grade levels?" and, "Why have certain grade levels received a certain score in a certain area?"

Mr. Simpson, who leads a school that has always achieved AYP status, indicated that he felt very little pressure from the community. He said, "Community pressure? Not really."

Principals currently leading school on NCLB Sanction

While Ms. Mars expressed that she did not feel overt pressure from the community, she did feel a sense of pressure with the fact that test scores are published publicly, and in her district, require a public presentation.

> Ms. Mars: I'm feeling really good about the community and I'm feeling good that they [parents] understand what we're dealing with as far as our population and the things that we're trying to implement, with what we have to work with here. I think that it's a lot of pressure [public presentation about test scores]... you're presenting to your whole board into your whole community, it's televised.

Mr. Sirover leads a Title I school in a large, diverse suburban district. His school is located in a working class neighborhood, and one of the biggest struggles he faces is the sense of apathy by the community for academic achievement and rigor.

> Mr. Sirover: When I was hired for the job, there were concerns that as a Title I school there were issues such as student behavior, parent attitudes, and apathy towards high instruction that that was something that set in the community. The community was not banging the doors down at the time I came here. The school ranked 12th out of 12 schools in standardized testing, and no one seemed to mind. It seemed to be an accepted norm that this was the poorest community in [the district] and therefore these are the expectations.

Although Mr. Sirover's school is currently in Year 1 of not meeting AYP, the school has a recent history of outstanding performance on standardized tests. He reflected on the reaction of the parent community both when they were doing exceptionally well, compared to its current status of not making AYP.

Mr. Sirover: When we were scoring 96%, the year that we beat [the district's highest performing schools], I cut and pasted [the test scores] into every one of my daily newsletters. I would put the scores at the bottom... I wanted to burn that into their hands. And despite that it was online, hard copy... I wasn't looking for a gift or the accolades, I wanted to try and change the belief system in the school of what we stood for, and I got no response... I got no response. So my disappointment in the gestalt of things in the school was that the community values. The happiness of their child's, the quality of care for the child in the school as opposed to the rigor of instruction.

Mr. Swift also leads a school currently on Year 1 of sanctions. When asked how his parent community reacted to his notice that the school did not make AYP, he responded, "Okay. On the whole, it wasn't a big deal to them…it didn't faze them.

Mr. Brice indicated that he has not directly experienced much pressure from his school community, despite the fact his school is located in an affluent suburb and is currently on Year 2 of the NCLB sanction continuum.

Mr. Brice: I haven't directly, indirectly yes, meaning that my superiors coming back to the principals saying that the community has questioned them about it, [but] I'm not getting the PTO saying, 'You know, we notice in the paper that your test scores are XY and Z. What's the deal?' No, I'm not getting that.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing, but with a recently history on

NCLB Sanction

Ms. Fargo, who leads a school that has made AYP in recent years, but was also on Year 2 of NCLB sanctions in 2008.

Ms. Fargo: Really [questions from parents about test scores] are few and far between. Like I said, the school was a failing school when I got here as assistant principal. We didn't have a whole lot of public feedback about that. I mean honestly, I think they were more worried when they took away field trips for year--then we heard from everybody. But test scores, not so much. Parents are more worried about how their child is doing as opposed to how the school is doing.   As long as they see their child bring home A's and B's, I don't think they give the whole school that much of a thought. In fact, I've had parents who've actually

told children that, you know, I don't care how well you do on this test…[it] doesn't mean a thing. Some students are coming in with that mindset. They don't feel like the test is all that important.

Mr. Warrington: [There is] relatively low concern regarding test scores. I mean, again, they would care more if we were not performing consistently in a certain area. I think [then] there would be a larger outcry, but I can't say that 100%. We haven't been in that situation, so we really don't know how the community would react.

In contrast, Mr. Warrington spoke about the community pressure that was felt in his former district, where he was the assistant principal of a school that was not making AYP.

Mr. Warrington: There was a lot of pressure put on teachers and kids to make sure that we made AYP and that progress was made. I think if you take that broader perspective I think it was that pressure was then put on by the community.

Mr. Shine works in a district ranked by the state in a "B" District Factor Group and has made AYP for three consecutive years. However, for a four year period beginning in 2003, the school was in a pattern of not making AYP on an every other year basis. Similarly to the other principals in the study, Mr. Shine rarely received questions about the testing, which he attributed to, in part, the socioeconomic level of his community.

Mr. Shine: I don't think the parents understand No Child Left Behind. I get calls when I send out retention letters [from parents saying], 'You can't retain my child [because of] No Child Left Behind,' so they don't understand that. We have the 65% poverty level, so you're not really dealing with a lot of post secondary education people. So as far as they are concerned that their child is getting a decent grade on the report card is what matters to them.

NCLB is structured to penalize schools for not making AYP, which is certainly an explicit negative reinforcer, and can be viewed as providing motivational pressure to have a school achieve well on the state test. In additional to the external pressures associated with high stakes testing and accountability, many of the principals in this study spoke of the internal pressures associated with high stakes testing and accountability, especially how the public nature of test results impact how the public sees them and how the individual principal questions his/her efficacy.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing

For Mr. Oppenheim's school, the expectation was that student would produce exceptional results on the state test; it was part of their identity.

> Mr. Oppenheim: I feel like I'm not doing my job if I can't help the teachers. I feel that there is pressure that my school makes AYP from a standpoint of pride.   The school would not believe it if the school did not make AYP.   That would affect the school as a whole and how they perceive themselves. I think there is enough stress felt at the grade levels that do get tested that they are going to do acceptable.

In Mr. Simpson's case, he had to deal with an unexpected decline in his third grade scores, which was attributed, in part, to the state's raising of the cut score needed to achieve proficiency.

> Mr. Simpson: I was shocked. We were all expecting to see a drop, but when I saw that 50% of my third graders were partially proficient, I was fearful with how I was going to break that news to the parents.

Despite the initial shock, he did not feel strong pressures from the school community.

> Mr. Simpson: I would say no [to pressure], because I don't put a whole lot of

weight in them to be honest with you. I mean, I know, I want my kids to do well. I think it is a reflection on me if the scores come in low. Like when I saw that 50%. I took it as personally myself, because I know I'm the principal of the building, you know but I don't feel like I'm under the gun. If you know, if we score 50% again this year for third grade or fourth grade. Yes that I'm going to feel pressure and I would answer this question differently.
 Yeah we have a couple that look at the test scores and but no, I mean, I guess I'm not in panic mode right now.

Principals currently leading schools on NCLB Sanction

Ms. Mars discussed some of the personal stress that goes along with the fact that

high stakes test information is widely disseminated to the public; this stress is particularly

acute when AYP is not met. She stated, "I was mortified to stand up in front of my board

and tell them what our scores were. Ms. Mars continued:

 I feel like we are sometimes all about the test when we are not doing well because we are so stressed out that we want our students to do well.   We want to look good and we want it to be good when it hits the papers and hits the website… it's hard.

The principals echoed the importance of being perceived as successful as they

reflected on the personal pressures associated with his school not making AYP.

Mr. Swift: Most of all I want my school community to see that we're doing well. And I think that the test scores are in large part public relations. I don't know that they really reflect all the kids in and outs of learning as much as other things. I try to put it in perspective. I suppose I don't feel the pressure is unrealistic, so that it's not eating me up. But it's real, and it's part of the heat of our kitchen as principal to attend to that. You know, I think every principal wants school to do well in every aspect. And this is one of those aspects.

Mr. Brice: - Personally, I try not to let it get to me. You know, when I leave here, I leave here, you know of course is. You're basically a mini CEO in this place. I [have] three kids… two, five and seven, and you don't want to bring it home and

stress you out, you know, the closer you get to May the more stress. You get stressed or worried or concerned about that .

For Mr. Douglas, the internal pressures he faced in regards to high stakes testing and accountability were significant. When asked to define the pressure, he responded, "I'm trying to define what the pressures are. I can't really put my finger on it." However, as the principal of a school on Year 5 of NCLB Sanction, he was well aware that in the event his school does not improve performance, he, and perhaps some of his staff members could be reassigned or lose their jobs. During our first interview, Mr. Douglas was reflective of his experiences in coping with high stakes testing and accountability and spoke to the pressure to improve within a relatively short time frame and the consequences of not doing so.

Mr. Douglas: There is a little more of a critical time element you know…making AYP or at least safe harbor before the hatchet comes down on us. I tell my staff [that] they'll take me out, but they will probably take half of you guys out, too.

During our first interview, Mr. Douglas discussed what it was like for him, when, in the summer of 2009, he learned that his school again did not make AYP: "[The test scores] come in the summertime. So I'm basically here by myself, and I can really commit Harry Carey when I get those results, but I don't." Mr. Douglas continued:

I was sick to my stomach [when learned AYP was not again met]. It was terrible, cause you wonder my people are working as hard as they can I mean, I think we're doing everything we are doing all the right things. But there's so many deficits, we have to make up I just felt. I really felt disappointed because I knew my teachers were going to feel really disappointed. And I figured now there's going to be even more scrutiny…if that's possible.

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During our first interview, which was conducted in January of 2010, Mr. Douglas

projected a positive outlook about the situation. "The thought of [being moved

out/reassigned]," said Mr. Douglas, "doesn't even enter my mind. I mean, I still come

here every day…my teachers come here every day--we have a lot of challenges."

However, during our second interview, which took place in late spring of 2010,

Mr. Douglas's outlook was not as positive. His school recently concluded its latest round

of CAPA review. Mr. Douglas reflected on that experience.

> Terrible [CAPA review}. I was at their beckon call. They would want me to do things, [like] visit classrooms with them, and then we had all of these meetings…after that the briefings. And they were really rough. It might have been some personality thing--they might have thought I was a little too loose and maybe they thought I needed to have more organization with regard to distributive leadership, which I do have it, I just don't call it what they want.

It was then that Mr. Douglas shared that he was informed by his superiors that he would

not return to his current assignment next year due to performance on the state test.

> Mr. Douglas: I won't be here next year because I'm in year five, so the state has told the superintendent that there has to be a change of leadership so I'll have a different assignment next year…I don't feel really good about it. I feel bad, you know, we have worked really hard but someone makes up these little rules and the state is holding the district's purse strings.

When asked about what he might do next, Mr. Douglas stated:

> I've been living with it for a month so I'm getting accustomed to it. I just asked the assistant superintendent of where I'm going next year, and she said that she didn't know. I told her that I don't like the assignment then I'm just leaving, which is something that I really wasn't planning to do... I was planning on staying around for another year or so, but between that big change at this point in my career…to go and start at another school kind of thing... and then with the governor playing around with all the pension stuff... I just may need to read the writing on the wall. I may just leave.

Mr. Finch: I think of our special education students didn't pass. I wouldn't worry about job security. I think if test scores tanked and the surrounding districts did not go down this year test scores went down there and forth grade. But everyone else's scores went down because the cut score changed if ours went down and the surrounding scores in Gloucester County did not and went up…I would begin to worry, you know, I would begin to worry sure. It's definitely a measure. It's only one measure, but it's a big one. And when people point to your weaknesses. There is pride. You know you have a good school and you want to correct things so in an effort to correct the weakness in to show growth. You focus and zero in on the test.

Ms. Fargo shared what it was like to come into a school that did not make

AYP for two consecutive years.

Ms. Fargo: We failed for two years in a row and you know, it was getting scary over there... it was sink or swim." And people have said this that if you don't pass the test, you become all about the test and that's what we were. I mean, we were so close to that CAPA review that it wasn't funny, you always want to be part of a school that succeeds. You don't want to be known as a failing school.

Mr. Shine also highlighted the sense of pride in not wanted to be

associated with a failing school.

Mr. Shine: I think it's more personal pressure because I don't want to be a failure. And I don't want to be labeled a school in need of improvement. So yea, that's where it really comes from is that pride, where you don't want to…you don't want to get that label.

Unlike the other respondents, Mr. Warrington does not necessarily believe

that test results are the reflection of him as a leader.

Mr. Warrington: If one of my schools performed poorly, I would feel responsible to at least look and examine to see what happened. You know, did something occur in our curriculum? But I don't blame me…personally; I don't see it as a reflection on my abilities as a leader. I don't see it. I don't measure the competence of my teachers based on the test scores. I don't use the test scores to measure whether or not my schools are high performing…I know they are.

2) Special Education Programming

Educating students with special needs provides unique challenges to public schools. Federal and State laws like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantee that students with special needs are entitled to a free and appropriate education; however, the unique aspect of developing special education programming specific to the individual needs of children is challenging and places a high demand on resources and planning. Providing further challenge is ensuring that all students, including students with special needs, meet the same proficiency standards.

In most of the respondent interviews, principals took time to discuss how special education has been impacted by the high stakes testing. During one of the interviews, a principal spoke to what he believed to be a paradox in how one views the performance of students with specials needs on high stakes testing.:

Mr. Finch: If the majority of your special ed kids are passing the test, well then you're too many kids classified. What are you doing with all these kids classified? So in a world of RTI and special education says that only your most severe students should be classified. So if they all pass, you have too many classified. But if they don't pass -- you get slammed. You're not going to make AYP.

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The principals also spoke to the challenges of students with special needs taking the same test as their typical peers, but also spoke of the positive aspects that have come with having testing results disaggregated, thus providing a focus on students with special needs that may not have happened without the high stakes test.

The following section includes a breakdown of the sub categories of the response of principals under the theme of how high stakes testing and accountability has impacted their decisions and priorities in regards to special education programming. The sub-categories include: a) Heightened attention to students with special needs; b) Impact of service delivery for students with special needs; and c) Clustering.

a) Heightened Attention to Students with Special Needs

Nine out of eleven of the principals spoke of the focus that the high stakes test has brought the special education population.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing

Of the two schools without any history of NCLB sanction, the attention to students with special needs was there; however, both schools had a special education population in grades 3-5 that was below the threshold of 40 needed to count toward AYP status. As indicated by Mr. Oppeneheim, "We don't have a [significant] subgroup for special education this year… probably will be next year. And so that's, that's a concern."

Principals currently leading school on NCLB Sanction

For these principals, the focus that the test has brought to students with special needs is seen in a positive light, despite the fact that this is the subgroup that can often move a school to levels of NCLB sanction.

> Mr. Swift: The special education population is a unique population, and you have to temper whatever your thoughts are that we're giving more overt attention to it. The discussion about this provides focus but at the same time, the bottom line is to educate the kids.

Mr. Douglass stated, "The fact that special-education children are not housed in a closet someplace in the school because they're going to have to take the test…that is a good feature of [the test]. As stated by Mr. Brice, "That subgroup makes you sweat like a sinner in church." But he went on to add:

> We missed AYP in this building the last two years. [It] was the special education area, you know, which a lot of districts are dealing with But the other piece of it is to stop throwing blame, this is our school, we are a public school in this is the way it works

For Mr. Sirover, the renewed focus on students with special needs resulting from this particular subgroup's performance on the state test became a transformational experience for him. When asked about whether or not his priorities have changed as a result, he replied:

> No doubt about it…in an illuminating kind of way. That's my priority that no matter what else I do this year, that will be the one thing that I will be judged by. Now, years ago, I'm going back a long time 15 to 20 years, principals had the latitude with special needs children of giving them a standardized test 1 to 2 years below their chronological grade level, and that was perfectly acceptable. In the high-stakes world we're in right now, it is totally unacceptable. So it's not an arbitrary decision that a teacher with a special needs child can say he can't possibly take that test.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing, but with a recently history on NCLB Sanction.

Ms. Fargo, Mr. Finch, and Mr. Shine all spoke to the specific focus that high stakes testing has brought to the special education subgroup. As pointed out by Mr. Finch, "You're not going to make AYP without special education students passing the test." For Ms. Fargo, it has provided a lens to examine individual students with the subgroup. She stated, "It has made me really delve deeper into looking at specific children." Mr. Shine elaborated, speaking to the time before testing when, he believes, students with special needs were not expected to achieve to a high standard, nonetheless perform well on high stakes testing:

> Mr. Shine: The impact has been great because it has forced us to look at those kids and not just push them under the rock. . I think that standardized testing has had a great impact on special education. Do I like the way that they measure it? Not at all. But at the same time it has brought that kind of thing to the forefront, which is good.

Mr. Warrington, however, had a different perspective, indicating that the testing itself has not brought students with special needs into sharper focus; rather, the focus is on all children, regardless of classification.

> Mr. Warrington: I've had classes of students where all of the special education students passed the test. Some even had advanced proficient in some subjects. Again, their classification is not based upon the test so that has very little impact on how we look at those students.

Once the focus upon test results for students with special needs was highlighted, principals were then required to determine how they would react in order to meet the needs of this specific sub-group. Seven out of the eleven principals, both on the sanction continuum and in Good Standing, spoke specifically about how they led changes regarding how students with special needs received services.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing

In Mr. Simpson's school, where the special education subgroup is not large enough to count toward AYP, he has worked hard to change the service delivery model for students with special needs. He is working toward students with special needs receiving more of their support and programming in the regular education classroom, rather than in a pull-out setting like a resource room.

> Mr. Simpson: Up until the end of last year there was a lot of pull-out being done. We really worked hard last year to try to get them to buy into the whole in class support model. So, now students are only pulled if they're really low, a couple years behind.   So, most of our support is being done within the classroom. Another benefit is that is it [counters] the perception of the [regular education] teachers was that if a child is below grade level, then it's easier to pass that child off to the special education teacher for pull-out or to the math and/or reading specialist.

Principals currently leading school on NCLB Sanction

Students in the school led by Ms. Mars were provided access to computerized programs that helped to target learning needs. This was the first year for this type of intervention, which is done both during and before school. The piece done during the

school day is preferably done during the corresponding subject area (reading or math) so that the student is not missing other subject areas.

> Ms. Mars: Regarding specific things that we have done, we talk about, you know, we have targeted programs where we tried to bring them in and do computerized... we had computer city this year trying to improve their math scores. The teachers are doing everything in their bag of tricks.

For Mr. Sirover, the fact that his students with special needs did not perform well on the high stakes test resulted in a critical reflection on how services are provided to this population of students. He was able to uncover an unhealthy culture of how students were being instructed in the resource room setting; specifically, he learned that the achievement gap between students receiving resource support and their non-disabled peers was not being closed, along with a compliancy among teachers in rarely narrowing the achievement gap.

> Mr. Sirover: What I discovered was that teachers were happy with themselves if a child achieved one year's growth in one year's time in a resource room. Yet resource room children must take their grade level tests with their chronological grade. So the dilemma is that if a child is a year and a half behind his grade level peers, he gets resource room services. At the end of the year, children in this grade are proficient and have made a year's progress. Children in the resource room are below proficient, and they had made a year's progress.

> Mr. Sirover referred to the cycle of resource support not closing the achievement gap as the Hotel California Syndrome. "There was a prevailing culture in the resource room, that this was an ongoing service." Mr. Sirover continued, "So it's what I call the Hotel California syndrome... you can check in anytime you like, but you can never leave."

Mr. Sirover: And so when we took a look at exit strategies, we saw that it was only an occasional child who left the resource room and in terms of closing the academic gap by providing children with alternative instruction or replacement instruction. They weren't closing the gap at all, but they were making a year's progress with a child which artificially pleased the parents because they saw progress. Simply put, a fourth-grade student in a resource room in the third month of school was getting third grade instruction on the third month of school, because that was his instructional level and the teacher was not teaching what was identical to what was being taught in that child's regular classroom, which is conceptually the way it was supposed to be, and the NJASK doesn't make adjustments for those children.

Based upon his finding, Mr. Sirover has worked to address what he believes to be the core issues in the lack of success experienced by his school's special education subgroup, including more instruction in the regular education classroom, along with pull-out services that more closely mirror instruction that is occurring in the regular education classroom. He also spoke to the challenges of changing the practice of teachers.

Mr. Sirover: When we got our AYP and we start to do this investigation the teachers had to make some left and right turns in the middle of the year to adapt their work. Not to teach the test, but to teach the curriculum for which the test is going to be judging them. I don't know if I'm going to be successful in fixing it this year, because I cause a lot of tears and a lot of questions in the building as we started to take a hard look at what we are doing and whether or not we were following best practice to give our children the best opportunity to perform on standardized tests. There is no reason to believe that every child who is in special education is going to be below proficient, unless there are low expectations.

Similarly to Mr. Sirover's strategy, Mr. Swift and Mr. Brice led efforts to have services for students with special needs more closely aligned with the regular education curriculum.

Mr. Swift: One of the key components of our literacy program is to try to include the special education reading instruction more within the Rigby focus, and so it was. So we're trying to get that connection. Historically, there has been a bit

more divergence between the language arts replacement program and the regular program, and now it's much more unified, and it makes sense both for the test prep for the kids. So if they go back to the class and the class is talking about imaging, they know what that means so that they are connected. And that's good education anyway.

Mr. Brice: We did something rather drastic this year with our special ed... we got rid of our resource rooms. We only have one resource rooms in fifth grade. We just did full co-teaching. We need to have those students in the classroom, particularly with language arts, because we moved over to readers and writers workshop, which truly lends to differentiation.

In Mr. Douglas's school, he reported that the superintendent removed a large portion of his special education population and moved them to another school, which was an attempt to help the school provide greater focus on the regular education subgroup of students. He stated, "They took away five [special education] classes, which should of helped me testing wise, which I think is why the superintendent was doing it."

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing, but with a recently history on NCLB Sanction.

Similarly to the schools currently on some level of NCLB sanction, Mr. Finch has worked to include more inclusive educational experiences for his students with special needs, echoing Mr. Sirover's "Hotel California" syndrome: "Once they were pulled out of the mainstream, they were stuck there." Mr. Finch stated, "We have tried to do as much as we can with the inclusion model for the special needs population. I have really gone away from the resource model." He continued, speaking to what he believes to be the benefit of students with special needs having more exposure to grade level content.

Mr. Finch: I think the philosophy was to include the students in the [regular education] classrooms to get more exposure to grade level appropriate content...testable content. So if a student was in third grade and taking the state test, the inclusion model would expose them more to grade level concepts. Maybe a resource class would better meet their needs, but they would have no chance on the test.

For Mr. Shine, the impact of high stakes testing and his population of students with special needs have less of an impact on pedagogy, but did impact his scheduling priorities.

Mr. Shine: I guess that high-stakes testing has changed how I scheduled a resource center. Those kids have resource center when the regular rate kids have small group instruction because I want them to be pulled out like a small group so that they get the whole class hour reading instruction similar to everyone else on grade level.

c) *Clustering*

With three of the principals, they were faced with the issue of serving the needs of students with special needs with limited personnel resources. Therefore, they implemented the idea of "clustering" students with similar abilities together in the same class. While this grouping strategy maximizes teacher resources by efficiently serving the largest group of students, this practice can also result in the unintended consequence of creating basic skill classrooms, making it more difficult to accommodate heterogeneous grouping.

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Principals currently leading schools in Good Standing

Neither of the principals in this category discussed using the clustering strategy to help meet the needs of students.

Principals currently leading school on NCLB Sanction

Mr. Brice spoke to this challenge of balancing limited teacher resources with meeting the needs of students and the sometimes associated unintended consequences.

> Mr. Brice: The end result of doing some of that [co-teaching] was [so] that the co-teachers weren't jumping to this room and jumping into that room, running all over chasing kids, following kids. So, the end result is that there are some teams, and we work in teams, that are a little heavier with special education population -- that kind of did us in a little bit. Some teachers…that was a bit too much for them there. We may see a decline in our regular education scores because of it.

During our second interview, Mr. Brice followed up on how he has responded to this issue.

> Mr. Brice: I'm not going to have as many special ed students on a team, because part of what we wanted to do was to have co-teachers teach together throughout the day and truly have two teachers instead of having one teacher is the lead and the other just coming in every now and again. But in the end result is that that meant that a certain team of teachers would have more special education students on their team because of it... that has a little bit backfired so we're going to spread out the special education students. The co-teachers are going to have to rotate a little more, but we're still having co-teaching. So they can come to me and say it didn't work, but I'm going to say no problem, I've made some adjustments.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing, but with a recently history on

NCLB Sanction.

Mr. Finch and Ms. Fargo also spoke to this challenge of balancing limited teacher

resources with meeting the needs of students:

> Mr. Finch: We try not to have a homogeneous class that's all basic skills kids for language arts and math. The idea on paper is to have clusters of kids 6/17, 9/20 but because we are limited in our…those numbers were a lot higher than I thought they would be…more like 16/19 you know which is not good which is not ideal[1].

> Ms. Fargo: We put the kids who really needed corrective reading and BSI into one class. I mean, you had to get teachers in there where kids were, because I didn't want to have to pull out situations, because then you're pulling kids out of academic subjects there are just no ways around it.

3) Paradox of High Stakes Testing and Accountability

Like most things in life, there are both positive and negative qualities of any given

thing. High stakes testing and accountability are no exception, especially as it relates to

the perspectives of elementary school principals in this study. Principals expressed both

positive and negative aspects of issues related to high stakes testing and accountability,

including data driven decision making and educating the "whole" child.

Data Driven Decision Making

Good principals know that they must have the ability to analyze data, and make

instructional decisions based upon the data. Data driven decision making in education is

not something that came along with the advent of wide-spread high-stakes testing. As

commented on by Mr. Swift:

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[1] Mr. Finch's numerical comments refer to the ratio of at-risk/basic skill students to non at-risk/basic skill students.

I think we're more data driven doing work for, but not from testing alone. I think there's a general emphasis in the field now to the data layer and data driven, but I don't think the testing alone per se. I think that's a common phenomenon in our field.

However, the practice of principals using data to guide and inform their leadership experienced resurgence concurrent with the passing of No Child Left Behind. A challenge facing school leaders regarding the use of data is determining what do to with the data once they have been collected. Questions like, "What data streams are most reliable and useful?" and, "How can the data be used in an ethical and collaborative manner?" At the forefront of the "data driven" issue is how much weight to place on the results of standardized testing; several of the principals in this study commented on the use data, particularly data from high stakes testing.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing

Both of the principals leading schools in good standing without a history of dealing with NCLB sanctions spoke to the positive aspects of being data driven, especially as it relates to high stakes testing.

> Mr. Oppenheim: I really rely upon a data-driven model. I shared results with our staff and set goals. The high stakes testing moves the school to more of a data-driven model as opposed to simply a subjective opinion. And so I think that in that respect it's been valuable, but I also think the focus now is so much on state assessments that it does detract from some extent from the curriculum.

> Mr. Simpson: I think it [high stakes testing] has really made my role as instructional leader change in that I think I work more closely now with teachers sitting down and reviewing the data and kind of charting the strengths and weaknesses of the classes.

Mr. Brice embraces data analysis in general, as well as data analysis related to

high stakes testing, in helping to guide and inform his decision making.

> Mr. Brice: A lot of times when we look through data, or when I meet with teams
> of teachers, and we pulled out data and we look at it, they go through, oh yeah, oh
> yeah that is him. But every now and then we get one like…wow look at how
> much he went up... look at how high he went up... those are the times that I think
> it's very beneficial. It allows us to be, when you say in the best interest of every
> child, that's when you get the every child... you're not missing any one. It allows
> the conversations to be a little bit deeper than to say, 'oh I knew that.'

Mr. Brice expanded on his views on data analysis during our second interview.

> Mr. Brice: The assessment allows the administrator not to just assume things and
> it forces you to look at data. You're not a quality administrator unless you do.
> You have something right in front of you that will tell you what your school is
> doing academically, instructional wise. This is your test for your school. If
> you're not going to sit back and look at that it's almost like having a bad teacher...
> you know the teacher who just tests their students and doesn't use information.
> As a principal or administrator you have to look at that test data... you can't just sit
> back and that educational arrogance and say oh I know.

> Also during our second interview, Mr. Brice spoke of the internal conflict with

how he uses data. For example, he stated that those teachers whose students' scores are

not demonstrating grade level proficiency should be removed. He said:

> The standards of the state are lined up to the assessment so therefore if you are
> teaching to the standards then you're going to do fine on the assessment. So
> somewhere in the middle, you're not making it work so therefore you gotta go.

However, Mr. Brice, a non-tenured administrator, has not met AYP during the first two

years of his tenure as principal.   He indicated there exists a "little internal conflict" in

knowing that he stands the chance of his superiors dismissing him for the lack of

performance on the high stakes test.

> Mr. Sirover: I find that without the data, we're guessing at things. The
> standardized testing also gives us more data than they ever gave us before. It
> gives us subgroups, it gives us skill levels. It gives us a lot of information that's
> formative as well as summative.

> During the interview, Mr. Sirover also illuminated how looking at numbers alone

can have drastic consequences on a school. Mr. Sirover recounted a story from earlier in

his career where data from test scores, in his opinion, was used to satisfy the agenda of

his superintendent.

> Mr. Sirover: When Davis Hassleback was superintendent in Sunnytown, he had
> what was called the Children of Achieving agenda, which included 10 points of
> reform in his agenda.   I happened to be principal of a school that was in the top
> 5% of high performing schools. It was the highest achieving predominantly
> [African American] school in Sunnytown and was doing quite well. The year
> before I left, or two years before I left, there was a slight drop in one of the scores,
> and that was a year in which he determined that he was going to reform schools
> that had drops. So for years of being one of the foremost public schools with a
> waiting list of 2000 kids, a couple point drop in the scores caused us to be the
> poster child for his reform, which was a shock to the community so much so that
> the community and I had investigated becoming a charter school.

> Some of the principals in this study admittedly struggled with the notion of being

data driven. While the data can provide insight information about a student or group of

students, there can exists ethical conflicts with how to use the data in a productive and

collaborative manner. As stated by Mr. Swift:

> Mr. Swift: People like numbers today, they like data. I don't know if it's… who
> knows… it's a buzzword… it really is. I'm not sure what folks mean by it
> sometimes. We've always had tests of some sort. The Iowa tests or… I don't
> know.

During our first interview, Ms. Mars stated that, "We do a lot of data analysis. We know our district factor group we know [how] other schools [are doing]…we're all about that." When we again met several weeks later, Ms. Mars again reflected on this issue; when asked if she believed that the focus on data analysis from high stakes testing was a good thing, she responded, "Not necessarily, no." Ms. Mars continued, "It makes you feel like you're in good company when you see that other schools' scores are similar to yours... that makes you feel good."

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing, but with a recently history on NCLB Sanction.

Both Mr. Finch and Mr. Warrington believe that data analysis must be part of the skill set of any principal; however, they also cautioned that while the data from the high stakes testing are very important, it is important to use data from multiple sources when making decisions that impact children.

> Mr. Finch: Not only to consider test scores, because the test scores are a snapshot. Everybody else is looking at the test score, such as the superintendent of the board of education to parents and I know that as a school leader that [test scores] is only a snapshot of what a child does one given day. I have found myself more and more conscious of giving that child or teacher a better opportunity for evaluation on other things... other progress monitoring devices... portfolios, other in-house theater that we generate.

> Mr. Warrington: We do spend time collecting the data from [high stakes test] at all three levels. I spend a lot of time in the summer and early fall when they come in going through them. I try to look at the patterns…I have a database on my computers with years' worth of data and try to see what the trends are.

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Mr. Warrington went on the offer some balance to his perspective on data

analysis, outlining the caution of interpreting data from small samples.

> Mr. Warrington: We try, I try to keep in mind, my superintendent understands,
> and the other principals in my district, we all have this understanding that we are
> so small that we have one class per grade. Sometimes we have less than 20 kids
> per class. So if I have a third grade that has 14 students in it and a student has a
> bad day or a bad five minutes on the assessment, you know…that really has the
> potential to throw the school's grade one way or another.

4) Educating the "Whole" Child and the Narrowing of Curriculum

The notion of educating the whole child typically refers to providing educational

experiences for children that go beyond the instructional pillars of reading, writing, and

arithmetic. These ideals may include character education, cultural and aesthetic

awareness/appreciation, and teaching that help to foster social/emotional development.

In an environment that contends with high stakes testing and accountability, the pressures

to perform well on the test, as communicated by the principals, can be both positive and

negative; positive in that it helps to focus priorities on instructional leadership and the

foundations of math and literacy—negative in that is forces principals to narrow the

extra-curricular, enriching types of actives that some see as equally important as what is

measured in the high stakes tests.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing

Mr. Simpson reflected on his experiences in education, both as a student and as an

educator.

> Mr. Simpson: And there are so many other things that are taken out of the
> classroom and other experiences that have really reached kids lives because the
> focus is that my students have to do well test. Just think of the time and energy
> that has been spent on writing prompts, timed tasks with the kids, a lot of the

other experiences. I remember going through school, and I remember doing with my students when I taught that we don't seem to have time for anymore. So we kind of let the urgent moved out important... and I think a lot of these skills that the state wants the kids to have can be learned in many ways. These kids spend so much time in the classroom just drilling for these tests; I don't know I just think we could be spending our time elsewhere.

Principals currently leading school on NCLB Sanction

Ms. Mars , Mr. Sirover, and Mr. Swift also believe that the current focus on high stakes testing can lead to the narrowing of curriculum. In some instances, like in the case of Ms. Mars, it has impacted her both professional and personally, which has resulted in some changes to how she helps to structure the school day for her students.

> Ms. Mars: I think you have to educate the whole child, and I think sometimes when you focus on academics too much and you take away all these other things like assemblies …I'm thinking back to when I went to school and the kinds of things I was exposed to and the kinds of programs that there were. You look forward to those assemblies you look forward to those trips and look forward to those things in the arts.   They've done away with them because of the testing. I think that that's made a big impact both personally and in my profession because I feel like the kids are missing out in some way in those areas.

For Mr. Brice, while he works hard to downplay the pressures of the state test, he stated, "We don't even talk about the test until about the end of March," students to miss non-tested classes to receive extra academic support. Mr. Brice added, "They are pulled out of one physical education and one special, art and music, per week to go to their basic skills math."

While both Mr. Sirover and Mr. Swift, veteran administrators with each over 30 years of experience, do not believe the focus on high stakes testing and accountability has narrowed the experience for their students, they clearly understand how some are led down that path.

> Mr. Sirover: The benefit of standardized testing is there has to be a belief that the standards are truly what children need to be able to know and be able to do. When you attach a high-stakes piece to it, it takes me away from some of the other things. I can see how that happens [narrowing of curriculum], and I can see that a less experienced principal or less secure principal would have no choice but to go there.

> Mr. Swift: There are pros and cons to the focus it brings. I think the pro- to it is the NCLB concept and its associated testing really forces to consider all children, which is a good thing. Sometimes some kids are easier to forget on the other hand. I think that it too narrowly defines what the legislation defines as a student's best interest. I think that we may define it more broadly. It [narrowing of curriculum] can if you let it. That's what I would like not to happen.

Principals leading school currently in Good Standing, but with a recently history on NCLB Sanction.

> According to Mr. Finch:

> I think that we lose our ability to focus on the whole child... I really do. The idea that the children will be tested in reading and mathematics and the tests are going to be such high-stakes--I think you really lose your focus on the whole child.

During this past school year, Mr. Finch made the decision to not replace the school librarian, which essentially eliminated the school's library/media instruction from a certified specialist and transferred these responsibilities to a paraprofessional. This was done to reallocate the funding for a basic skills teacher.

Mr. Finch: It's really making a trade-off there the idea of accountability is good. But the fact that it is so high-stakes, I don't think is very good. Putting an emphasis on reading and math reasoning, I think, is a good thing. That's how kids are going to be measured. But the level to which we are measuring, I think, is out of control, and when you focus on one thing, you automatically don't focus on another. So I think it's good to have accountability. In those areas, but if it's too high-stakes were forgetting about the whole child. The best interest would be the whole child... reading and math and high achievement, but also character education exposing kids to the artists, sports in school, peer and social learning... we should be measuring schools by all these things instead of just math and language.

For Mr. Shine, the narrowing of the curriculum resulting from the high stakes nature of testing is seen as a positive for his leadership. He believes that it has helped him to focus on the foundational elements of elementary education, specifically Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics.

Mr. Shine: I think that testing has helped me to focus the teachers on teaching the kids, especially in my district where you have so many kids that are below grade level. You are really focusing on their reading and math, and the high-stakes testing has allowed me as an administrator to say that there is much less room for your little projects. So I have used them to my benefit.

The renewed focus has also helped him to eliminate things from the curriculum that he views as frivolous. Mr. Shine believes this to be especially important since the students in his school come from a low socioeconomic background, with little support from the home.

Mr. Shine: I have gotten rid of some of the fluff, and I have been able to say you need to focus on the use skills or areas. Am I my still getting the same well-rounded child? Did they have this experience and that experience? No, I don't think so. But can they read? Can they write? Can they do basic math? I think that is more of my focus then the well-rounded individual that has had exposure to all these neat and cool things. I don't know if school... I think people have to work harder to make school fun.

Mr. Finch and Ms. Fargo spoke about the challenge of providing extra support for students within the confines of a 6.5-hour school day, especially when this requires that students miss extracurricular classes like art and music, or even academic subjects that are not part of the high stakes assessment.

> Mr. Finch: Kids have to miss science or social studies. [Parents call and say] why is my kid missing science and social studies. I really have a hard time answering that. How you say [because] we're not testing science and social studies

He went on to state that parents are not necessarily happy with the idea of their child missing a subject area. "The parents of the at-risk kids are not happy about having their kids miss certain things, but at the same time they want their kid to not be at risk, and they want their kid to pass." Mr. Finch then spoke of the challenge of scheduling extra support for students.

> There is no good place to pull a kid. The schedule is designed so every second gets put to good use. So kids need recess…kids need science…kids need art. One of my students is very much a reluctant learner, but she is a very good artist I can't pull this kid from art so I guess the rub is there. We should be aiming to educate the whole child. And when there is so much emphasis on passing the test, you forget to educate the whole child, because there is so much emphasis on passing the test.

> This scheduling challenge was also shared by Ms. Fargo:

> Everything we did was in class support and on top of that then we would pull children out during recess time during specials time. So that we weren't interrupting their school day we weren't impacting their academics we were pulling them out of extraneous areas.

5) Ethical Dilemmas

Problem solving is a required skill of a principal. Throughout the course of any given day, dozens of decisions must be made; some are relatively small, for example, should recess be held indoors out outdoors? Other decisions carry more weight and significance. In the course of dealing with problems big and small, the principal is going to be faced with ethical dilemmas. As written by Shapiro and Stefcovich (2005),

> …the profession…expects its leaders to formulate and examine their own professional codes of ethics in light of individual personal codes of ethics, as well as standards set forth by the profession, and then call on them to place students at the center of the ethical decision making process. (p. 26)

Dealing with the pressures of high stakes testing and accountability can present a great challenge for even the most veteran of administrators. Mr. Douglas, whose school is located in an impoverished urban area, spoke to the challenges that his school district has encountered regarding allegations of wide-spread cheating on the state test. While in most circumstances, ethical leaders might never think of such a breach, one can imagine the pressures of knowing that one's career can hinge upon a single assessment. Mr. Douglas noted:

> I can tell you that [our district] has had some issues in the past... schools scoring 100% AYP. That's not me. If I thought for a second that there was anything the regular going on I would be jumping on that teacher. We do everything by the book.

School leaders, especially building principals, are faced with the challenge of taking into account the wishes of supervisors, including superintendents and board members. Possessing the ability to negotiate ethical dilemmas when the personal and/or professional values of the principal are at odds with his/her superiors presents great

challenges. This was the case when Mr. Warrington was a vice principal in a school that was in year two of not making AYP. He began to feel that as the result of the hyper-focus on performing on the test, the needs of students were getting lost. He stated, "[there is] a tremendous amount of pressure put on everybody, and I think that sometimes the students got squeezed." When asked if he felt conflicted about what was happened he said, "Yeah, I was conflicted a little bit because I think I felt as though there was one small sliver that we focused on." Mr. Warrington then spoke to his perception that his "voice" was lost in this process. "If I had spoken up adamantly, I probably would've been asked to leave. I really do. I think the folks in charge might have said that maybe [this district] isn't the place you want to work.

The 190 Club

Another great challenge in public school education is how school leaders allocate a finite amount of resources. From discretionary spending to human resources, school leaders must determine how best to allocate resources. This issue is especially true regarding high stakes testing and accountability. As stated by Ms. Fargo, "[high stakes testing] impacts the allocation of resources quite a bit." For some principals, how resources are allocated is a central issue in supporting struggling students. For example, the passing score on the state test is 200. Should the same level of resources be allocated for all students that scored below the 200 standard of proficiency, or should the students who scored closer to passing receive the most support? In other words, principals were faced with the dilemma of whether to concentrate resources on the students in the 185-

199 range, knowing that they had the greatest likelihood to pass the test, compared with those who scored in the 150-180 range.

Mr. Finch faced this issue. As a result, he designed a plan to target students who scored in the 185-205 range. He reflected upon the dilemma:

> I had designed a schedule so we define who the bubble kids were, and we were thinking about doing eight 190 club or something like that. The students were going to get a more intense [testing] intervention, and the students that were below 190… we knew they were not going to pass, and resources were limited. So, we were not going to give them as much support.

> The conception of such a model of service delivery weighed heavily on Mr.

Finch. After developing the "190 Club," identified the target students, and received the approval of his supervisors, Mr. Finch abandoned the idea. "It was ready to go, and I couldn't do it... I couldn't do it. I wasn't sleeping at night; I just didn't think it was the right thing." Mr. Finch reflected further:

> We have only 86 kids in fourth-grade and judged by what the kids did in third grade, when you look at it statistically, you have 86 kids and five kids didn't pass last year, and everything else stays the same. Now that this year, your percentage changes 10%. So every kid counts for two percentage points. So I'm looking at these five kids were all around 190. If we can get all five of these to pass our scores go up from 82% to 92%, just on these five kids, if everything else stays the same. Let's target these five and get them over the home... let's not worry about the 170s. 175, 180s, we know that they're not going to pass. So we had it all designed but I just didn't think it was the right thing to do. We had one teacher in math and one teacher in reading to do this intervention... five kids, one teacher every day for a half an hour... that would be pretty powerful. And we probably could have done that. I didn't want to sell out... I thought that was selling out too much.

When asked about what finally brought him to make the decision to not implement the 190 Club, Mr. Finch indicated:

It wasn't sitting right with me...I didn't think it was the right thing, so when something doesn't feel like the right thing, you kind of wait on it. I was seeing if we can do better. So what we did was, we found 10 laptop computers that were not being used and we had some software installed on it where kids can go on it and practice math and reading. So instead of [allocating] one teacher for five students, we allocated the teacher to all of the students that were below 200. Ten students would be on the laptop, and she would pull three or four at a time based on a common need, regardless to whether they were at 195 or 170. So there was more equity among the kids who didn't pass. We were ready to go that 190 club, but I just felt like I was selling out. We had already pulled kids from arts, pulled kids from recess... I felt like I was becoming too zeroed in on the test.

Similarly, Ms. Mars struggled with the idea of providing the most targeted

instructional interventions for the students that are within the closest range of passing the

test. She stated that,

"... I think we all as building principals lay in bed at night and think about these things. You really do wrestle with this issue because you want to make sure you're giving everyone the same opportunity to improve in any subject. You want to make sure you're not just targeting... you never want to say that there is no hope for them, but you know that they are pretty much going to stay in the same range based on their abilities...it's a really tough thing.

This dilemma was also shared by Ms. Fargo. However, her dilemma was made

more difficult given the fact that she was in a school that had already not made AYP for

two consecutive years.

We have failed for two years in a row and you know, it was getting scary over there. So we actually targeted students. We got a list of the students who were free and reduced lunch, and we broke them out and said who we think is not going to pass and who do we think that no matter what we do with them, they're not going to pass. We got a list of those students, and we said, with our help, who could possibly pass and those were the students targeted and went for after afterschool help, pulling them during the day and during the summer. I know this sounds awful, but you can't afford to spend time and resources on kids, who don't need the help or who are so far down that you aren't going to get them up to where they need to be. We did other things for them, but at that point we had to really focus on the kids that we could help.

Ms. Fargo recognized the dilemma this creates for children and educators; as a result of this approach, the students with the greatest academic challenges may not be receiving the most support. Ms. Fargo continued:

> Yes, I do believe that I think that there have been times when we've not provided assistance when we could have because quite honestly, I needed to provide it to somebody else who was going to count for me that year, and we figured well, we've got two years with this kid. We will pick him up next year. So yes, and you know, unfortunately, that's the name of the game. The kids that count for you have to pass.

Some of the principals, like Mr. Swift, whose school is currently on Year 1 of NCLB Sanction, did not target students within a particular score range. With limited resources, however, he does take into account and provide additional support to a student that did not pass, compared to a student that passed, but may be close to scoring Advanced Proficient. "We have looked at needy kids vs. non-needy kids," said Mr. Swift, "but no I haven't booked off 120s, as opposed to 195s." Mr. Finch referred to this practice as "[gearing] our programs toward helping the lowest students achieve minimum proficiency."

Other principals, like Mr. Warrington, who is not currently on sanction, although he formerly worked in a school on Year 2 of not making AYP , and Mr. Brice, who is currently on NCLB sanction reported that they do not engage in the practice of targeted students within a particular score range. Mr. Warrington stated:

> In my mind that no longer becomes what is best for the children, it becomes what's best for the principal's reputation or the reputation of the school. So me personally, I'm going to offer assistance to the most needy kids.

Mr. Brice stated that he has more of a global perspective when it comes to allocation

support resources for students in relation to the high stakes testing.

> I don't necessarily say that we are going to focus on them... we provide services
> for them, we keep an eye on them and we keep it moving. We are going to teach
> everybody because in the meantime, I don't want anybody slipping back. I want
> some of those kids who are proficient to be advanced proficient because I even
> like that more so than anything else. I want to see a push of advanced proficient
> kids. We're not going at or away doing anything super special for them, but we
> are aware of them, but I don't say to the whole staff that these kids, let's get on
> these kids. No, we are teaching the whole.

One of the most compelling ethical dilemmas encountered during this research

came from Mr. Shine. The procedures of administering the state testing include steps to

deal with a variety of scenarios that might result in a student's test being voided. For

example, if a student should become disruptive during testing, the student is to be

escorted out of the testing area and his/her test would be voided, which means that it

would not count.   Other scenarios, however, can present a principal with a very

challenging decision as whether or not to void a test—this becomes increasingly complex

when AYP is a factor.

To Void or Not to Void

During our conversations, Mr. Shine shared two scenarios that presented him with

ethical dilemmas. The first involved a student having a bathroom accident in the middle

of a test, and the other involved a student whose residency status, specifically the time

spend in district, was in question.

> Mr. Shine: We had a girl, a bright girl, have an accident in her pants. And she's
> testing, and I'm like...are you kidding me…I'm not voiding that test, right? So, I
> said, but what are you going to do? She sat there for like 15 minutes.   Now, I

didn't stop her…I let her go. If it was not the state test…if it was a spelling test, I think any teacher would've said, 'Sweetie go change,'…but you want to know what this teacher said?   As soon as you're done, let me know because we all knew she was going to pass the test.   Now had it been a kid that we had some concerns about…I don't know, you know…you what I mean, you better go get changed…you can't sit here in your own urine, good God. I got to void this test.

Time In District

What the state refers to as time "in" district is an important factor in computing whether or not AYP has been met by a school. For example, scores of students with less than one year in the school or district do not count toward the school's AYP status. In most situations, this is a clear-cut delineation. In others, as was the case presented to Mr. Shine, the factors were more complex, especially as it related to a student who he did not think would scored in the proficient range on the test. In addition, this was a student with special needs.

> Mr. Shine: We had a kid transfer out for one day and transfer back in, and we were really worried about him. [We had to] really scrutinize whether or not to mark him as in school for less than a year. We made the decision based on the fact that there is a state ID number now and the state ID number, if you tracked it, would've gone from [our district] to [another] for one day and back to [our district]. And so if someone said to me was he in the school less than a year. Yes. Yes, if you follow the state ID number, I agree it's not kosher, but…

By marking the student as in district for less than a year, his score did not count toward AYP. Also, this also placed Mr. Shine's special education subgroup at 39, below the minimum number of 40 to count as a subgroup toward AYP. The irony in all of this is that the student did score within the proficient range on the test. Mr. Shine added:

> He passed…I'm like…you know, what are you going to do? [I'm] obviously not going to go back and change things, but had he been someone I was more confident in passing, I may have said I wouldn't put in him less than a year…he

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didn't even go to that school [in the other district]. So if I thought he was going to pass, I probably would've let him go and he was never really out of the district. But I was concerned about him and he was a special education kid. So I was actually trying to lower my number below 30… this is confidential...I don't think I broke a rule, but I definitely read to the letter of the law to try to benefit my school. You know, and you can see I can see how schools get in trouble for transferring kids. What we're going to do is we're going to move this whole class to the school so they'll be in that school less than a year and they won't count.

Summary

As the pressures escalate for principals to validate that our public schools are providing a thorough and efficient education, principals that participated in this study all acknowledged that high stakes testing and accountability is a part of the job that is going to be around for some time. School leaders strive to strike a balance of about the public's perception of the quality of public schools as measured by generally five days of standardized tests, with the quality of programming that occurs the other 175 days of the school year.

While the principals in this study generally had views unique to the particular individuals, all of the principals communicated generally favorable views of current systems of high stakes testing and accountability; none went on record overtly criticizing the goals and structure of the current system. It was clear, however, that those principals who lead schools currently on sanction, or who either led schools that were on sanctions, or whose school was on sanction in the recent past, had a greater awareness and sensitivity regarding the high stakes test.

Despite the uniquely individualized perspectives provided by the participants, some common themes emerged. These common themes included:

1) Personal and Professional Pressure Associated with High Stakes Testing and Accountability and How Principals Respond

2) Special Education Programming

3) Paradox of High Stakes Testing and Accountability

4) Ethical Dilemmas Associated with High Stakes Testing and Accountability

All of the principals discussed the personal and professional pressures encountered in their daily working lives. For some, the pressure was overt and external; for others, it was more about an internal drive to be successful and not to be associated with anything labeled as failing. The professional pressures associated with high stakes testing and accountability originated from to three sources: Boards and central office (e.g. superintendent), community, and personal pressures generated from within. When asked directly about how they would describe the level of turbulence felt about high stakes testing and accountability, none of the principals, with the exception of Mr. Douglas, who was being forced transferred from his principal's position, stated that they felt extreme levels of turbulence. Even then, Mr. Douglas only implied his sense of turbulence, despite the fact that he was losing his position due to the policy associated with high stakes testing and accountability. He still maintained support for the spirit of the policies. It appeared that one of the most consistent sources of turbulence was generated internally—the principals in this study had a genuine drive to succeed in their profession.

Addressing the needs of students with special needs in regards to high stakes testing presented a challenge for many of the principals in the study. The challenge focused upon the requirement that students with special needs meet the same proficiency

standards as their non-special needs peers. This sentiment was captured by Mr. Finch when he stated, "if they all pass, you have too many classified. But if they don't pass -- you get slammed. You're not going to make AYP." In most of the respondent interviews, principals took time to discuss how special education has been impacted by the high stakes testing. The principals also spoke to the challenges of students with special needs taking the same test as their typical peers, but also spoke of the positive aspects that have come with having testing results disaggregated, thus providing a focus on students with special needs that may not have happened without the high stakes test. In more than one case, for example, poor results from students with special needs on the high stakes tested prompted principals to have more students with special needs educated within the regular education classroom.

Principals expressed both positive and negative aspects of issues related to high stakes testing and accountability, including data driven decision making and educating the "whole" child. The practice of principals using data to guide and inform their leadership experienced resurgence concurrent with the passing of No Child Left Behind. At the forefront of the "data driven" issue is how much weight to place on the results of standardized testing. Several of the principals in this study commented on how the data that comes from the testing can be very helpful in guiding and informing decision making. However, principals were challenged to balance the significance of the high stakes results of a five-day assessment with other data sources that often yield richer performance information on students.

The notion of educating the whole child typically refers to providing educational experiences for children that go beyond the instructional pillars of reading, writing, and arithmetic. These ideals may include character education, cultural and aesthetic awareness/appreciation, and teaching that helps to foster social/emotional development. In an environment that contends with high stakes testing and accountability, the pressures to perform well on the test, as communicated by the principals, can be both positive and negative; positive in that it helps to focus priorities on instructional leadership and the foundations of math and literacy—negative in that is forces principals to narrow the extra-curricular, enriching types of actives that some see as equally important as what is measured in the high stakes tests.

Decision making in the face the pressures of high stakes testing and accountability can present a great challenge for even the most veteran of administrators. From determining whether to allow a student to continue a test under extreme circumstances to losing one's voice to oppose practices that run counter to personal and professional ethics, understanding that one's professional reputation and career can rise or fall based upon a high stakes test can significantly alter the lens though which a principal makes decisions.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

In the final chapter of this work, the data will be analyzed and framed in the theoretical perspectives presented earlier, Turbulence Theory and Multiple Ethical Paradigms. Following this analysis a conclusion will be offered, followed by recommendations for further study.

Before beginning the analysis, it is necessary to revisit the purpose, research questions and methodology introduced in the first three chapters. Chapter Five will begin by restating the problem, research questions, methods of data collection, and the methods of data analysis.

Restatement of the Problem

The current era of high stakes testing and accountability has weighed heavily on the roles and responsibility of the school principal. In this environment, the principal must have a keen understanding of data analysis and a deep pedagogical understanding to know how to translate achievement data into effective instructional practice. In addition, principals must consistently monitor and evaluate the school curriculum and teacher pedagogy. These demanding responsibilities are in addition to the oversight responsibilities already assumed by the principal, including teacher evaluator, public relations officer, disciplinarian, cleanliness supervisor, and traffic controller, among others. The extent to which high stakes testing and accountability have impacted the leadership role of school principal is of much debate. This issue focuses on the

philosophy of narrowing curriculum for high-stakes testing versus the philosophy of letting the high stakes testing evaluate the effectiveness of what is being taught as a method for supporting learning (Allen, 2008). While some researchers believe that it has helped to better articulate and define expectations for learners others believe the results are a "narrowing" of the curriculum. As stated in Chapter 1, through a series of in-depth interviews and analysis of principals that lead schools that are on various levels of *No Child Left Behind* sanctions, this study will help the reader to understand how principals perceive the impact high stakes testing and accountability on their roles as school leaders. In order to accomplish this, the following research questions were asked:

Has the current era of accountability caused selected principals to redefine themselves and their self perception of their leadership? If so, in what ways?

- Do selected principals perceive an impact of testing and assessment policies associated with NCLB on their role as a school administrator? If so, how?

- Do selected principals' perceptions of their leadership within accountability and high stakes testing vary based upon the level of NCLB sanction?

Review of Methodology

Through a series of in-depth interviews and analysis of principals that lead schools that are on various levels of No Child Left Behind sanctions, this study helps the reader to understand how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted the principal's role. The researcher used non-probability/criterion-based/convenience selection methods. The population of principals for this study was selected through an analysis of the New Jersey Department of Education's (2009) School Improvement Status Summary. The criteria for participant selection included the following characteristics:

- Elementary level principals in New Jersey

- Sites that represent variety in placement on the NCLB sanction continuum

- Sites that represent a variety of socio-economic levels

- Sites that are in relatively close proximity to the researcher

The researcher included eleven elementary level (K-5) principals in the study, and the schools they led were on various levels of No Child Left Behind sanction. The data collection procedures for this case included the use of interviews and descriptive statistics. The researcher implemented a semi-structured interview, and each interview session lasted approximately 45-60 minutes.

Interviews were recorded using an IPod with an external microphone. Following the interviews, the IPod was connected to a laptop computer, which transferred the interview data into ITunes. Once in ITunes, a CD of the interview was burned.

Interviews were completely transcribed using Dragon NaturallySpeaking speech recognition software. The data were analyzed and coded using the constant comparative method. Scheduling conflicts and emergencies at the respondent's school site prevented the research from shadowing selected principals, as originally intended in the research design.

Summary of Results

As the pressures escalate for principals to validate that our public schools are providing a thorough and efficient education, principals that participated in this study all acknowledged that high stakes testing and accountability is a part of the job that is going to be around for some time. School leaders strive to strike a balance between the public's perceptions about the quality of public schools as measured by generally five days of standardized tests, with the quality of programming that occurs the other 175 days of the school year.

While the principals in this study generally held perceptions germane to their particular situations, all of the principals communicated generally favorable views of current systems of high stakes testing and accountability; none went on record overtly criticizing the goals and structure of the current system. It was clear, however, that those principals who either lead schools currently on sanction, who either led schools that were on sanctions, or whose school was on sanction in the recent past, had a greater awareness and sensitivity regarding issues associated with high stakes testing and accountability.

Despite the uniquely individualized perspectives provided by the participants, some common themes emerged. These common themes included:

1) Personal and Professional Pressure Associated with High Stakes Testing and Accountability and How Principals Respond

2) Special Education Programming

3) Paradox of High Stakes Testing and Accountability

4) Ethical Dilemmas Associated with High Stakes Testing and Accountability

1) Personal and Professional Pressure Associated with High Stakes Testing and Accountability and How Principals Respond

All of the principals discussed the personal and professional pressures encountered in their daily working lives. For some, the pressure was overt and external; for others, it was more about an internal drive to be successful and not to be associated with anything labeled as failing. The professional pressures associated with high stakes testing and accountability originated from three sources: Boards and central office (e.g. superintendent), community, and personal pressures generated from within. When asked directly about how they would describe the level of turbulence felt about high stakes testing and accountability, only one principal stated that he felt extreme levels of turbulence. Even then, Mr. Douglas only implied his sense of turbulence, despite the fact that he was losing his position due to policies associated with high stakes testing and accountability. He still maintained support for the "spirit" of the policies.   It appeared that one of the most consistent sources of turbulence was generated internally—the principals in this study had a strong drive to be perceived as successful.

2) Special Education Programming

Addressing the needs of students with special needs in regards to high stakes testing presented a challenge for many of the principals in the study. The challenge focused upon the requirement that students with special needs meet the same proficiency standards as their non-special needs peers. In most of the respondent interviews, principals took time to discuss how special education has been impacted by high stakes testing. The principals also spoke to the challenges of students with special needs taking the same test as their typical peers, but also spoke of the positive aspects that have come with having testing results disaggregated, thus providing a focus on students with special needs that may not have happened without the high stakes test. In more than one case, for example, poor testing results from students with special needs prompted principals to have more students with special needs educated within the regular education classroom.

3) Paradox of High Stakes Testing and Accountability

Principals expressed both positive and negative aspects of issues related to high stakes testing and accountability, including data driven decision making and educating the "whole" child. The practice of principals using data to guide and inform their leadership experienced resurgence concurrent with the passing of No Child Left Behind. At the forefront of the "data driven" issue is how much weight to place on the results of standardized testing. Several of the principals in this study commented on how the data that come from the testing can be very helpful in guiding and informing decision making. However, principals were challenged to balance the significance of the high stakes results

of a five-day assessment with other data sources (e.g. reading assessments, writing samples) that often yield richer performance information on students.

The notion of educating the whole child typically refers to providing educational experiences for children that go beyond the instructional pillars of reading, writing, and arithmetic. These ideals may include character education, cultural and aesthetic awareness/appreciation, and teaching that help to foster social/emotional development. In an environment that contends with high stakes testing and accountability, the pressures to perform well on the test, as communicated by the principals, can be both positive and negative; positive in that it helps to focus priorities on instructional leadership and the foundations of math and literacy—negative in that is forces principals to narrow the extra-curricular, enriching types of actives that some see as equally important as what is measured in the high stakes tests.

4) Ethical Dilemmas Associated with High Stakes Testing and Accountability

Decision making in the face of pressures associated with high stakes testing and accountability can present a great challenge for even the most veteran of administrators. From determining whether to allow a student to continue a test under extreme circumstances to losing one's voice to oppose practices that run counter to personal and professional ethics, understanding that one's professional reputation and career can rise or fall based upon a high stakes test can significantly alter the lens though which a principal makes decisions.

Turbulence Theory, according to Gross (Mitra & Gross, 2009) employs four levels of disturbance (modeled after those used in flight instruction) to describe its intensity: light (where little or no disturbance is experienced); moderate (where a constant or buffeting disturbance is experienced but where enough stability exists to continue); severe (where disturbance is so elevated that stability is lost, at least for a brief period of time and where the flight is threatened); and extreme (where disturbance is so significant that structural damage to the craft occurs). While light or moderate levels of turbulence can lead to positive outcomes for individuals and organizations, severe and extreme levels of turbulence threaten the foundational structure of an organization.

Gross (Shapiro & Gross, 2008) explains that turbulence is not experienced by everyone in an organization in the same manner—this is referred to as positionality. One's position has a great deal to do with the perceptions one has of a given situation, including the critical issues of power in relationships (Mitra & Gross, 2009).

Turbulence can also build on itself, gathering like water at the top of a waterfall. This is the phenomenon of cascading (Gross & Shapiro, 2008), the accumulation of coinciding forces. This gathering of turbulence can become a cascading series of crises that compound, one on top of another.

Stability is the final component of Turbulence Theory (Gross, 2007). Stability addresses how leaders stabilize their turbulent organization.

Using Turbulence Theory to Analyze Principal Perceptions of Impact of High Stakes
Testing and Accountability

In this section, the researcher's findings will be analyzed through the four level of

turbulence previously described. To aide in this analysis, the researcher created a

Turbulence Gauge from Gross (Gross & Shapiro, 2008).

Table 7. Turbulence Gauge for Principals

Degree of Turbulence	General Definition	Turbulence as It Is Applied to This Situation
Light	Associated with ongoing issues, little or no disruption in normal work environment, subtle signs of stress.	• School is in Good Standing • Test does not drive curriculum or programming • School currently in Good Standing, but principal and/or school has experience with not making AYP
Moderate	Widespread awareness of the issue, specific origins	• Widespread awareness about not making or maintaining AYP • Special education programming is modified • Programs target students with greatest likelihood of passing high-stakes test • Students in need of extra support "clustered" together to ease delivery of services • Curriculum and/or programming modified to provide extra academic to students
Severe	Fear for the entire enterprise, possibility of large scale community demonstrations, a feeling of crisis	• Fear of the unknown • CAPA Review Team • Principal fears repercussions and school restructuring
Extreme	Structural damage to the institution's normal operation is occurring	• School restructuring • Principal reassignment

Extreme Turbulence

Extreme turbulence, according to Gross (Shapiro & Gross, 2008), can lead to the unraveling of an institution. For this study, the unraveling associated with severe turbulence is more personalized in that this research aimed to gauge the individual principal's perspective on levels of turbulence associated with high stakes testing and accountability. Only one account of extreme turbulence was reported by principals. This account was provided by Mr. Douglas, who leads a school on Year 5 of NCLB Sanction.

In the spring of 2010, Mr. Douglas was informed that he would not be returning as principal of the school he had made his home for the previous nine years. Those nine years were filled with many ups and downs, but this was a very special place to him. As he recalled when he was first assigned to the school, "I really felt like I was coming home." Unfortunately, the school experienced a series of setbacks in regards to state testing, starting in 2003, the first year AYP was not made. Next, in 2006, the state's CAPA team was assigned to the school. According to Mr. Douglas, the CAPA team, designed to provide feedback and support to struggling schools, did little more that provide "cookie cutter" recommendations that did not provide any substantive support. As the years progressed, the turbulence began to cascade, as the school, according to Mr. Douglas, was "placed under a microscope." According to Mr. Douglas, the superintendent of the district in which he worked was also under a lot of pressure from the Board of Education and from state education workers to increase test scores. This pressure was then passed along to the principals, including Mr. Douglas.

As the school continued to not meet AYP targets, the internal and external pressures multiplied; it appeared that little was successfully done to provide stability to

the school. Efforts to provide sustained professional development did not take hold. Special education programming were moved out, but had no impact on test scores. In addition, due to the structure of the district's collective bargaining agreement with the teacher's union, Mr. Douglas has almost no authority to remove and/or reassign teachers. It was incredible to learn that Mr. Douglas, as well as other principals in the district, were not involved in the hiring process for teachers; they were simply assigned by the district's human resources department. Positionality was important in this case because from Mr. Douglas's perspective, his role was the most turbulent as he believed his job was the most expendable in the wake of unsuccessful attempts to make AYP.

The lack of stability in the face of rising AYP targets, combined with scrutiny from the district and state, and low teacher morale, led to a circumstance where the school was on Year 5 of not making AYP; something drastic had to happen. Unfortunately, this resulted in Mr. Douglas losing his position as principal. At the time of our last discussion, Mr. Douglas did not know what the future held in store, and questioned whether or not to resign or retire in the face of this setback.

Severe Turbulence

Two of the school leaders in this study, Mr. Douglas and Mr. Brice, shared experiences of severe turbulence. The source of the turbulence for both principals was the same: a high stakes test. The conditions, however, that contributed to both the internal and external pressures experienced by the two principals were quite different. During the time of the interviews, both led schools on NCLB sanction for not making AYP in multiple consecutive years, but Mr. Douglas's school community was in an

urban, highly impoverished area in a district with a history of poor performance on high

stakes tests, and Mr. Brice's school community was located in an suburban wealthy area

in a district with a history of excellent performance on high stakes test. While both

experienced severe levels of turbulence, Mr. Brice's path to severe turbulence was greatly

accelerated as compared to Mr. Douglas.   This could be contributed, in part, to the

general difference in expectations of Mr. Brice's school community, compared to that of

Mr. Douglas.

For Mr. Douglas, the level of turbulence clearly was in the severe range around

the time the school first hit Year 5 on the NCLB continuum. It was at that time in 2008

that Mr. Douglas knew that a third CAPA review would be initiated. Mr. Douglas also

knew that the likelihood of losing his job greatly increased if the current strategies for

reform were not translating into positive testing results.   In efforts to stabilize the

situation, Mr. Douglas attempted to implement reform strategies, including technology

initiatives, along with new reading and mathematics curricula. In addition, he reported

that he tried to strengthen collegiality and collaboration among his staff. Unfortunately,

these efforts did little to change the outcome of test results, and the school slipped further

along the NCLB sanction continuum.

Severe turbulence was also discussed by Mr. Brice. Although he was only on

Year 2 of NCLB sanction, he had an acute sense of the cascading pressures from his

wealthy, suburban school community, even though these pressures were fairly implicit.

In comparing his ordeal as an air flight metaphor, Mr. Brice described the situation as,

"Buckle your seat belts, because it is going to be a bumpy ride. The oxygen bags haven't

yet come down but you have to hold on." In contrast to Mr. Douglas's efforts to stabilize the situation, which were primarily the result of external recommendations, Mr. Brice took a more aggressive approach earlier on and assumed a more visible leadership role in implemented significant shifts in programming, particularly in the area of special education, in a relatively short amount of time. The results of these shifts have yet to be known since the most recent test results were not available when this dissertation was written. It is difficult to clearly conclude what may have accounted for the different approaches taken by the principals, specifically, why Mr. Brice took more aggressive actions more quickly than did Mr. Douglas; however, it is possible that this could be attributed in part to positionality and cascading.

Before working in his current position, Mr. Brice worked in two schools that struggled to make AYP, one of which was coming out of restructuring. Mr. Brice knew the consequences, both personally and professionally, of being in a pattern of not making AYP. Although he had a strong desire to not again experience that in his current district, those initial experiences also helped him to better cope with the situation and help to bring about strategies to stabilize the situation. In addition, Mr. Brice was not feeling overt pressures from his supervisors, unlike what was experienced by Mr. Douglas. Another possible explanation was that Mr. Brice was dealing with one subgroup, special education, struggling with making AYP. This may have helped to provide Mr. Brice with a clear focus in his reform efforts, whereas Mr. Douglas was dealing with the whole school population not making AYP—a much more daunting challenge.

Moderate Turbulence

Moderate turbulence was the most prevalent form of turbulence conveyed by the principals. By definition, moderate turbulence includes widespread awareness of the issue (Gross & Shapiro, 2008), the every principal in the study was very well aware of the high stakes test, and the consequences of making or not making AYP. In addition to the widespread awareness, recurring themes associated with moderate turbulence stemmed from special education programming, and issues associated with the perceived narrowing of curriculum to help students pass the test.

Widespread awareness of keeping up with AYP

Widespread awareness about not making or maintaining AYP was acknowledged by all the principals in the study, regardless of their place on the NCLB sanction continuum. This may be due in part to the fact that NCLB has been in existence for over 10 years. The results of high stakes test is a very public issue, with detailed score reports available online and in local papers. In most cases, however, heightened levels of awareness were localized to teachers, administrators, and other school officials. Only one of the principals indicated that his school community specifically requested an annual report from the principal to the parents about the scores from the high stakes test. None of the principals from schools currently on the sanction continuum reported high levels of interest or awareness of testing results from the general public.

The heightened levels of awareness of high stakes testing from central office personnel (e.g. superintendents) appeared to play a role in the level of significance that principals placed upon the issue. Gross (Gross & Shapiro, 2008) refers to this as

cascading. For example, Mr. Finch was in the first year of working with a new superintendent. This superintendent frequently and explicitly communicated high expectations about performance on the high stakes test. This was a catalyst for Mr. Finch to initiate changes that he might not have otherwise done, like replace the librarian with a basic skills support teacher or feel compelled to pull students from art and music class for supplemental academic support.   The experience of Mr. Finch was in sharp contrast to the experience of Mr. Warrington, whose superintendent placed little overt pressure on standardized test performance and even went as far as to minimize the significance of the test. This was not to say that a message of indifference was communicated; rather, there was a clear message that the high stakes testing provided only one measure. It is also possible that Mr. Warrington's superintendent was afforded the opportunity to have a more balanced perspective on high stakes testing given the fact that Mr. Warrington's school has always made AYP. However, Mr. Warrington experienced periods of not making AYP in another district and his superintendent was dealing with another school in the district that did not make AYP, yet Mr. Warrington stated that the message about balancing the significance of the test was universal to all the schools in the district, regardless of their AYP status. The experiences of both Mr. Finch and Mr. Warrington were representative of how the concept of cascading affected how principals in this study allowed high stakes testing and accountability to impact decision making.   Although the heightened levels of awareness about high stakes testing were localized to teachers, administrators, and other school officials, the positionality of principals brought on some of the highest levels of stress and anxiety given the fact that they were on the front lines of their school's operations.

Special Education Programming

Since NCLB disaggregates test data and all subgroups, including special education, minority, and low income, must meet proficiency targets in order to make AYP, schools have been required in many circumstances to critically analyze how programming is delivered to students in these categories. Eight out of the eleven principals in the study indicated that high stakes testing and accountability had an impact on decisions and programming made regarding special education. While principals reported both positive and negative outcomes of this renewed focus on special education programming, most agreed that it has brought about widespread awareness of the issue.

For some of the principals, the renewed focus on populations of students with special needs brought about by testing results has led to more inclusive practices. For example, principals have determined that in order for a student with special needs to meet grade level proficiency levels on a high stakes test, then they have to routinely be exposed to grade level content; something that traditionally was not happening in pull-out resource programs. While more inclusive practices are generally a good thing, the issue becomes more complicated given the challenge for regular education teachers, many of whom have little or no formal special education training, to meet the needs of a student that may be two or more years below grade level.

While special education teachers are often part of the service delivery, either through in class support or through a co-teaching model, special education staffing, especially in light of broad reductions in school budgets, further challenge the resources of schools to effectively meet the needs of all students. These staffing challenges have often led to the "clustering" of students with special needs in particular classes. The

benefit is that the special education teacher's time is maximized by working with larger populations of students in classes and the students with special needs benefit from positive academic role models; however, the drawback is a lack of individualized attention from the special education teacher. Also, when special education teacher support is not available, the heavy mix of students with special needs in a regular education classroom can overly tax the time and attention of the regular education teacher, reducing contact time with general education students.

Thus, positionality plays a significant role in this circumstance. For principals, including more students with special needs in the regular education classroom achieves the goal of exposing them to more grade level appropriate curriculum. In some cases, however, the perspective of regular education teachers is that they are unfairly being required to meet the needs of students for whom they don't have the proper training and regular education students are left with less direct teacher time and attention.

Two of the principals in the study, Mr. Sirover and Mr. Brice, took aggressive stands in an attempt to stabilize the turbulence associated with high stakes testing and students with special needs. Mr. Sirover reevaluated how students with special needs are provided support in the resource room setting. The resource room setting is outside of the regular education environment. Students are often grouped homogeneously in groups of three to five and the content to which they are exposed is often between one to three levels below their current grade level. Mr. Sirover discovered that special education teachers were satisfied when students in the resource room made a year's academic growth; however, it became clear to Mr. Sirover that one year's growth never closes the gap for that student and special education becomes a "life sentence." He began engaging

his special education teachers in conversation about this issue to help bring the issue to light; he then worked to ensure that students in the resource setting were exposed to content that was commiserate with the students' grade level, and worked with the special education teacher to enhance their ability to differentiate the grade level content, processes, and products.

Mr. Brice's approach was to significantly reduce the resource room support model of service delivery in favor of the more inclusive model of co-teaching. While this strategy seemed to achieve the goal of having students with special needs having more exposure to grade level curriculum, the clustering of these students and the unanticipated challenge of supporting students with special needs when the special education teacher was not available became a significant issue for Mr. Brice. To address the issue, he met with teachers and engaged in discussions, and the outcome was the for the following school year, less clustering would take place and the special education teachers will work on more of a rotation. In addition, Mr. Brice would bring in co-teaching coaches to help providing training and support for both special and regular education teachers.

Educating the Whole Child and the Narrowing of Curriculum

The notion of educating the whole child typically refers to providing educational experiences for children that go beyond the instructional pillars of reading, writing, and arithmetic. These ideals may include character education, cultural and aesthetic awareness/appreciation, and teaching that help to foster social/emotional development. In an environment that contends with high stakes testing and accountability, the pressures to perform well on the test, as communicated by the principals, can be both positive and negative; positive in that it helps to focus priorities on instructional leadership and the

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foundations of math and literacy—negative in that is forces principals to narrow the extra-curricular, enriching activities that some see as equally important as what is measured in the high stakes tests.

Moderate turbulence was experienced by nearly half of the principals in the study related a perception that the pressure to have students pass the high stakes tests resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum. Based on conversations with the principals in this study, the most common conventions at play included 1) balancing the pressure of providing supplemental academic support in tested subject areas without requiring students to miss other non-tested subjects (e.g. art, music, social studies), and 2) eliminating enriching activities not directly correlated with state standards and therefore not tested.

1) Balancing supplemental academic support in tested subject areas without requiring students to miss other non-tested subjects

Half of the principals in this study spoke directly to the challenge of ensuring that all students are receiving the necessary support required to succeed in school. However, principals often struggle with an operational definition of what it means to be successful in school. For example, which of the following is the most accurate reflection of success in school: report card grades, student's attitude toward school, social/emotional development, reading level, standardized test score? While it is practical, and often accurate, to determine the level of success of an individual child by looking at a composite of all of those factors, principals are increasingly pressured to focus upon a single indicator, the standardized test score, to determine whether or not a student is achieved successfully in school. As discussed earlier, the sources of the pressure are

varied and can include pressures from the community, central office and the board, as well as internal pressures to be perceived as successful.

When student success is measured primarily by a single source, in this case a standardized test score, principals can experience turbulence associated with ensuring that students achieve on the test. How principals go about achieving this often varies, but it typically includes some type of supplemental academic support that is delivered either before, during, or after the normal school day. While extra support can be viewed as positive, the delivery and content of that support can sometimes run counter to what educators know to be best practice. For example, half of the principals had designed staffing and programming specifically to support students who were at risk for not passing the state's high stakes test. In some of these cases, the extra support came at the cost of a student missing non-tested subject areas. For example, students receiving extra support in Mr. Finch's school missed subjects like art, social studies, and even recess. The same was true in Mr. Shine's school, where most of the grade levels spend little time learning about science. It's important to note, however, that while all of the principals in this study spoke to a de-emphasis in the subject areas of social studies and science, not all attributed that to the nature of standardized testing. Some of the more experienced principals like Mr. Swift and Mr. Sirover, believe that even before the advent of high stakes testing associated with NCLB, significant emphasis was placed on reading and mathematics with a lesser emphasis on science and social studies. Another interesting point is that science is tested only in grade four; however, many principals believe that the current proficiency standards for science are much less rigorous compared to literacy and mathematics, permitting a reduced for on science but not in poor test performance.

The other significant challenge faced by principals is determining how to support the needs of all students with finite resources. For example, principals know that time and resources are two critical factors in designing student support. Specifically, how best to allocate limited teacher support for students within the eight month time frame from the start of the school year until the administration of the high stakes test. This challenge can force principals to cluster groups of students at risk for not passing the high stakes test. While this can maximize staffing resources, it can also lead to the formulation of homogenous classes, which all of the principals in the study perceived as an undesirable cost of clustering.

2) Eliminating enriching activities not directly correlated with state standards and therefore not tested.

Most experienced principals, especially at the elementary level, have fielded countless claims by teachers that there is not enough time to accomplish all that needs to be done during a school day. This lament has been heightened in the face of the current iteration of high stakes testing and forced principals to prioritize what constitutes a typical school day for children. This has resulted in both positive and negative outcomes for principals.

Some principals, like Mr. Shine, believe that the focus on high stakes testing has helped his school to focus on what he believes to be the most critical aspects of his educational mission, which is to develop students proficient in literacy and mathematics. This focus has resulted in teachers "pushing-out" projects and teaching that may have been "fun and cute" for students, but lacked educational focus and rigor.

This also calls into question the primary mission of public education. Traditionally, citizenship was a primary desired outcome of public schools, yet none of the principals spoke of this ideal. This can be attributed to the fact that the characteristics of positive citizenship are not part of high stakes testing. This is not to assume, however, that character education initiatives, which often include characteristics associated with positive citizenship, were not undertaken by principals. It is possible that the questions posed by the researcher did not lead to this as a topic of discussion.

While issues of educating the whole and narrowing of the curriculum were mostly associated with only moderate levels of turbulence and did not require extensive actions on the part of principals to stabilize these situations, principals did speak to their efforts to prevent the turbulence from intensifying, which had a direct connection to the cascading nature of turbulence. For example, all of the principals were mindful not to implement an overly rigid and narrowing experience for students, despite their academic performance. All of the principals also were mindful in how they balanced their role as the motivator, collaborator, and supporter of teachers and students, commonly referred to the "cheerleader" role of the principal, while also conveying a sense of urgency and importance for the high stakes test. A factor that contributed to which side there was more emphasis was the superintendent's emphasis on the high stakes test. As discussed earlier, overt and sometimes covert pressures placed on principals by superintendents cascade to how principals respond to the pressure. However, despite the level of pressure exerted by superintendents on principals to raise or maintain test scores, all principals consciously balanced this requirement with what they believe to be best for students. This was true of principals regardless of their place on the NCLB continuum.

Light Turbulence

According to Gross (Shapiro & Gross) 2008, light turbulence is "associated with ongoing issues," with "little or no disruption in normal work environment" (pg. 9). This level of turbulence is inherent in most aspects of running a school; it is often assumed that operations rarely run without ripples on the surface. The most obvious examples of light turbulence were evidenced by schools currently in Good Standing.

The two principals in the study that led schools in Good Standing and where the principals or their school have never experienced not making AYP is where high stakes testing and accountability had the least visible impact on leadership decisions and priorities. Neither of these schools had clear and targeted efforts designed for performance on the high stakes test, yet was very aware of the issues associated with high stakes testing and accountability. These principals had more of a long-term and systemic approach to performing well on high stakes tests, which typically including have curriculum that was of high quality and aligned with state standards.

The five other principals that were currently in good standing but had either personal experience with not making AYP, or the school they currently lead did not make AYP in the recent past, showed a level of turbulence on the farther end of the light turbulence continuum, but did not require reach levels of moderate turbulence. These principals were more likely to have some specific programs and/or interventions in place to help support student in meeting proficiency standards on the state test.

In summary, Turbulence Theory provides a useful lens with which to analyze how high stakes testing and accountability impact the role of the principal (see Table 8 for a summary of distribution of responses to turbulence). While an early assumption that

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there would be a clear correlation that the farther down one goes on the NCLB sanction continuum, the greater the level of turbulence, the analysis has shown that the process is more relationship is more complex and includes many variables like cascading, positionality, history of the district and school's performance, as well as the personal and professional experience of the individual principal.

A second useful lens that emerged after data analysis was principals often demonstrated use of their ethical codes when discussing their approaches and solution to problems. In this section, school leader's use of these multiple ethical codes to help them navigate through the turbulence will be examined. The discussion will begin with a short review of the multiple ethical paradigms.

Table 8. Distribution of Responses Along Turbulence Gauge

	Indicators	Respondent Initials										
Levels of Turbulence		JD	CM	BF	PF	CO	SS	CW	SB	SS	RS	DS
Light	Good Standing					X	X	X				
	Test does not alter curriculum					X		X				
	Currently in Good Standing, with history			X	X			X		X		X
Moderate	Widespread awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Sp. Ed. programming is modified	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	
	Curriculum modified		X	X	X				X			X
	Programs target students with greatest likelihood of passing high-stakes test		X	X	X							
	Students in need of extra support "clustered" together to ease delivery of services		X	X	X				X			
Severe	Fear of the unknown	X		X					X			
	CAPA Review Team	X										
	Principal fears repercussions and school restructuring	X							X			
Extreme	School restructuring	X										
	Principal reassignment	X										

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Using Multiple Ethical Paradigm to Analyze Principal Perceptions of impact of High Stakes Testing and Accountability

As related in Chapter Three, the Multiple Ethical Paradigm approach includes four areas of the field of ethics as related to educational administration: the Ethic of Justice, the Ethic of Critique, the Ethic of Care and the Ethic of the Profession.

Review of the ethic of justice. The ethic of justice deals with laws, rights, and policies. The liberal part of this tradition is defined as a "commitment to human freedom," and the democratic aspect implies "procedures for making decisions that respect the equal sovereignty of the people" (Strike, 1991, p.415). Starratt (1994) describes the ethic of justice as emanating from two schools of thought, one originating in the seventeenth century including the work of Hobbes, Kant, and more contemporary scholars such as Rawls and Kohlberg; the other rooted in the works of philosophers such as Aristotle, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Dewey. The former school sees the individual as central and social relationships as a type of a social contract where the individual, using human reason, gives up some rights for the good of the whole or for social justice (Starratt, p.49). The latter tends to see society as central, rather than the individual, and seeks to teach individuals how to behave throughout their life within communities. In this tradition, justice emerges from "communal understandings" (p.50).

Through the lens of the ethic of justice, one would ask questions such as: Is there a law, right, or policy that relates to this case? If so, should it be enforced? If there is not a law or policy, should there be (Shapiro& Gross, 2008)?

Analysis of the ethic of justice.

Principals in this study used the ethic of justice in a variety of ways in dealing with issues related to high stakes testing and accountability. Principals are bound to follow the highly prescribe policies and procedures that accompany high stakes testing. All principals are required to attending training, then turnkey that training to all certificated and non-certificated employees who will either be administering or proctoring the test. Additional policies and procedures must be adhered to for students with special needs and students with Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. These policies and procedure range from ensuring that adequate lighting and ventilation are provided in all testing areas, to ensuring that there are no breeches in testing security (e.g. lost testing book, cheating, etc.). For example, Mr. Douglas had testing policies and procedures posted in the main office of the school, and even included an easily seen "Keep Out" poster to denote that only authorized personnel were permitted to enter the room where the test booklets were stored. The principal is also responsible to ensure that there are no instructional aides displayed in the classroom, including use of dictionaries and phones, to ensuring that number lines and student work samples are removed from the room.

Principals acknowledged the gravity of following the policies and procedures of the high stakes tests and are aware of the consequence that accompany security and/or procedural breaches. These may include fines for the school district, loss of employment, and the potential of being the headline in the local newspaper.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that all students in grades three through five take the high stakes test. There is a provision for what is called an Alternative Proficiency Exam (APA), but these are typically reserved for the most profoundly impaired student. Principals reported feeling conflicted about the provision to test all students. They see one aspect of the inclusive nature of the testing as a very positive aspect; it forces schools to account for the performance of all students, including ones with special needs. Another aspect of the policy, as previously discussed, sets an unrealistic expectation for students who don't meet the criteria for the (APA), yet may be functioning 2-3 years below grade level.

Review of the ethic of critique

The ethic of critique can be seen as checks and balances mechanism for the ethic of justice. In other words, the ethic of critique is a lens that questions laws, rights, and policies to determine if they are just. The ethic of critique draws much of its philosophical underpinnings from critical theory, which analyzes inequities of social class, race, and gender. In the realm of education, critical theorists often study how societal social structures and inequalities are echoed in the nation's schools. Along with critical theory, the ethic of critique is also frequently linked to critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy has traditionally referred to educational theory and teaching and learning practices that are designed to raise learners' critical consciousness regarding oppressive social conditions. Giroux (1991) asks educators to understand that their classrooms are political, as well as educational locations and, as such, ethics is not as a matter of individual choice or relativism but a "social discourse grounded in struggles that refuse to

accept needless human suffering and exploitation." In this respect, the ethic of critique provides "a discourse for expanding basic human rights" (p.48) and may serve as a vehicle in the struggle against inequality. In this vein, critical theorists are often concerned with making known the voices of those who are silenced, particularly students (Giroux, 1988; Weis & Fine, 1993). For Giroux (1991), Welch (1991), and other critical educators, the language of critique is central, but they also believe should be a beginning leading to some kind of action -- preferably political. Through the ethic of critique, one might pose the question: Does the inequitable distribution of resources help to level the playing field? Does fairness equal equality? The questions that help guide the ethic of critique include: Who makes the laws, rules or policies? Who benefits from them? Who has the power? Who is silenced? (Shapiro & Gross, 2008).

Analysis of the ethic of critique

Within the ethic of critique, two major themes emerge—1) testing for students with special needs, and 2) the weighting of the high stakes test. As previously discussed, principals often struggle with the issue of high stakes testing and students with special needs. A significant aspect of testing policies associated with NCLB was that all students would be tested and the result would be disaggregated. This forced school leaders to renew their responsibility to all students, especially those with special needs. All of the principals in the study were supportive of students with special needs being held to a high standard, and in some cases, the nature of the testing prompted principals to design more inclusive educational opportunities for them. The inclusive opportunities, however, were not always driven by what was believed to be best for the child; rather, it was driven by

what would provide the greatest likelihood of success on the high stakes test. This has

resulted in many questioning the very nature of this requirement and whether or not a

different measure of success needs to be developed for particular groups of students.

Another way that principals in this study have used the ethic of critique is in how

the test results are interpreted. In other words, questioning whether good scores mean

that curriculum and instruction is sound and whether bad scores mean they are not. Many

of the principals shared that they analyze data from high stakes testing somewhat

cautiously. For example, if a particular student did not meet proficiency in a particular

area, principals communicated they are likely to determine if other data streams, like

reading assessments, grades, and teacher reports either support or refute the score from

the high stakes test. Principals also acknowledge that as the stakes are raised to meet

ever higher levels of proficiency, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain that

balanced approach to data analysis.

Review of the ethic of care

The ethic of care places caring as the foundation for ethical decision-making.

Noddings (1989) believes that caring should be at the heart of the educational system.

This concept extended the original lens of the ethic of care introduced by Gillian (1982)

and adapted it to the realm of education. The framework for the ethic of care contrasts

with the traditional male dominated view of rules and regulations most commonly

associated with the ethic of justice. While the ethic of care is most commonly associated

as a feminist point of view, men, too, have ascribed to the importance of this lens,

including such prominent male ethicists as Buber (1965) and Sergiovanni (1992).

A caring ethic would lead administrators to look beyond goals to several distinctive values to guide them in developing organization strategies. They would embrace the idea that each person deserves the opportunity to live and learn in a supportive, nurturing environment (Beck, 1994, p. 79).

The ethic of care compels school leaders to balance the competing demands of standards, testing, and accountability with the individuals that comprise their particular educational community. School leaders must not lose the perspective the behind every test score and AYP percentages are teachers and students that have needs beyond the ability to perform well on assessments. Leaders employing the ethic of care will not dismiss this perspective in the face of the turbulence that can be caused by high stakes testing and accountability.

Analysis of the ethic of care

The ethic of care was an important component in the decision making of many of the school leaders in this study. Along with the internal and external pressures they felt regarding high stakes testing and accountability, many of the principals spoke directly to their responsibility to their students; a responsibility rooted in care and compassion for children and their well-being. This ethic of care weighed heavily on the school leaders and provided restless nights for some. For example, Mr. Finch had thoughtfully designed and was ready to implement a plan that would focus academic support for the students on the cusp of passing the high stakes test, essentially taking away support from student who demonstrate greater academic need but were less likely to pass the high stakes test. However,

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his personal code of ethics prevented him from implementing his plan and redesigned his initiative to include all students that demonstrated a need for additional academic support.

Mr. Warrington also demonstrated a strong ethic of care in his defense of not targeting students within a particular score range for additional support, citing that if that was done, he would be losing sight of doing what was best for children. This approach was exemplified by Mr. Warrington's superintendent when during testing week, he demonstrated care and concern for the social and emotional well-being of his principals, teachers, and students, and was less concerned with how people thought they performed.

Unfortunately, there were also examples of when an ethic of care was not used. For example, Ms. Fargo's decision to provide extra academic support not necessary for the students with the most need, but for those who were most likely to pass the test. Another would be Mr. Shine's decision to let a student who urinated in her pants continue through a section of testing due to the fact that she was likely to pass the test, and allowed her to stop testing may have resulted in her test being voided.

Review of the ethic of profession

Ethics, as related to particular professions, are most notably associated with the fields of medicine, law, and business. Throughout their work on the Multiple Ethical Paradigms, Shapiro and Stefkovitch (2010) believed that ethics need also a foundational

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element in the work of educational leaders. This belief was supported by a variety of others notable researchers, including Beck (1994), Begley (1999), and Starrat (2004). Shapiro and Stefkovitch found that the ethical paradigms of justice, care, and critique, while essential, lacked a perspective unique to the field of education.

Ethical codes authored by professional organizations, which can at times be at odds with one's unique ethical lens are sometimes "limited in their responsiveness in that they are somewhat removed from the day-to-day personal and professional dilemmas educational leaders face" (Shapiro & Gross, 2008, p. 31). Shapiro and Gross also recount that many students in educational administration find it more beneficial to write their own professional code of ethics, rather than to use the professional codes established by legal bodies and organizations. This does not mean that these professional codes of ethics should be dismissed. They are still important guideposts for the field and the professionals within them.

Analysis of the ethic of profession

The most recurring theme that was consistent with the ethic of profession was the question, "What is best for children?" This was a source of great conflict for many of the principals due to the punitive consequences associated with not making AYP. Principals often tried to reconcile what they truly believed to be best for the academic and social well-being of students, with the reality of the significant personal and professional consequences of poor performance on the high stakes test. These tensions were exemplified as principals struggled to find the time and resources to support students,

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while not diminishing some of the more broad aims many believed were vital to education, but not part of high stakes testing, like exposure to the arts and social/emotional development.

In one of the cases, the principal's personal ethics greatly skewed his professional ethics. For example, when asked to whom he as ultimate responsibility to as a principal, he said that was owed to his family. From a certain perspective, one cannot fault the personal pressure and responsibility one has to his or her own family, especially when one's profession is solely responsible for income and economic security for a family. However, at what length might one go to compromise one's professional responsibility to students at the cost of personal security and at what point is that line so blurred as to become unethical? This is an example of how personal and professional codes of ethics can present their own ethical dilemmas.

Using Multiple Ethical Paradigm and Turbulence Theory: Case Study

In the following section, an ethical dilemma is presented. I believe this case study scenario is a significant section because it combines the ethical frameworks in a comprehensive manner to a real life scenario. This scenario provides a perspective to the reader about the unintended consequences of how some principals can find themselves making decisions in a manner that is markedly different from the philosophical foundation. The case contains a brief introduction, followed by a dilemma based on a situation described to the researcher during this study. An analysis of turbulence theory and multiple ethical paradigms will be used to help illuminate this issue.

The week of high stakes testing is one of the more stressful times for school personal, especially the building principal, who often serves as the school's testing coordinator. There is much work that occurs before, during, and after testing. For example, in the weeks leading up to testing, the principal must ensure that all students are properly registered to take the test, personnel have been trained and allocated to meet all necessary testing accommodations, and adequate testing locations are assigned and readied for testing. Notices are required to be sent home to parents, along with reminders of how important attendance and punctuality is on testing days. Two weeks before the test, principals must count, then recount, to ensure they have all the necessary testing material; once that is completed, the materials must be locked in a secure location at all times. Twenty four hours prior to testing, principals are permitted to break open the sealed packages of the test booklets, recounting to ensure each student has a booklet, then affixes computerized labels that assign a student to a particular testing book. Checklists and authorization forms, as well as testing security plans are finalized—testing is finally ready to begin.

In a process filled with strict protocols and policies, some issues concerning high stakes testing is left to the judgment and interpretation of the building principal. One such issue is the determination of whether to void a student test, which presented Mr. Shine with a challenging ethical dilemma.

To first understanding the context of the situation, it is important to note that Mr. Shine, a principal with seven years of experience, is in his third year of leading the

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Rosewood School, a school with a large population of students, 65% according to Mr. Shine, that receive free and reduced lunch. The school was not successful in making AYP in 2003 and 2005. Mr. Shine was hired in 2006, while the school was on Year 1 Hold[2]. When he was hired for the job, he was provided explicit directions by the superintendent to keep the school on track in making AYP and to move the school into Good Standing status. When asked about the expectations provided to him prior to his employment, Mr. Shine stated, "I got the 'don't screw it up' school."

Rosewood school is one of two elementary schools in the Eastern School District; the other district elementary school, Central School, has experienced three consecutive years of not making AYP and, according to Mr. Shine, receives much of the attention of scrutiny district central office. As Mr. Shine stated to his teachers when talking about being under a microscope from central office and the board, as is the other elementary school, "You want to be left alone? You want to not have the 'Golden Palace[3]' telling us what to do with our curriculum? Then we need to keep on passing."

Mr. Shine's account of the expectations set for him as he started his tenure as principal, along with the school's inconsistent performance on the state test are consistent with moderate levels of turbulence. There was indeed widespread awareness of the testing issue, specifically from the teachers and administrators in the school district. Two factors that helped to stabilize the situation, preventing the issue from moving into the category of severe turbulence, were the cascading affect from superintendent's primary

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[2] Hold status indicates that the school made AYP for one year by subject

[3] Slang term used by principals in Mr. Shine's district for central administrative offices

focus being on Westside School for not making AYP in consecutive years, along with the fact that Rosewood school was coming off of a year where AYP was made. The 2008 testing year was an important one for the Rosewood school. The school was coming off of being on Year 1 Hold, and successful attainment of AYP would place the school in Good Standing, a status that the school had never attained since the inception of NCLB.

Testing procedures call for any irregularities during the administration of the test are to be immediately reported to the school's testing coordinator, which in this case was Mr. Shine. Typical testing irregularities may include a student misbehaving or working on an incorrect section of the test. Most principals, including Mr. Shine, are accustomed to these issues and they generally do not have a significant impact on testing. The call that Mr. Shine received on the second morning of testing, however, was one that was not anticipated.

The call from the classroom teacher indicated that a third grade student, Erin, had urinated in her pants while testing. It was during the second day of Language Arts Literacy testing and the student had one page left to complete with approximately 10-minutes left to complete the test; based on prior assessment data, there was a strong expectation that Erin would score very well on the test. At that moment, Mr. Shine had a decision to make. Should he let Erin remain in her wet pants and finish the test? Should he permit her to leave the testing area to change? If she left to change, there is a risk that she would not be able to finish the test, thus voiding her score for both days of Language Literacy testing, and potentially affected the school's test scores. These choices will be examined through lenses of the Multiple Ethical Paradigms.

To Void or Not To Void—the ethical lens that was used

In this case, one can argue that Mr. Shine's decision to let Erin finish the test lacked ethical judgment; however, it can also be argued that his decision demonstrated an ethic of justice, in that his decision was in part based on the procedures set forth by the state board of education of when a testing coordinator is required to void a student's test.

To Void or Not To Void—Ethical lenses that should have been used

Ethic of Care

If Mr. Shine based his response on the ethic of care, then he would understand that his decision has a direct impact on Erin. Mr. Shine's decision not only impacts Erin and her sense of self and her sense of how others perceive her, but also impacts how teachers judge his values and priorities. For example, while it may be true that Erin did not resent Mr. Shine or her teacher for allowing her to finish the test, it is quite possible she will reflect on the experience at a later time in her development and question how her needs were or were not met in this case. If the ethic of care was used, consideration would have been made for how her peers may react when and if they learned that this happened. The ethic of care would also have required Mr. Shine and the teacher to reflect and ask, "How might you have liked this handled if it was your or own son or daughter?" Mr. Shine's decision may also have far reaching affects on how the teachers perceive his leadership and question his personal and professional ethics.

Ethic of Profession

If the ethic of profession was used in this case, Mr. Shine would have been more mindful of Erin's best interest. For example, even if Erin received a perfect score on the high stakes test, was it in her best interest or the school's to complete the portion of the test? It can be argued that it was in the school's best interest given the likelihood of her passing. Schools often work *in loco parentis*; the ethic of profession would have forced Mr. Shine to ask what a reasonable parent might have done in this situation, thus compelling him to remove the student from testing.

Ethic of Justice

It is important to note that the ethic of justice could have been used more favorably in this particular case. For example, there is a process whereby the testing coordinator can make an appeal to the state testing coordinator for a variance of rules or procedures in certain situations. In this case, Mr. Shine could have removed Erin from the testing room, allowed her to change, then contacted the state testing coordinator to allow her to finish the remaining section at a later time. Unfortunately, this option was not used.

To Void or Not To Void and Turbulence Theory

Turbulence theory may be able to explain why Mr. Shine made the decision he did. As explained in the opening of this case, the Rosewood School had recent challenges in making AYP; most of the scrutiny from the board of education and central office was on the Westside School and Mr. Shine wanted to keep in that way. This

tension provided a moderate level of turbulence and Mr. Shine did not want that to escalate; therefore, his method to maintain stability was to ensure the school made AYP. If there was not such turbulence associated with performance on the high stakes test, then perhaps things would have played out differently.

In summary, this case would have likely done more good for all involved if the ethics of care and profession were used to a greater extent, and if Mr. Shine used the ethic of justice to help stabilize the situation, allowed Erin to take care of her personal needs immediately, as well as complete the test and have it count toward AYP.

Summary of Discussion of Findings

Principals in this study reported light to severe turbulence in relation to high stakes testing and accountability on their role as school leaders. While the majority of the reported turbulence was in the moderate category, three of the eleven principals indicate levels of severe turbulence and one indicated levels of extreme turbulence. The sources of turbulence came from both internal and external sources. External sources including supervisors and central office personnel, board members, and the community. Internal pressures originated primarily from the principal's desire to do their job well and be perceived as successful. Internal pressures also came from the tension leaders felt between what they believed was in the best interest of students, and what was necessary to perform well on high stakes tests.

The personal stress also came from the leaders' apprehension to be perceived as not supporting high achievement for all students. This was especially demonstrated by

Mr. Douglas, who, despite receiving notification that as a result of poor performance on high stakes testing, he did not speak critically of the intent of the testing and of NCLB in general. While an analysis of the data seemed to indicate that as schools and leaders experienced increased levels of turbulence the further down the NCLB sanction continuum, the data also showed that the relationship between turbulence and the sanction continuum is more complex and includes the dynamics of the following in addition to current level of NCLB status: Principal's past experience with AYP; the schools past experience with AYP; and the external pressure from the school community, namely parent, superintendents and boards of education

School leaders used all four ethical paradigms when making decisions in regards to high stakes testing and accountability. Principals used the ethic of justice as they discussed the policies and procedures they needed to follow in order to comply with NCLB. Principals reported feeling conflicted about the provision to test all students. They see one aspect of the inclusive nature of the testing as a very positive aspect; yet another aspect of the policy is that is can set unrealistic expectations for students who may be functioning 2-3 years below grade level.

The ethic of critique was demonstrated as the principals discussed the issues of testing requirements for students with special needs, and the level of significance that should be attributed to the results of high stakes tests. Principals felt pressure from the tension of their desire to provide inclusive and rigorous learning opportunities for students with special needs, and the unreality expectations that the vast majority of students with specials needs can demonstrate grade level proficiency on a high stakes

test. Principals also questioned how to interpret test scores, good and bad. Many of the

principals shared a cautious perspective on how they analyze data from high stakes

testing.   Principals also acknowledged that as the stakes are raised to meet ever higher

levels of proficiency, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain that balanced approach

to data analysis.

The ethic of care was an important component in the decision making of

many of the school leaders in this study. Many of the principals spoke directly to

their responsibility to their students; a responsibility rooted in care and

compassion for children and their well-being. This ethic of care weighted heavily

on the school leaders and provided restless nights for some. The ethic of care was

used in beneficial ways, helping one principal to redesign academic support plans

to include more students and helping another to keep centered on the social and

emotional well-being during the week the state test was administered.

Conversely, principals also demonstrated instances where an ethic of care was

absent, resulting in scenarios that have the potential to have lasting impacts on

students.

The ethic of profession asks educators to reflect on the ideal of what is best for

children. This was a source of great conflict for many of the principals, especially as they

struggled to find the time and resources to support students, while not diminishing some

of the more broad aims many believed were vital to education, but not part of high stakes

testing, like exposure to the arts and social/emotional development. Principals also felt

conflicted endorsing educational programming that was not considered a best practice, but may have helped to boost test scores.

Recommendations

School leaders in today's public schools are working in an era of unprecedented accountability stemming from high stakes testing. In addition, schools are consistently being asked to do more with less, which can often result in the principal's role being stretched to include more and more responsibilities, making it more difficult to focus on the job of student achievement. While the job is not likely to get easier or include less responsibility any time in the near future, principals must recognize that there are strategies they can employ that can help to stabilize and improve circumstances related to high stakes testing and accountability and their work. These include collaboration and the integration of ethical paradigms to promote stability and mitigate turbulence.

The role of the school principal, especially in a school without other administrators, is an isolated one. In many states, local rule is the norm. This can be seen as a positive system of governance in that local leaders make local decisions. An unintended consequence of this system, however, is that it contributes to an environment where each district, school board, and administrative team is an island unto themselves. Collaboration among principals, within a local school district, but especially outside of one's district, is often an underutilized source of support and professional growth. While one can argue that the demands of the job leave little time for inter and intra district collaboration, new technologies like Skype, blogs, and wikis are breaking down traditional barriers and making virtual meetings possible.

An example of how this may work can be demonstrated with how principals devise long and short term academic interventions for students. While principals may work with teachers and parents from their own school on this type of issue, very few have established networks to reach out and see how other principals in their geographic area address similar issues. Online meetings and/or message boards would help provide a means to collaborate with other professional who are working to address the very same problems. For example, while compiling data for this study, this researcher was able to learn about what other districts were doing to help support the academic needs of struggling students, which led to the implementation of programming that may benefit students with whom this researcher works. The participating principals often commented on how much they enjoy the opportunity to sit and speak with a colleague about their role and responsibilities as principal. In many ways, school districts are islands that are void of bridges and connected communications, which results in isolationism. School districts and those who lead them must take advantage of 21st century technology to bridge the communication and collaboration divide.

Finally, principals should develop a strong code of ethics to help analyze problems and mitigate turbulence in their schools. The simple threat of sanctions can lead otherwise smart and rational school leaders to make misguided and hasty decisions. When principals use multiple ethical paradigms to address problems, they better understand the complexities of a given issue and position them to formulate a thoughtful and rational response. Using multiple ethical paradigms and conjunction with Turbulence Theory helps principals to mitigate turbulence and increase stability, for principals know that inaction can often further destabilize a situation. Principals must

ensure that they are confronting issues directly and efficiently, with clear and open lines of communication; however, personal or professional codes of ethics should not be violated in the process. Principals must never forget the great responsibility to care for the children whom they serve, and no test, no matter what the stakes, should ever compromise that responsibility.

<p style="text-align:center">Recommendations for Further Study</p>

This multiple site, qualitative case study was limited in scope. Eleven principals in a relatively small geographic area provided their perspectives on the issue. Therefore, there is much more to learn about the issues of high stakes testing and accountability as it relates to principals and decision making. Three areas in which the field of education research would benefit from more information include the following:

1) The impact of traditionally high performing school districts not making AYP in the face of increasing targets.

2) Differences in curriculum for schools that have traditionally made AYP versus those that traditionally have not.

3) How high stakes testing and accountability impact the decisions and priorities of teachers.

1) The impact of traditionally high performing school districts not making AYP in the face of increasing targets

When AYP targets started in 2003, the proficiency level goal was 68% for all elementary students for both the Language Arts and Mathematics tests. Under current legislative guidelines, that target rises incrementally, with the final goal of 100% proficiency by the year 2014 for all elementary level students (New Jersey Department of Education, 2009). 2009 marks a significant turning point in AYP calculations due to the sharp increase in proficiency requirements.   According to the New Jersey Department of Education, proficiency targets rise from 59% in 2010 to 79% in 2011. This significant increase in proficiency target for all students is in part due to a recalculation of mean score required for a student to be considered proficient. The sharp increase in 2011, which then jumps to 100% in 2014, may result in traditionally high performing schools, most likely including wealthy suburban districts, not making AYP. If these types of school begin to not make AYP in large numbers, the impact on schools, communities, and public perception of public school education will be significant.   Further study on these schools, especially at this critical time, will help to better understand both how schools are adapting to the increased expectations, and how NCLB legislation is adapting when large numbers of traditionally high performing schools are deemed failing.

2) Differences in curriculum for schools that have traditionally made AYP versus those that traditionally have not

This study focused on the perceptions of principals on the issue of high stakes testing and accountability; further study is needed to better understand the differences in curriculum, instruction, and assessment between schools that do and do not consistently pass the high stakes test. For example, are students in traditionally high performing

schools exposed to a better quality of curriculum? As more states formally adopt the

Common Core Standards, it would be beneficial to the field of educational research to

determining if the curriculum in school districts across the country will become more

similar given the shared outcomes. Are we moving towards a nationalized curriculum?

3) How high stakes testing and accountability impact the decisions and priorities of

teachers in traditionally high performing districts

When we cut through all of the policies, guidelines, and administrative issues,
it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to deliver the majority of
curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Similar to the pressures and level of
turbulence felt by principals in the face of high stakes testing and accountability,
teachers are likely to face increasing amounts of internal and external pressures in
the wake of testing and accountability. Do these pressures compel teachers to
implement a hidden curriculum focused on passing the high stakes test? What is
the impact on the increasing calls for teacher evaluation to be tied to test scores?
How will this impact teachers' willingness to accept diverse students, including
students with special needs, in their classrooms? These questions will have a
significant impact on the quality of education in our schools, and is likely to
greatly impact collective bargaining between teacher unions and boards of
education.

Further Study Conclusions

The future of public school education is quite uncertain in this time. School

leaders are beginning to see drastic changes to the system come not from local

boards, but from state governments. High stakes testing and accountability are at the heart of these issues, impacting issues of teacher evaluation, funding, vouchers, and public perception of public school education. Further study on these topics will help to inform education professionals, legislatures, and the general public and these groups work to ensure an effective and solvent public education system in America.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
PRINCIPAL FIRST INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewee ID# _____

Demographic Information:
Name: _____
Gender: _____ Age:_____
Current Position:_____
Years of administrative experience:_____
Years in current position: _____
Interview #: _____
Date of Interview: _____

Interview

Introduction:
The purpose of our conversation is to provide you with an opportunity to share your

thoughts on how high stakes testing and accountability have affected your role as

principal.

There main questions that I'm going to explore:

Has the current era of accountability caused principals to redefine themselves and

their self perception of their leadership? If so, in what ways?

- Do selected principals perceive an impact of testing and assessment

  policies associated with NCLB on their role as a school administrator? If

  so, how?

- Do selected principals' perceptions of their leadership within

  accountability and high stakes testing vary based upon the level of NCLB

  sanction?

My questions are designed to allow you to guide the direction of our conversation. While

I will ask a number of questions in response to the perceptions you share, I want

you to feel free to describe those things that are most important to you in regard

to the NCLB legislation and its impact on your role as the school leader.

Section 1:   Introduction

1. I am interested to learn how you chose to enter the field of education. Could you explain the factors or life experiences that led to your decision to become an educator?

2. In what levels and subject areas did you teach?

3. Why did you choose to become an administrator? How long have you been an administrator?

Section 2:   Perception of impact

4. In what ways do high stakes testing influence your decisions making and priority setting processes? Has the federal law caused you to do things that you would not otherwise have done?

   a. Staffing/evaluation

   b. Budget

   c. Test prep

5. How might you define or redefine your priorities if the high stakes nature of standardized testing no longer existed?

6. What is the perception/expectation of following groups regarding your role and njask results?

   ➢ Community

   ➢ Central office/board

   a. Do you believe the dynamics of any of these relationships would differ depending on your test scores? If so, how?

   b. How would you analyze your personal expectations of testing with the aforementioned groups? Are there any conflicts?

7. Did you feel any pressure as a result of not/maintaining making AYP?
   a. Personally?
   b. Professionally? From where does the pressure come?

8. How have you responded to these pressures?
   a. Personally?
   b. Professionally?

9. What was your reaction when you learned that your school (did/did not) make AYP?

10. Have the core principles on which you usually base your decisions come in conflict with any of the necessities of your job in relation to the implementation of NCLB/making AYP?

11. How might your priorities have changed since the time in 2001 with NCLB became law?

PRINCIPAL SECOND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewee ID# _____

Demographic Information:
Name: _____
Interview #: _____
Date of Interview: _____

Interview

Introduction:
The purpose of this second conversation is to follow up on some things that I learned from my first round of interviews. It is my intention to both confirm and clarify responses made during those discussions, as well as to delve more deeply into your thoughts as related to my original research questions, which have remained the same:

Has the current era of accountability caused principals to redefine themselves and their

self perception of their leadership? If so, in what ways?

- Do selected principals perceive an impact of testing and assessment

  policies associated with NCLB on their role as a school administrator? If

  so, how?

- Do selected principals' perceptions of their leadership within

  accountability and high stakes testing vary based upon the level of NCLB

  sanction?

As in the first round, my questions are designed to allow you to guide the direction of our conversation.

How has the current era of accountability caused principals to redefine themselves and the perception their mission? If so, what are the consequences of this redefinition?

- How do principals perceive the impact of policies that evaluate, reward, and sanction schools on the basis of measured student performance on their role as a school administrator? If so, how?

Section 1-Perception of Impact

1. Educators often talk about working in the best interest of children. Does standardized testing help or hinder your ability to work toward this ideal?

2. How do you feel you and/or your leadership role if affected by your test scores?

3. How does it impact your relationship with the following:

    a. community

    b. students

    c. professional staff

    d. Supt and board?

Section 2-Perception based on Sanction

1. How would you describe the testing culture in your school/school district?

2. Does the threat of sanction from testing impact your priorities?

    a. Do you perceive a public vs. personal sanction?

3. What is your perception of how testing impacts school leaders that have/have not made AYP (urban v. suburban)?

4. How would you describe the school community when it was learned that AYP was not made? Was a particular group more affected than another? How did you respond?

5. If your school did not make AYP, would you be doing anything differently? If so, how?

6. Have the decisions made in regards to NCLB/AYP improved things? Why or why not?

7. Do you believe that pressure to perform increases/decreases in correlation with the level of sanction?

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Oral History

Investigator's Name: **Gino R. Priolo**

Department: **College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies**

Project Title: **How principals lead in an era of testing and accountability—A qualitative study of the perceptions of principals leading schools on the continuum of No Child Left Behind Sanctions**

Investigator's Contacts: **(856) 429-0902 (w)**
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Advisor: **Dr. Steven J. Gross**
Department: **College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies**
Telephone: **(215) 204-8064**

My name is Gino Priolo, and I have worked in public school education for the past fifteen years. My career began as a special education teacher at both the middle and elementary levels. For the past nine years, I have served as an elementary school principal in Southern New Jersey.

As a doctoral student at Temple University, I am currently engaged in a project of school leadership in the era of high stakes testing and accountability. To help me gain further insights into this area I will ask you to participate in two to three interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes each. The interviews will be scheduled at a time and location that is convenient to you.

I would like to invite you to contribute your experiences as a school leader during this pivotal era in public school education. Would you be willing to speak with me about

your perspective on how high stakes testing and accountability have impacted your school leadership role? I would ask questions to help me answer the following project questions:

- How has the current era of accountability caused principals to redefine themselves and the perception their mission? If so, what are the consequences of this redefinition?
- How do principal perceive the impact of policies that evaluate, reward, and sanction schools on the basis of measured student performance on their role as a school administrator? If so, how?
- Do principals' perceptions of their leadership within accountability and high stakes testing vary based upon the level of NCLB sanction?

I would welcome any opinions you would like to express and any experiences you would like to describe. Each of the three interviews would take no more than forty-five minutes, and would enable me to preserve your perspectives and experiences for historians in the future.

The information you will provide will be recorded anonymously and your participation and anything you say during the session will be held in confidence. The interview conducted will strictly adhere to the General Principles for Oral History as developed by the Oral History Association.

I welcome questions about this project at any time. Your participation in this study is on voluntary basis, and you may refuse to participate at any time without consequence or prejudice.

Singing your name below indicates that you have read and understand the contents of this information and that you agree to take part in this study.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

PERMISSION TO AUDIOTAPE

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Permission to Audiotape

Investigator's Name: **Gino R. Priolo**

Department: **College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies**

Project Title: **How principals lead in an era of testing and accountability—A qualitative study of the perceptions of principals leading schools on the continuum of No Child Left Behind Sanctions**

Respondent:_____

Date: _____

Log #: _____

I give Gino R. Priolo permission to audiotape me. This audiotape will be used only for the following purpose (s):

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

This audiotape will be used as a part of a project at Temple University. I have already given written consent for my participation in this project. At no time will my name be used.

WHEN WILL I BE AUDIOTAPED?

I agree to be audiotaped during the time period: February 2010 through August 2010.

HOW LONG WILL THESE TAPES BE USED?

I give my permission for these tapes to be used from: February 2010 through August 2010.
These recordings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the historian's residence for three (3) years after completion of the study.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND?

I understand that I can withdraw my permission at any time. Upon my request, the audiotape(s) will no longer be used.

OTHER

I understand that I will not be paid for being audio taped or for the use of the audiotapes.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If I want more information about the audiotape(s), or if I have questions or concerns at any time, I can contact:

Investigator's Name: Gino R. Priolo

Department: College of Education, Department of
                            Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Institution: Temple University

Street Address: 39 Lenox Drive
                            Hainesport, NJ 08036

Phone: Home: (609) 518-1612

This form will be placed in my records at Temple University and the person named above will keep a copy. A copy will be given to me.

Please print:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Participant's Signature _____