Principal Leadership and Teacher Expectancy in Low-Performing Schools

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Paper Presented at the National Conference of the
American Educational Research Association
April 2005
Montreal, Canada

Introduction

Many urban schools are failing to educate children. These schools serve mostly poor and minority students, exacerbating the differential school success of students based on income and race. To make matters worse, some students spend their entire educational careers—from kindergarten through 12th grade—in low-performing schools (Ascher, Ikeda, & Fruchter, 1998). In the last decade, school failure has gained widespread attention as a result of an increased emphasis on educational policies that hold schools accountable. Targeting schools and holding them accountable is supported at the federal level by the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

NCLB and other school accountability policies aim to transform the motivation and capacity of teachers and administrators and focus attention on improved student performance. Underlying these policies is an assumption that clear goals, public information about school success (or failure), and the use of incentives or sanctions can drive school improvement (Ascher et al., 1998). A central assumption of school accountability policies is that extreme measures are necessary because the schools have failed to improve on their own.

This paper seeks to inform the debate around accountability policies and NCLB by answering the following research question: *Does principal leadership influence teacher expectancy in low-performing schools?* Expectancy theory is a theory of motivation, as discussed in more detail in the next section. The paper is based on the findings from the qualitative component of a larger mixed model study that used survey research and case study analysis to better understand the relationship between principal leadership and teacher motivation (expectancy) in a high-stakes accountability context (see Finnigan, 2003). The qualitative component involves teachers in three elementary schools placed on probation in Chicago.

Given the fact that NCLB affects all schools in the country, more research on school accountability policies is necessary. The policies require and rely on leadership that will focus and motivate those who influence student learning (Adams & Kirst, 1999; O'Day, 2002), but little attention has been paid to the relationship between leadership and motivation in this accountability context.

Recent research suggests that teachers appear to be motivated by accountability policies (Abelmann et al., 1999; Finnigan & Gross, 2001; Kelley et al., 2002), but the motivational response is somewhat weak (Mintrop, 2003). Furthermore, increased effort is associated with teachers' interest in seeing their students succeed rather than the policies' consequences (Finnigan & Gross, 2001; Mintrop, 2003). Factors that may negatively influence motivational responses include: misalignment of the policy and individual goals; concerns about implementing the policy; concerns about inadequate time and resources; and emotions, including frustration (Leithwood et al, 2002). Teacher beliefs about their own and their students'

capacities may also influence motivational responses (Fuhrman, 1999; Lipman, 2002; Abelmann et al., 1999).

A few studies have examined the role of principals in the accountability policy context. Mintrop (2003) found that principals in improving schools had implemented additional monitoring of teachers in response to sanctions. Spillane et al (2002), on the other hand, found that principals adopted positive leadership behaviors in response to accountability policies, including using data to inform the educational program. Similarly, Ladd and Zelli (2002) found that principals redirected funds toward the achievement of the policy's goals and focused attention on low-performing students as a result of these policies. Kelemen (2001), however, argued that responses to accountability policies vary and that the variation is linked to the characteristics of leaders and their individual contexts. While each of these studies provides an important contribution, more research examining leadership and motivation in low-performing schools is clearly warranted.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

This section describes the educational and organizational literature guiding this study. First, the section begins by discussing the literature relating to motivation in organizations and expectancy theory. Next, it describes the literature on principal leadership as it relates to this study, including the research on transformational leaders. The section also discusses the empirical research suggesting a link between principal leadership and teacher expectancy.

Teacher Expectancy

Expectancy theory is a part of the larger body of literature addressing individual motivation within organizations. Some researchers have argued that motivation is important in the work environment because it is related to "the arousal, direction, magnitude, and maintenance of effort" (Katzell & Thompson, 1990 p.144). Furthermore, motivation is one of three factors (along with ability and situation) that affect job performance (Rowan, 1996).

Expectancy theory emphasizes the importance of forward-looking beliefs about what will occur (Lawler, 1973). This theory posits that given a particular outcome two things drive an individual's motivation: the expectation or "expectancy" that a particular act will lead to the desired outcome and the value or "valence" that the person places on the outcome (Vroom, 1964). Developments in expectancy theory led to the conceptualization of two expectancies that influence motivation: 1) the *effort->performance* expectancy (a person's estimate of the probability of accomplishing the performance, given one's situation), and 2) the *outcome->performance* expectancy (a person's expectation that performance of a task will lead to particular outcomes) (Lawler, 1973). This study focuses on the *effort->performance* expectancy or whether a person believes that his or her effort will lead to achievement of a particular goal or performance.[1] Several factors influence the *effort->performance* expectancy including:

> whether the individual believes that he or she has the skills and knowledge required, whether there is a clear understanding about the nature of the performance that is to be attained and it is viewed as attainable, and whether the individual believes that there is situational support for the performance" (Mohrman & Lawler, 1996 p.121).

If tasks appear too difficult, people will not be motivated to undertake them (Chung, 1977).

[1] The *performance->outcome* expectancy and valence are beyond the scope of this study, but deserve further attention in examining teacher motivation in a high-stakes accountability context.

This study also draws on the literature on self-efficacy (or teacher efficacy). Like expectancy theory, efficacy beliefs have two components relating to judgments about one's ability to accomplish a task or performance level and about whether an outcome will result from this performance (Bandura, 1986; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).[2]

Few studies have examined expectancy in the high-stakes accountability context; however, a number of studies have investigated expectancy generally. In a recent review of the literature on teacher efficacy, Ross (1998) found that females, teachers with advanced degrees, and elementary teachers reported higher levels of efficacy. Ross also found that teachers with more experience had higher "personal teaching efficacy," but lower "general teaching efficacy."

Expectancy is an important area of research because among the elements of the motivation model, expectancy (or efficacy) has been found to have strong and significant effect on improvements in student performance (Enderlin-Lampe, 1997; Kelley, 1998; Kelley et al., 2002; Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993; Ross, 1998; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). However, applying expectancy theory within the school context is complicated by the nature of schools. In the school accountability policy context, the performance outcome is student (not teacher) performance. This dependency on students means that teachers must rely on both student ability and student motivation (Cohen, 1996; Metz, 1993). A further complication is that the particular goal or performance is the target set by the state or district. In other words, the *effort->performance* expectancy refers to teachers' beliefs that their effort will bring about the desired school performance level given the state's target. A number of beliefs enter into this equation: whether the teacher believes that students are able to or can be motivated to learn (and that this will be measured on standardized tests); whether the teacher believes she can influence student

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[2] While the term "expectancy" is used in the general discussion to refer to the overlapping concepts of expectancy and efficacy, the specific term ("expectancy" or "efficacy") is used when citing particular studies.

learning; and whether she believes her colleagues can have the same influence in their classrooms.

The research does not clearly indicate which school contextual variables are associated with efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2002). Some researchers have found teacher efficacy to be related to higher student performance, as well as student social class and class size (Ross, 1998). Other studies have focused on characteristics of teachers' jobs or the organizational environment. According to Ross (1998), high workload, low collaboration among teachers, low control over work, low participation in school-wide decisions and other workplace features are negatively associated with efficacy. Several studies suggest that an association exists between principal leadership and teacher motivation, with certain positive leadership behaviors linked to higher levels of motivation (Kelley & Finnigan, 2003; Lee, Dedrick, & Smith, 1991; Hipp, 1995; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2002; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2000).

Principal Leadership

Principals are the focus of this study because of research conducted over the past few decades that has supported the view that the principal is a key player in school effectiveness (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Edmonds, 1979). Principals also play a central role in both the everyday operation of the school and in school change (Fullan, 1991; Kelley, Heneman, & Milanowski, 2000). However, principals have an indirect, rather than direct, effect on school and student performance, as they shape the school's internal processes, climate, and resources (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

Principal leadership is particularly crucial under school accountability policies (Elmore, 2001; Lashway, 1999). In fact, two recent studies have found that principals play a key role in

improvement within this policy context (Kelley, 1998; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). These findings may not be surprising given the increased pressures on principals. To bring about change, principals must motivate teachers by communicating goals and fostering commitment to these, aligning resources with goals, and fixing problems (Adams & Kirst, 1999). In addition, principals play an important role in shaping teachers' beliefs, including that students are capable of learning and that teachers can improve student performance (Rosenholtz, 1985).

The literature on transformational leadership provides insight into the role of the principal in the school change context and focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers (Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge, 1996). According to Yukl (1994), "followers of a transformational leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect toward the leader, and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do" (p.351). Past research has identified a relationship between transformational leadership and teacher motivation and self-efficacy (Chance & Chance, 2002; Goldring & Sullivan, 1996).

The theoretical and empirical research suggests that four overall leadership constructs, related to the literature on transformational leadership, are associated with teacher expectancy: instructional leadership; teacher-principal trust; principal support for change; and inclusive leadership.

Instructional leadership encompasses a number of leadership areas relating to the principal's role in providing direction to the school—from articulating a vision, to setting high expectations, to monitoring performance. Clearly defined goals are linked to higher individual performance and positive effects on motivation (Katzell & Thompson, 1990). Beyond goals, developing a vision is also crucial. As Owens (2001) argues,

> the purpose of the ongoing process of stating and discussing the vision is to buttress and develop the most critical factors in the development of organizational

> culture: the web of shared assumptions, beliefs, and values that unites the group in mutual solidarity" (p.246).

Components of instructional leadership have been linked to teacher motivation in several studies (Hipp, 1995; Kelley & Finnigan, 2003; Lee et al., 1991; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Fernandez, 1994).

The literature on motivation suggests that *teacher-principal trust* is important in influencing teacher motivation. Consideration of leaders who show concern about the feelings of subordinates and treat people with respect and dignity is positively associated with motivation and acceptance (Chung, 1977; Vroom, 1964). In the educational context, Bryk and Schneider (2002) found that "relational trust" was critical to school improvement. According to these authors, relational trust—conceptualized as the interplay among respect, competence, personal regard, and integrity—reduces uncertainty and vulnerability in contexts involving external pressures and demands. Two recent studies have linked this area of leadership to effort or expectancy (Blase & Kirby, 2000; Hipp, 1995).

Principal support for change is another important area of leadership. The importance of this area of leadership is supported by personal and material resource theory.   Past research has indicated that resource adequacy affects motivation (Katzell & Thompson, 1990). According to Katzell and Thompson (1990), "Constraints on worker's abilities or opportunities to attain their work goals are demotivating . . . Conversely, conditions that facilitate goal attainment are positively motivating. These constraints and facilitators can be personal (such as skill level) or material (such as equipment)" (p.145). Research has found that effective principals encourage teachers to take risks and try new methods of teaching in their classrooms, challenge the status quo, and bring teachers into contact with new ideas (Goldring & Sullivan, 1996; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). Principals that are effective are described as strategic in their attempts to acquire

resources—both money and ideas—from the external environment (Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, & Easton, 1998). Several studies suggest a link between the components on this leadership area and teacher expectancy (Hipp, 1995; Kelley & Finnigan, 2003; Lee et al., 1991; Leithwood et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2002).[3]

In an *inclusive leadership* environment "control is spread throughout the organization, all organizational members focus on organizational performance and contribute to strategy and direction, and employees are able to influence decisions that shape their expectancies" (Mohrman & Lawler, 1996 p.126). Theoretically, with this type of leadership, teachers develop a vested interest in the operation and performance of the school (Ellis, 1984) and acquire the power to make decisions that will support their efforts (Enderlin-Lampe, 1997; Lashway, 1999); however, the research findings in this area are inconclusive.[4] In fact, Yukl (1994) contends "after more than forty years of research on participation, we are left with the conclusion that participative leadership sometimes results in higher satisfaction, effort, and performance, and other times it does not" (p.161). A recent study found that inclusive leadership (or "shared governance") motivated teachers (Blase & Blase, 2001), while another study found that a number of related leadership areas, including empowering teachers, involving them in decision-making, and fostering teamwork, influenced expectancy (Hipp, 1995).[5]

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[3] Tschannen-Moran's study focuses on the existence of resources, rather than the principal's role in acquiring these although the principal's role as resource provider is well documented (Smith & Andrews, 1989). An additional area identified by Lee et al. (1991) is principal's role in buffering teachers from outside pressures. This buffering role would most likely fall under *principal support for change.*

[4] Enderlin-Lampe (1997) points out that the literature is contradictory relating to the relationship between inclusive leadership and motivation and argues that these contradictory findings may be linked to the difficulty in measuring the degree of actual shared decision-making that occurs in schools.

[5] Hipp's (1995) findings relating to "inclusive leadership" and "trust" are supported by past research by Pulvino (1979), who found that "consideration" (a dimension defined by Pulvino as including 1) trust and respect and 2) involving subordinates in decision-making) was positively associated with teacher motivation.

This study examined the relationship between these four areas of leadership and teacher expectancy in schools on probation. Before discussing the findings, the paper briefly describes the Chicago policy context and outlines the study's methodology.

Policy Context

In the early 1980s, Secretary of Education William Bennett referred to the Chicago Public Schools as the "worst school system in the nation" (Bennett, 2001). At the same time, the view that the Chicago Public School system was failing its predominantly minority and low income students was becoming widespread (Hess, 1994). These views, in combination, created the momentum for sweeping changes to occur in 1988 through the Chicago School Reform Act. As a result, Local School Councils (LSCs) acquired the authority to hire and fire principals, while principals gained the authority to select staff and received new resources (Sebring & Bryk, 2000); however, principal tenure was removed (Bennett, 2001). Finally, a provision established the identification of schools that were not adequately performing, but sanctions were seldom applied (Bennett, 2001; Hess, 1994).

Between 1988 and 1995 schools showed little improvement and educators were viewed as resistant to change (Hess, 1999). The result—additional legislation in the form of the 1995 accountability policy, which re-centralized aspects of the 1988 reforms. The 1995 legislation gave the mayor control and created a council to oversee Chicago's public schools and serve as a link between the Illinois State Board of Education and the Chicago Board of Trustees (Bennett, 2001). Chicago's policy, which targets the lowest performing schools and requires that they improve or face consequences, consists of three designations: schools on remediation, schools

on probation, and schools requiring reconstitution.[6] The least severe sanction is *remediation*, which involves a district team assessing each school's needs and determining corrective actions. This study focuses on the most common sanction, *probation,* which results in decreased autonomy, additional requirements and scrutiny, support, and the threat of additional sanctions (Finnigan & O'Day, 2003; Hess, 1999; O'Day, 2002). The ultimate threat, known as *reconstitution*, or the practice of removing every staff person and allowing each person to re-apply for a position, was only implemented in a few high schools, and has been discontinued.

At the time of the study, the Chicago policy targeted low-performing schools with probationary status based on norm-referenced test scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).[7] The standard for probation schools has shifted over time with low performance originally defined as less than 15% of students scoring at or above the national norms (to get off probation a school had to increase to 20%). This original cut-off was an arbitrary number selected by the district, in part because of the large number of schools that would be designated as low performing (Bennett, 2001; Hess, 1999). According to Bennett (2001), most schools were able to move off probationary status over time—only 17 of the original 109 schools (including elementary and high schools) were still on probation five years later (however, new schools have been placed on probation as the district has shifted the bar higher).

Teacher motivation and principal leadership were important aspects of this policy context. Prior to the policy, critics of low-performing schools in Chicago argued that educators used student background characteristics as excuses for inadequate performance (Hess, 1999).

[6] Since this study a few key changes have been made to Chicago's policy. The Department of Critical School Support of the Office of Accountability has been created to assist with the implementation and monitoring of the accountability policy. For probation schools, the primary development is related to the performance measure.
[7] The new system uses more performance indicators, examines growth, and focuses on all schools (CPS website: www.cps.k12.il.us). The new accountability system for elementary schools uses both the ITBS and the ISAT and includes reading, writing, math, science, and social science. In addition, the bar has been raised from 20% to 25%—schools with less than 25% of the students meeting national norms are placed on probation. The probation manager and external partner components remain the same.

The policy was meant to send a message to the educators that they had to work harder and focus their effort on specific student outcomes. Furthermore, the policy design indicated an assumption that principals play a key role in school improvement but need assistance in developing their leadership skills. Evidence of this is the assignment of a "probation manager" to each principal in a low-performing school—this person serves as a mentor and may work with the principal on a number of leadership and management responsibilities (Finnigan & O'Day, 2003). In addition, Hess (1999) reports that those who created the legislation viewed changing teachers' beliefs about students as a key responsibility of principals—one for which they should be held accountable.

Methods

This paper is based on the qualitative data of a larger mixed method study. The qualitative and quantitative components followed a concurrent mixed-model design (see Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003), meaning that data collection and analysis operated in parallel, with final interpretation occurring across both studies. The study's qualitative component allowed an exploration of the link between principal leadership and teacher expectancy within particular school contexts, while the quantitative component enabled an examination of the key aspects of principal leadership across varied school settings. In other words, the qualitative component provided depth while the quantitative component provided breadth.

The qualitative data involved interviews with staff from schools involved in the Chicago School Probation Study conducted by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Consortium for Chicago School Research. The interviews occurred between fall 1999 and

spring 2001 during three multi-day visits to each school. The participants consented to participate in the research and the interviews were taped and transcribed.

Teachers' views of their principals are the basis of this study, rather than principals' own views of their leadership activities. As Lee, Dedrick, and Smith (1991) argue, it is essential to examine the school organization "by those who experience it—the teachers—rather than by the principals" (p.195). In fact, teachers' *perceptions* of their principals are more informative than principals' accounts of their leadership activities for the purpose of this study, which focuses on teachers' individual beliefs about students and their ability to influence performance. For simplification purposes, the term "principal leadership" is used to refer to teachers' *perceptions* of principal leadership from this point forward.

This study involves data from three of the ten schools that participated in the Chicago School Probation Study. Sample selection for the larger study was based on probation status, external partner designation, and school demographics. All ten schools had been on probation at one point, with four having moved off probation at the time data collection began and six schools remaining on probation through at least 1998-99.[8] This study involves a subsample of three of the original case study schools, identified through the following process. First, the ten schools in the study were divided into 1) schools that had moved off probation by 2000-01 (n=5), and 2) schools that remained on probation in 2000-01 (n=4).[9] The three schools include one school that moved off probation quickly, i.e., in the first two years, one that took longer to move off probation, and one school that remained on probation.

[8] Many of the schools originally selected because they were on probation moved off probationary status during the course of the study.

[9] One school was dropped from the set because it went off probation but then went back on a year later and could not be classified into these two groups.

The three schools, like most of the schools on probation in Chicago, have similar characteristics. Table 1 provides some descriptive information about the three schools. All are located in either the south or west side of Chicago—two areas known to have higher poverty rates than the rest of the city. All serve high proportions of low income and low achieving students with few students meeting national norms on standardized tests.[10] One difference in the schools in this study compared with the larger universe of Chicago schools on probation is that all three serve large proportions of Hispanic and Latino students. In contract, most probation schools at the time of the study had student populations that were primarily (more than 85%) African American.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Three Schools

	Enroll.	% Low Income	PNN (Rdg.) 1996	PNN (Rdg.) 1997	PNN (Rdg.) 1998	PNN (Rdg.) 1999	PNN (Rdg.) 2000	Location	Probation Status
Evergreen[11]	800	100	10	11	18	20	25	West	Off probation (remained on 3 years)
Bradford	1300	100	14	16	25	30	26	West	Off probation (remained on 2 years)
Quincy	500	100	14	9	12	14	17	South-west	Remained on probation

Note: To protect confidentiality, data in this table relating to income and limited English proficiency are rounded to the nearest 5; percent meeting national norms is rounded to the nearest whole number; and enrollment is rounded to the nearest 100.

The qualitative analysis involved a review of approximately 25 transcripts for each school (including interviews with approximately 12 teachers and two administrators over multiple time periods). The transcripts of external partners, probation managers, and school

[10] The latter characteristics is not surprising since schools were placed on probation for the 1996-97 school year because less than 15% of their students were scoring at national norms.
[11] All school and principal names have been changed throughout this paper; pseudonyms are used to protect confidentiality.

administrators were reviewed to understand the school context; however, the stories included in this paper are based primarily on the views of teachers. The following paragraphs provide a brief description of each school:

- **Evergreen Elementary** opened in the last decade. Evergreen's population of approximately 800 students in Kindergarten through eighth grade is mostly Latino (87%). Nearly all of the students are from low income families and the school has a mobility rate of 60%. Evergreen is located in a mostly Mexican community with industrial and commercial businesses nearby. Although the surrounding neighborhood was described as having four rival gangs, gang violence and tensions did not exist in the school. During the course of the study, a new principal was hired at Evergreen.

- **Bradford Elementary** is a large school with approximately 1300 students in Kindergarten through eighth grade. The school has a mixed student population (Latino and African American) and nearly all students are from low income families. The school has a student mobility rate of 30%. Bradford is located in a neighborhood consisting of small single-family homes (including rental properties) and a few small businesses—the larger businesses had moved out of the community in recent years. Recent census data indicate that 81% of the population in Bradford's census tract are Hispanic/Latino. The community around Bradford is described as a difficult environment for students with abandoned houses, armed robberies, drug abuse, gun violence, and gang activity.

- **Quincy Elementary**: Approximately 17 of the original 109 schools were still on probation after five years—Quincy Elementary was one of them. Quincy had experienced slight improvements in test scores, but the increase was not high enough to move the school off probationary status. Quincy has approximately 500 students, nearly all of whom are low income families and has a mobility rate of 40%. The school serves a student population that is 90% Latino, mostly Mexican and Puerto Rican students. Quincy opened in the last decade to reduce overcrowding at the elementary schools in the area—all students are bussed from several different school boundary areas. This issue frustrated teachers because they believed that Quincy received the most difficult students, both academically and behaviorally.

A coding scheme was developed for each school after considering the literature that informed this study and reviewing all of the transcripts for the school. The coding schemes had similarities, but some themes were particular to individual schools and, as a result, the coding

schemes were not the same across all schools. Rather, the stories of each school emerged through the review, analysis, and coding process.

The purpose of this analysis was to provide evidence from teachers' own words about the importance of various leadership activities or behaviors. While the stories are not generalizeable to the other six schools in the Chicago School Probation Study—nor to the other probation schools in the district—they are snapshots of the relationship between leadership and expectations/motivation. These stories allow the teachers' own voices to emerge as they discuss their views of their principals and their motivation levels.

The study's design and methodology are well suited to answer the research question but a few limitations must be recognized. The study is limited by the small number of schools involved. An additional limitation is the fact that the study focuses only on elementary schools. In spite of these limitations, this study is important given the current policy context in which states and districts across the country are implementing school accountability policies with consequences for teachers and administrators. This study begins to address the gap in the empirical literature regarding the link between principal leadership and teacher motivation in this accountability policy context. The findings have the potential to inform both policy and practice by identifying principal leadership areas associated with higher teacher expectancy in schools under sanctions.

Findings

As discussed in rich detail in Finnigan (2003), these schools provide important insights into principal leadership and teacher motivation. The story of Evergreen illustrates how crucial trust and instructional leadership can be to teacher motivation. At Bradford, teachers were

influenced by a principal who was seen as a strong instructional leader and strong supporter. The third story about Quincy illustrates the negative effect of inadequate resources and trust on teacher motivation—teachers felt that they did not have the resources or the respect they needed to do their jobs. Teachers in these three schools had strong feelings about their principals and the leadership they expected, as their words indicate.

Response to Probation

To understand the influence of leadership on teacher expectancy, the study first examined the motivation levels of teachers. The low levels of morale and motivation were evident, but leadership quickly became a part of the discussions as teachers described their responses to the probation policy—from blame and demoralization to increased focus and collective action. Teacher turnover was an important aspect of the two schools that moved off probation.

Low Morale and Motivation

Teachers at all three schools expressed concerns about being on probation in terms of the negative stigma associated with this classification. Most teachers found out about probation through the local media. One teacher at Bradford described a feeling of inadequacy when talking to other teachers in the district. However, this teacher emphasized that the principal met with them after they found out about probation to reassure them that they should not worry about losing their jobs. She told them not to pay attention to the media reports that they would be fired; instead, she told them to relax and continue what they had been doing because they were headed in the right direction and, as a result, the school would eventually move off probation.

In the time period prior to and immediately after being placed on probation, teachers at all three schools reported low morale and low motivation. In the first year of the study, teachers at Evergreen were described by the external partner as being unmotivated with a general lack of enthusiasm about their work. He reported that morale and motivation were low because the principal's contract had not been renewed and the staff members were extremely divided in their support of the current principal, describing the situation as follows:

> It's just that people are upset. People are frustrated. It's just, people are getting really worn down. You know, but again, it's not that you don't see anybody teaching. It's not like anybody is doing that kind of stuff where they're not teaching. But it's like they're struggling to not deal with that [politics surrounding the principal] so that they can deal with what they have to in the classroom.

Similarly, at Quincy, school staff were described as "discouraged." One teacher was particularly angry and frustrated: "I absolutely hate it here. And there's no way that I will be here next year. I can't stand it." The situation of teachers at Evergreen and Bradford improved during the course of the study, for the most part,[12] but the situation at Quincy remained the same (or became worse).

Blame versus Collective Action

Principals' own responses to probation appeared to influence how teachers responded. At Evergreen, teachers reported that the first principal copied student test scores for each class in the school and placed these scores, highlighted by classroom teacher, in every teacher's mailbox. This process made teachers feel embarrassed in front of their peers and blamed for being placed on probation. The principal's distribution of scores without discussing the results seemed to the

[12] Although one new teacher at Bradford did start the first interview (in mid-October) by crying and saying that she was going to put in her resignation with the principal after completing the interview. She did, in fact, quit and was no longer at the school when we returned in the Spring.

teachers an action that symbolized individual teachers as the problem, rather than suggesting that this was a school-level problem that they would attack collectively.

Similarly, teachers at Bradford said that their principal increased pressure on them by displaying and comparing classroom scores. The principal also began including student achievement data in teachers' formal evaluations. However, teachers had a different response to the principal's actions. Teachers at Bradford were quick to admit that they had not taken the test seriously previously and they did not appear to feel blamed for probation. In part, their responses may have been linked to the fact that the principal had been persuaded to focus on growth rather than absolute scores and perhaps they viewed this as fair. Teachers described this shift in focus toward their classroom-level scores:

> 6th grade teacher: . .The principal definitely wanted to see growth. And she is totally fine with pointing out where growth is not happening. And so I think there is just more pressure from their realizing that they will be, a person will be called in part because the kids didn't do well.
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> 2nd grade teacher: And then what Mrs. Johnson expects at the end is not that they are on grade level now but they moved a year's growth. So that is what we are accountable for, like a year's growth. Now there are circumstances where they might be special education, they are being referred, things like that. But we are accountable to move them a whole year, whatever stage they are on.

The principal's focus on teachers' classroom scores became even more apparent in the second year of this study when she required each classroom teacher to submit a spreadsheet sorted by student from highest to lowest ITBS score. One teacher indicated that this spreadsheet was required to allow the school to develop a "watch list" of students that may "fall between the cracks."

Surprisingly only two teachers complained about being evaluated based on their students' ITBS scores. A primary grade teacher, whose students' scores did not count in school averages,

believed this practice was unfair, complaining that the kids were "slow learners" at Bradford. She added, "I don't think that is really that fair—to judge them right on their scores—because you don't know what kind of kids you get. It is like a lottery here." An eighth grade teacher also complained about being evaluated based on scores, particularly because students were several grades behind.

Despite these few complaints, teachers did not find the principal's efforts to hold them accountable for growth in their students' scores on the ITBS to be problematic, perhaps because this was only one component of their evaluation. An additional reason that they may have been supportive (or at least neutral) about this evaluation system is that they had been frustrated by not receiving scores quickly enough, but that situation had recently changed. One teacher reported her frustration about this: "You didn't see the scores because the scores didn't come back until the following year. And your students were already gone at that point. . . . So you couldn't even figure out how you did as a teacher." This teacher argued that the scores became more central to teachers' work when they began receiving them within two weeks of test administration. In addition, the same scores were now linked to student promotion decisions. Receiving the scores promptly, as well making decisions about promotion based on them, led teachers to focus more on the standardized test scores (increasing the focus on the scores was an underlying goal of the probation policy).

The response of teachers at Bradford differed from the response of Evergreen teachers although the situation was quite similar—the principal copied and disseminated student performance data by classroom. At Evergreen, teachers felt blamed and demoralized, while at Bradford, teachers felt focused and, in some ways, energized by the principal's response. These

data suggest that subtle differences in how this approach was handled by each principal resulted in different reactions of staff.

Staff Turnover

Teacher turnover occurred at both Evergreen and Bradford after the schools went on probation. A high level of turnover suggests that the policy could result in changes in the culture or collective motivation of individuals within the organization if those that were least motivated left. At both schools teachers seemed to leave as a result of the hiring of a new principal soon after being placed on probation. In both cases, teachers and principals reported that some teachers were removed (or pushed out) and others left voluntarily. In both cases, this was viewed as a positive result by school staff. An eighth grade teacher at Evergreen described the turnover as, "addition by subtraction." The newly hired teachers were viewed as beneficial to the school because of their energy and enthusiasm. "Let's face it," one teacher at Bradford said, "a lot of times, a lot of them, you know, teachers come in and they don't have the burn-out. They've got all these ideas, they work pretty hard, quite a few of them do, and that makes a difference."

Principal leadership clearly mattered to teachers in these three schools. However, each school context was very different, resulting in distinct leadership areas that were most salient to teachers at each school. The following pages, which are organized according to the study's conceptual framework, discuss the critical areas of leadership identified in this study.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership was one of the most important areas of leadership discussed by teachers in Evergreen and Bradford. In these two schools, teacher motivation appeared to be influenced by principal vision and direction, clear expectations, and high degree of coherence and consistency. Teachers at Quincy did not discuss the principal's instructional leadership; instead other areas of leadership (trust and support) had a stronger influence on teachers at Quincy.

Vision and Direction

Evergreen teachers expected their principal to have a vision for the school that would allow it to move off of probationary status. They complained that the first principal (the one in this position after the school was placed on probation) did not have any vision or philosophy to move the school forward. In fact, when the principal discussed her strategies she was vague, saying that she accepted "what the external partner wanted." She did not discuss a long-term vision for improving the school, but focused on two more immediate strategies of test preparation and targeting students performing just below the probation cut-off. Her perceived lack of vision, coupled with what teachers described as an inadequate understanding of teaching and learning, frustrated teachers. A sixth grade teacher summed up the views of many:

> I think that, quite frankly, that the current administrator or administration is not either capable or willing to do the things necessary to get us off probation. . . . .Such as really pushing the staff to be innovative. . I don't think the administration understands what it is that in the long run gets kids to become better readers, better students, better thinkers. And doesn't understand and doesn't really. . . their heart is not into, her heart is not into all aspects of being a leader. I don't see leadership. And you know that includes good relations with parents, good relations with teachers, good relations with kids.

Instructional leadership seemed particularly linked to teacher expectancy in terms of teachers' knowing what they needed to do to get off probation. In other words, teachers wanted both a vision and a plan for how the school would move off of probation.

Clear (High) Expectations

At both Evergreen and Bradford teachers talked about the need for the principal to be clear about her expectations of them. At Evergreen the change in principal was welcomed by teachers because they believe that the second principal's strong communication skills resulted in teachers always knowing what she expected of them. A second grade teacher summed up the thoughts of many, emphasizing the principal's non-threatening leadership style:

> Mrs. Brookstone has very high expectations for all of us. And she makes that very clear. But she doesn't make it a threat. It's not like, you know, if you don't get all your kids at grade level you're going to be fired. It's not in a threatening way. She's very matter of fact. You guys are a great staff, I'm expecting great things from you. Not that she says that but just in all of her notes, she's very, very positive. And her weekly memos, which are so nice, she puts really nice things on the bottom. You know, like 'God you guys are doing such a great job I want to make sure you know I am appreciating every thing that you do' and all this really nice stuff. . . . . She's just complimenting us on how hard we worked and all that kind of stuff which is a rarity. You know, usually they are breathing down your neck. But at the same time, you know that if you're not toeing the line, she's going to catch up with you. But the thing is she's not going to catch up with you in a mean way. She's going to take you aside and say, 'How can I help you fix this?' Which is amazing. I just think she's an amazing principal. I really do. I've worked for three and she's the best one. Yes, constructive, that's the best word for her, and fair. It's not like, and she doesn't play favorites, and it's not that she expects more of others and less of, you know what I mean? She expects you all to do what she needs you to do.

According to an eighth grade teacher, some teachers left when the new principal arrived because they knew she would have high expectations for them. This turnover was discussed previously and was seen as a positive result of probation by this teacher.

Similarly, at Bradford teachers discussed the principal's high expectations of them and the pressure she put on them to improve. The principal was described as a hard worker who pushes staff to do the same. One teacher directly linked this increased pressure to their improved scores and removal from probation:

> 8th grade teacher: One reason, I think, because the principal knew if those scores didn't go up that she and probably all of us would not have jobs, is that she started demanding more from the teachers. Some teachers who really, to be honest, were kind of just letting it slide, and everybody, you could feel and see the difference, that the planning and the ideas they were coming up with, trying to reach our students.

This teacher later added that it was partially the principal "getting on their back" and partially the turnover in teachers that led to people working harder at the school. Another teacher supported this view, arguing that probation put pressure on the administrators, who in turn put pressure on teachers.

Coherence and Consistency

Teachers at both Bradford and Evergreen emphasized the critical role that principals played in providing coherence and consistency. In both cases, the coherence and consistency was directly related to the school's reading program. At Bradford, teachers (particularly those in the primary grades) said that the principal's bringing a new literacy program to the school added coherence to their work. Prior to Mrs. Johnson's assuming the role of principal, teachers were not required to use the same curricular or instructional strategies even in one grade level.

According to a second grade teacher, “Reading-wise, math-wise, there wasn’t a structured curriculum to follow like we have the literacy program. We didn’t have that then.”

After an initial transition during which participation was voluntary, the principal required that all teachers in the primary grades implement the reading program (teachers in upper grades were not required). Through this requirement and a requirement that every teacher include a scheduled block of time in the morning during which only reading occurred, the school became both focused on literacy development and more consistent across classrooms. Some of the strict requirements of the principal at the beginning of her tenure, related to this literacy program, loosened over time.

However, teachers in the upper grades, who were not required to implement any particular program, had mixed views about the school’s educational program. Interestingly, a pre-K teacher seemed to have some of the same complaints as the upper grade teachers, perhaps because she, too, was not part of the literacy program. One sixth grade teacher believed the lack of coherence in the upper grades was actually a benefit because they were allowed to “think divergently.” She was especially supportive of this situation given her non-traditional style of teaching, compared with the other teachers in her grade.

Particularly in the upper grades, teachers believed that the principal and other administrators had the foresight to adopt new programs, and that these programs had helped the school improve. But some teachers felt that too many programs were being implemented at once; as a result, the school was overwhelmed and teachers were never fully trained on most of the new programs. These teachers complained that because of a “frenzy of activities” the school did not run well.

A similar turn of events occurred when the new principal, Mrs. Brookstone, was hired after probation. She was a staunch supporter of a specific reading series and was seen as a resource for teachers in teaching this program because of her own classroom experience. Similarly, her push to adopt this program led to a degree of consistency across grade levels, particularly in the lower grades, and teachers seemed to appreciate this change. On teacher suggested that allowing people to do whatever they wanted may work with a veteran staff, but not with such a novice staff. According to this teacher, the situation was "somewhat confusing because it created differences and jealousy because this one was allowed to do that." A third grade teacher contrasted Mrs. Brookstone's efforts in this area with the previous principal who wouldn't "put her foot down and say 'this is how we're doing reading at this school.'"

Teacher-Principal Trust

Trust proved to be important for teachers in both Evergreen and Quincy. Two aspects of trust were frequently discussed in these two schools: effective management and respect. Effective management can be a key aspect of trust between teachers and principals (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Many teachers discussed the interconnection between respect and management, i.e., if the principal respected them and valued their expertise they would not micromanage their activities. Teacher-principal trust was not as salient at Bradford, and teachers seemed to justify this reality by describing the way in which the principal kept students at the forefront of all decisions. Her focus on the students, in essence, may have overshadowed the lack of teacher-principal trust felt by teachers in this school.

Effective Management

An effective manager is someone who keeps things running smoothly, does not micromanage and shows respect for the expertise of teachers. At Evergreen, the second principal fit this definition of an effective manager. She was described as "punctual," "organized," "focused," and having her "finger on the pulse of what's going on" at Evergreen. Teachers were enthusiastic about her organization style, reporting that she communicated well with them. The following are some of the teachers' comments about Mrs. Brookstone's leadership:

> 8th grade teacher: And under the new leadership, I think there is more responsibility for structure within the school—a consistent structure. It's greatly improved here. It makes my job more difficult, because there is a lot more work, but I personally am glad to do it for [Mrs. Brookstone].
>
> 2nd grade teacher: Everything is just better. Just the communication is clearer about everything. Truly. I mean, you know you're going to cover this and this and this by this date and I need this by 2:30 on this day and this needs to be done by 9:15 on this day. It's just great.
>
> 4th grade teacher: I mean, it's not scattered all over the place as to what everybody's going to be doing but, you know, this was set. You have to do this. More rules and regulations.

These views of the second principal are contrasted with the views of the first principal during the study. Teachers complained that the first principal was not effective because she changed classroom assignments without any justification. Furthermore, they complained that she did not communicate with them, was inconsistent, and did not strive to develop relationships with her staff.

Teachers at Quincy had similar (negative) views of their principal, Mrs. Marshall. Teachers complained that the principal was ineffective in her policies and general management. They were concerned about school policies that resulted in students being moved around to different classrooms long after the school year had started. Several teachers commented that the

high level of disorganization filtered down to their classrooms in the form of schedule changes and frequent interruptions. The following are examples of complaints teachers had in this area:

> 3rd grade teacher: I mean, like, you see all these interruptions and the turn arounds and switches and the changes, which I really can't point a finger at any one or anything that's causing it, but it's just, like, that is something I will never understand.
>
> 8th grade teacher: And then, too, we have so many interruptions. My God, you can't teach anything that you set out to teach because they stop you in the middle of class and you've got to stop and go do this and stop and go do that and stop, do a fire drill and there's an assembly. It's just so frustrating. And then somebody will come to that door, I promise you, twenty times in an hour and three of them will want exactly the same thing.

Rather than being concerned about the bigger picture, including how the students were doing or what strategies would enable them to move off of probation, Mrs. Marshall appeared focused on two things: monitoring lesson plans and monitoring teacher compliance with the reading and math program. One third grade teacher said, "it's so micromanaged here. They pick on you . . not like what you are doing, like they pick on the stupidest things."

Respect

Principal respect of teachers (and the lack thereof) was discussed during interviews at all three schools. Whether the principal respected them was most salient at Evergreen and Quincy. At Evergreen, the teachers were energized by the hiring of the second principal for a number of reasons and the respect and personal relationships the principal developed with both teachers and students were particularly important. "It's amazing the respect that she commands," said one teacher. She continued, "It's amazing. Truly. I haven't run into anyone that has bad things to say about her. And she remembers everyone and she makes really personal connections with the children."

This high level of mutual respect and the development of strong personal relationships, however, were completely absent at Quincy. In fact, several teachers thought the principal did not respect them as professionals. One teacher, an upper grade bilingual teacher, directly linked this to the school's inadequate resources: "The respect that should be there for the person that is on the frontline isn't there. If you respect them, then when we say we need books for the kids that should be taken care of." Two teachers complained that the principal treated teachers with an attitude that she was in charge, and then lectured them if they did not do as she said.

The principal's lack of respect extended to undermining the authority of teachers in front of students. One teacher gave the example of a student calling her a name. After taking the student to the principal's office, she describes the events that followed: "And [the principal] cracked up, she laughed, and she said, 'well, you know, [teacher's name], you're not going to be able to stop him from cussing all together. What you should do is try to get him to cuss a little less.' So Victor's standing there looking, saying, okay, I can call you anything I want." This same teacher—the teacher that seemed to have the most negative relationship with the principal of all the teachers in this study—gave another example of Mrs. Marshall coming into her room and reprimanding her in front of her class:

> Teacher: And I thought, I'm not giving you my authority in my room. . . You know, because I got to let my children know this is my classroom. I don't care who you are, you are going to walk out. You're not going to walk in my room and take my authority and then just walk out. But you know she does that to, she did that, you know, and she does that to other people and then she walks out. She comes in and she says those snide and nasty things and then she walks out.

No matter the circumstances—whether the teacher brought an issue to the principal or a student complained—teachers at Quincy thought that the principal would be least likely to support them in any given situation. Furthermore, they felt that they had to support Mrs. Marshall's views

and ideas or be viewed as troublemakers. One teacher said that she had been singled out because she had been outspoken against the principal to the point of filing a grievance against her.

Mrs. Marshall was considered someone who did not appreciate them or feel empathy toward the circumstances they faced in their classrooms. Rather than supporting and appreciating the Quincy teachers, she treated them badly, never praising them for their hard work. According to an eighth grade teacher any praise she offered was reserved for a handful of teachers:

> When it comes down to giving out accolades and that kind of stuff it's like completely skipped over, but you know, "Mrs. Anderson did this," and "Mrs. Blackwell did this," and "Mr. Eberly did this." Those are the only three people that do anything in this school. But we go out of our way, upside down, turn our lives upside down. I mean, I'm up twelve to one o'clock every night. Mrs. Jones is up every night. Twelve to one o'clock we do stuff and it's like we don't do anything.

A third grade teacher who taught the retained students (the students who were not promoted) told the story of her students taking the test in January to move on to fourth grade. She said, "Six of my students pass out of the 13, which is very good. Did I get a pat on the back? No, I was told that I could do better." This same teacher was upset because she believed the principal did not really care about teachers or understand the difficult and stressful issues that they faced:

> Sick with no voice this year for a week and, you can ask anybody, Wednesday afternoon I told my principal I'm not coming in tomorrow. I actually didn't say it I gave her my lesson plans to the secretary and said I'm going to the doctor, couldn't speak. She goes, 'oh, you're sick,' she says, 'I didn't know you were sick.' And I said—I've never talked back to her because you heard me, I'm, I've made up my mind, you know, I was kind of teetering about how I felt—the principal goes, 'oh, you're sick? Well, I didn't hear you talk like this yesterday.' And I said, oh, that's because you never say hello to me in the morning so you wouldn't know if I had a voice or not. And I'd never say that to my boss, never, but I was just so angry, and then when I came back, not a word, not a 'are you okay?'

While respect and personal relationships were important to teachers in both Evergreen and Quincy, teachers placed less of an emphasis on these things at Bradford. In fact, teachers admitted that they did not feel strong relational trust with the principal. However, three teachers directly commented on the lack of respect for teachers and praise for their hard work, saying, "there is not enough respect for the individual person" and "They never call you to say what a wonderful job you are doing." A fourth grade teacher said, "There's not a lot of support and morale here so I think people get knocked down a lot. I mean, it's so hard, you know, that you need a pat on the back." A common area of frustration was related to a lack of administrative support around classroom discipline. For the most part, however, teachers at Bradford seemed to accept that their principal's leadership was not strong in this area. What Bradford illustrates is the differential affect principals may have on teachers in the same school. For the three teachers discussed above, mutual respect and positive relationships may have had a stronger affect on their motivation levels than it did for the rest of Bradford's teachers.

Focusing on Students

Teachers seemed to value a focus on students more than effective management and respect. Bradford is a good example of this prioritizing of leadership areas. Although the principal's leadership style, or the way she interacted with others, was considered less than satisfactory, teachers were consistent in their view that Mrs. Johnson was passionate about the students. Illustrating this distinction, one teacher described the principal's love of students immediately following her complaint that the pressure from the principal and the district can cause teachers to feel attacked. She added, "that's not to say, I mean, you know, the principal is passionate about the children doing well. And I mean she cares as much as anyone I've ever met

that they do well. You know the pressure on her has to be enormous and the pressure on us has to be enormous." Another teacher commented on the principal's focus on students in the context of the school's improved test scores: "I mean, we have improved so much that when they show us our scores from 1998, it's unbelievable. So we are doing things right and Mrs. Johnson cares so much about the kids, truly."

On the other hand, the first principal at Evergreen was viewed as ineffective in many ways, but perhaps most importantly the teacher thought that she did not focus on students. According to an eighth grade teacher, "I feel that the atmosphere that's prevailed, the student has been left out. It's been done very secretly but if you look deeply in each classroom, I feel, personally, that it has affected each student." According to another teacher, "supposedly we're all here for the kids except that it's not the case with the administration and it shows." The principal was not viewed as legitimate in the eyes of these teachers because she did not have what they considered the most important goal—serving students—at the forefront at all times.

Principal Support for Change

Principal support for change was viewed differently at the three schools in this study. At Evergreen, teachers focused primarily on the principal's role as a resource for them when they faced problems or challenges in the classroom. Teachers viewed the principal's role very differently at Bradford, where they discussed her role as resource provider, including her efforts to acquire and renovate the school's facilities, set aside time for collaboration, and ensure that teachers received adequate training or professional development opportunities. Teachers at Quincy complained of a lack of support in these areas.

Principal as Resource

At Evergreen the principal was viewed as a resource, herself, because of her experiences as a classroom teacher. Teachers viewed Mrs. Brookstone as someone they could go to for ideas and support if they were having difficulty in their classrooms, e.g., with a lesson. A third grade teacher summed up this perspective:

> She's got a lot of classroom experience, which is really, really important. Because as a teacher when you approach her with a problem she can totally relate to it from a classroom perspective and she gives you feedback based on that. So try this, try this, try this, try this. . . . So that makes a huge difference because she's definitely a resource. If you need anything, she's a real person who will give you real solutions.

The role of Mrs. Brookstone as a resource, herself, may also have led teachers to view her as a legitimate leader compared with their previous principal. This type of individual principal support was not discussed in the other two schools.

Principal as Resource Provider

Teachers at Bradford viewed the principal as supportive of them because she provided resources, training, and common planning time. Most teachers said that they would ask someone other than the principal for assistance with specific problems, particularly around student learning, because the principal was considered "overwhelmed" most of the time. However, they considered Mrs. Johnson to be someone who listened to ideas, addressed concerns when they were raised, and would be supportive if they did have a problem, especially if the problem was with a parent.

When Bradford went on probation, classrooms were overcrowded and space was a problem throughout the school. However, an annex was being renovated and would soon alleviate this problem. Beyond improvements in the facilities, teachers felt that the school had a

lot of classroom resources. One upper grade bilingual teacher was frustrated with the way the school ran but added, "But the school is clean. You get materials. You get books. I have computers." A second grade teacher supported this: "You get a lot of resources. I mean, any material that you need they'll give it to you."

However, access to resources appears to be somewhat dependent on the teacher's grade level. In fact, three upper grade teachers complained that they did not have access to copiers or supplies at the same time that most of the other teachers reported unlimited access to both. One teacher said, "I feel like there's a ton of supplies locked up somewhere in this building that we can't just get to if we want to be able to. We have to like fight for them, you know." It is not clear from these interviews why some teachers felt that resources were more limited than others.

Beyond resources, teachers at Bradford believed that they received adequate professional development. According to one teacher, they were allowed to attend workshops and conferences that were "worthwhile," provided they share the information with other teachers upon returning. Teachers also received training at the school site through the school's full-time literacy coordinator, although much of the training by the literacy coordinator was limited to primary teachers at first. The training became available to all teachers once the principal revised the schedule to provide common preparatory times for teachers at every grade level. After this shift, Mrs. Johnson actually required that teachers meet together twice a week—one of these meetings was with the literacy coordinator. This requirement was viewed positively by teachers, as illustrated in the following comments:

> 2nd grade teacher: . . this year we have five preps. And two of those preps are spent with other colleagues, learning, discussing, sharing. And last year really the only time we did that is if we took a class through [literacy coordinator]. And now this year it is mandatory. On Mondays, I go and meet with the second grade teachers with [literacy coordinator] . . . And she, you know, like I said we share and we discuss. She shows us new

> things. We watch videos of other teachers who we might want to learn something from. And then on Wednesdays, we meet with our grade level to discuss the same type of issues. And we didn't do that last year. So now it is even, we are even getting stronger, I guess, with our working together and trying to move the kids.

An added form of support for teachers was the "pulling-out" of students during reading time. In some classes, particularly the benchmark grades, the literacy coordinator and other non-classroom teachers pulled-out small groups of the lowest performing students or the students performing immediately below the grade level norm. This school policy led teachers to feel that the school was taking collective responsibility for student performance, as articulated by one teacher: "I was happy to see that and it really helped me out and made me feel that I wasn't the only one responsible for these 21 kids."

Although teachers felt supported at Bradford and Evergreen, though in different ways, the most common complaint by teachers at Quincy was that the principal did not provide adequate resources or professional development. Most of the teachers said that they either did not receive curricular materials at all or were given these resources long after the school year had begun. An eighth grade teacher complained that she was unable to assign homework to her students because the school did not have enough books for them to take home. Beyond these frustrations, the bilingual teachers had additional resource problems because of a lack of Spanish-speaking materials. Not receiving classroom materials promptly or in the language they were teaching was critical in this school because the school was implementing a scripted reading program. Without the "script," teachers were unable to begin the program until months after school was in session. The following are a few representative responses of teachers regarding the school's inadequate resources:

> Lower grades bilingual teacher: But you know, as the principal, you need to know what's going on in those rooms. And we're still, what happened

> with all the materials? The teachers need the, if there's something that needs to be done by the teacher, you need the materials. Then once, she didn't know and then she told me, "Okay, I've got to go to your room and survey you on [math series]." And I said, oh, hello! We don't have them. Do you want me to, you know, make copies because we don't have the materials. "How come," she said right there. And I was like, we haven't received them yet. "Oh, Mrs. Butterfield said that we received the materials." No, we didn't. Then she called Mrs. Butterfield, "where are the materials?" "Oh, some of them are here, some of them are not." No, no, no, no. So she didn't know.
>
> Upper grade bilingual teacher: We've had like two business managers in the past two years and both of them have quit. For what reasons, I don't know, but the thing is there are books ordered. This is my third week here and every year it's the same thing. There are no books. We can't make copies from the copier. We don't have books and we can't make copies.
>
> 8th grade teacher: It's very, very easy for [the students] to break if they don't get what they need. And some of them are just sitting here on a daily basis asking you, "please," you know, "teach me something." And you're sitting here having to apologize because you don't have books, you don't have resources, you don't have anything.

One teacher had hoped to familiarize herself with the program before school started, but teachers received the materials during an in-service a few days before the first day of school.

In addition to complaints about materials, several teachers at Quincy complained that they did not receive training on implementing the school's reading and math programs. The teachers were frustrated that they had to sit through mediocre workshops and presentations during the school's restructured day (a shortened day for schoolwide staff meetings) when they could have spent their time collaborating with colleagues. The principal cited a board policy that would not allow them to meet with each other during that time, but teachers did not believe such a policy existed.

Complaints about materials, training, and support were very common at Quincy. One teacher summed up the frustration of teachers by pointing out that the school's probationary status was linked to the inadequate materials and implying that the principal was directly at fault:

> 8th grade teacher: Well, you know what, I'm not an expert on anything and I'm not going to say 100% this is it. But I do believe—now this school was on probation when I got here—these children, the way they are, they are going to learn. Some of them do. . . If we had all the supplies, the books, you know, all that stuff, access to the internet, all of these things, I don't believe we would still be on probation. But I've been here for four years and I have yet to have all the books that I need. I have yet to have worksheets, resources, and when we get so far, they don't want you to use them. You know, it's like, ok, but all of this stuff is aimed at the teachers, but it's not hurting the teachers, it's hurting the children. And I guess, I mean, I don't want to blame anybody for anything because I'm not anybody's judge. I mean, you know, I talk a lot because I'm opinionated. That's me, but I don't want to judge anybody based on what I think, but I'm just saying if you want your school off probation, you don't walk around the school all day long trying to do little bitty things to jab at teachers when you know the children need some. . .you would go somewhere and get the copy machines fixed, you will keep them fixed. You will go somewhere and you will get resources and you will give it to teachers and say, "Whatever you need. Here it is."

Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership refers to shared governance with parents and teacher. As mentioned previously, the literature on inclusive leadership is mixed but some research has found this to be associated with motivation (Blase & Blase, 2001; Hipp, 1995). Interestingly, teachers in Evergreen and Quincy did not discuss inclusive leadership at all. Teachers not only did not discuss the fact that neither principal included teachers and parents in governance, but also did not complain about their principals' more centralized approaches.

The only discussions about inclusive leadership occurred in interviews with Bradford teachers. Bradford's principal did not exhibit an inclusive leadership style, overall. In fact, she only included hand-picked administrators and teachers in school decision-making. However, a few noteworthy examples of inclusive leadership exist. Several teachers mentioned that they had been paid to work in the summer in a schoolwide effort to align the curriculum with state standards. This was funded by a foundation grant and was intended to improve coherence across

classrooms at each grade level. A few teachers also provided examples of involvement in particular decisions, e.g., the decision to select an external partner through probation and the development of the school improvement plan. In both cases, teachers spoke of their involvement in the process but indicated that final decisions were made by the principal, alone, or by her administrative team. An organizational structure in this school that enabled teachers to share their views with the principal was the system of grade level chairs. These grade level chairs allowed teachers to voice concerns or at least feel that the communication lines were open. In reality, the grade level chairs were primarily a conduit through which the principal communicated information and demands to the teachers. While teachers provided evidence of a few inclusive leadership structures or opportunities, these did not seem to have a strong influence on teacher motivation. The more centralized approaches to governance of all three of these school leaders is not surprising given the literature on organizations under threat (Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981).

Discussion and Implications

Teachers in the three probation schools had low levels of morale and motivation immediately before and after probation. It is not clear from the discussions with teachers whether the probation policy, itself, affected teacher motivation in these schools. However, teachers' responses to probation seemed closely linked to their principals' responses to probation. In fact, whether teachers felt 1) blamed or 2) determined to improve their situation collectively was related to the way principals both interpreted the policy (e.g., whether they communicated that teachers may lose their jobs) and responded to the policy (e.g., by discussing performance as an individual or schoolwide problem).

An important aspect of the school organization that may have had a positive effect on individual motivation was the high levels of staff turnover after probation. Teachers at both Evergreen and Bradford reported that other teachers were either pushed out or left voluntarily after the new principal was hired. In both cases, the teachers who remained at the school seemed to view this turnover as positive, emphasizing both the need for energetic new staff and the benefit of having ineffective or unmotivated teachers leave.

The stories of Evergreen, Bradford, and Quincy highlight the crucial role of the principals in schools placed on probation under school accountability sanctions, as seen from the perspective of teachers. The teachers' commentaries about their principals revealed specific areas of leadership that influenced them. Instructional leadership, teacher-principal trust, and principal support for change were described in varying degrees across the three schools. [13] These findings support the work of Leithwood, Tomlinson, and Genge (1996), whose review of the literature found three areas associated with the effort of organizational "followers": 1) charisma/inspiration/ vision (or the development of a shared vision and overall sense of purpose), 2) individual consideration (or promoting trust and respect, being approachable, and providing support to staff; and 3) intellectual stimulation (or changing school norms, bringing staff into contact with new ideas, and encouraging staff to try new practices). Beyond the principal leadership behaviors and their influence on teacher expectancy, valence (or valuing student performance on the test) also appeared linked to motivation, as seen in Bradford.

As discussed previously, the motivation of individuals to direct their energy toward a particular task is closely linked to their estimate of the probability that they will accomplish the task given their situation. As Morhman and Lawler (1996) suggest, the person must first

[13] The quantitative component of the larger study found instructional leadership and principal support for change to be associated with teacher expectancy across all Chicago elementary schools, but teacher-principal trust and inclusive leadership were not related to expectancy (see Finnigan, 2003).

consider whether or not they have the skills and knowledge required. Teachers in this study did not refer to their individual ability except in relation to the training they had received (or lack thereof). Mohrman and Lawler also argue that individuals must have a clear understanding about the nature of the task and the individual must view it as attainable. In this study, instructional leadership areas, such as vision and expectations, were important in providing direction and clarity to teachers. Finally, Mohrman and Lawler argue that the individual must believe that they have support for the task. Support in these schools was in the form of effective management, respect, and organizational resources. These leadership areas influenced teacher motivation by affecting whether or not teachers believed that they could, in fact, improve student performance as the accountability policy required.

Instructional leadership in the form of vision and direction, clear expectations, and coherence and consistency, was important to teachers in the two schools that had moved off of probation (Evergreen and Bradford). Interestingly, instructional leadership was less salient to the school that was having the most difficulty (Quincy). Quincy struggled as an organization with very weak leadership. In fact, Quincy was one of the approximately 17 schools (of the original 109) that remained on probation after five years. Teachers at Quincy were focused on the lack of trust and inadequate resources, rather than instructional leadership. Perhaps teachers believed that principals must first focus on developing trust and ensuring teachers have adequate resources before focusing on instructional leadership.

Teachers at both Evergreen and Quincy emphasized teacher-principal trust, primarily in the forms of effective management and respect. While teachers at Bradford did not describe their principal as an effective manager, they also did not indicate that she micro-managed their work. However, they did complain that she did not treat them with respect. For Bradford

teachers, the fact that the principal kept students front and center seemed to outweigh their complaints about the way she treated them individually.

Having a supportive principal played out differently in these schools. At Evergreen, principal support was closely linked to the individual role that the principal played as a resource for teachers. She was someone they believed they could go to for support and ideas when they faced classroom challenges. The principal at Bradford was not considered a resource for teachers in the same way, but she was viewed as a resource provider. Her strength was in providing them with materials, time, and training (all three things were reported by teachers as inadequate at Quincy).

While inclusive leadership has the potential to influence expectancy, it was almost nonexistent in these three schools. Only Bradford Elementary exhibited inclusive leadership to a small degree through the grade level coordinators, but the purpose of these coordinators was more for the transmission of information from the principal to the rest of the staff than for a more distributed or democratic type of governance. That inclusive leadership was not evident in the probation schools may be linked to the fact that schools in crisis, like organizations in crisis centralize rather than decentralize their operations.

As the stories indicate, the teachers in these schools, for the most part, had consistent perspectives about both motivation and leadership that were either very positive (Evergreen) or very negative (Quincy). However, Bradford may be the more typical school in which teacher expectancy and perceptions of leadership varied. An example of this variation is the fact that some teachers said they had all the resources they needed while others complained that they had to fight for resources or “know the right person.” While both Evergreen and Quincy’s stories are based on a high level of agreement of those teachers involved in the study, not every teacher in

these schools participated in the study. However, the researchers (rather than the principal) identified teachers for the study based on grade level taught. In no case did the principal steer the research team away from particular teachers in these schools.

These findings suggest that principals are potentially a key policy lever for turning around low-performing schools. Policies that improve principal leadership are likely to improve teachers' expectancy and, as a result, their motivation to perform. Understanding the factors associated with higher teacher expectancy is crucial to this policy context in which a primary goal is to improve the motivation of teachers. As the story of Quincy illustrates, principals sometimes do not exhibit these leadership behaviors. As a result, many teachers become unmotivated, frustrated, and even angry with their school's inadequate leadership.

This study has important implications for practice. To bring about school change, principals are in a key position to improve the performance of teachers by improving their motivation. Principals must recognize that, as transformational leaders, their activities and behaviors affect the motivation of teachers. Understanding the strength of this association is as important to principals as it is to any middle manager. The study suggests that principals should focus on providing instructional leadership, developing teacher-principal trust, and supporting change. Unfortunately principal capacity in these areas in persistently failing schools is particularly weak, as the story of Quincy illustrates. Ongoing professional development of principals—or perhaps even the removal of principals if they do not exhibit these leadership behaviors—may be necessary to ensure that principals in probation schools have the skills and knowledge they need to motivate school staff.

The study also has policy implications. The finding suggests that accountability policies should more directly focus on the role of principals in schools on probation because the role is a

key, yet often overlooked, lever for improving school performance. Policymakers should develop policies to attract and retain principals with proven track records in probation schools and to increase the capacity of current probation school principals to ensure that these schools have the necessary leadership to support and motivate teachers. The Chicago Public Schools requires that a probation manager work with the principal to improve his or her leadership; however, past research has found that the individuals hired to work with low-performing schools were unsure what they should focus on and often emphasized very basic changes, such as creating clean hallways (Finnigan & O'Day, 2003). Probation managers could be given more direction by the district to focus on areas of leadership identified in this study, such as helping the principals develop their schools' visions. Targeting these areas of leadership and building principal capacity through ongoing professional development (of principals) in these areas may be a way of improving teacher expectancy, and as a result performance, in probation schools.

Accountability policies also may be more effective in improving school performance if the support is targeted directly toward teachers with low motivation, inadequate knowledge and skills, and negative beliefs about students. In Chicago, assistance is not targeted in this manner (Finnigan & O'Day, 2003). Furthermore, both external assistance (through the partner) and internal assistance (through the principal or other school staff) may improve teacher motivation by focusing on beliefs about students and self-efficacy beliefs.

The widespread interest in school accountability and recent passage of NCLB indicate that these popular policies are here to stay. The dearth of evidence about the contextual factors that influence teacher motivation in low-performing schools is cause for concern. Furthermore, a more concerted effort toward ensuring that teachers in probation schools are led and supported

by high quality principals may increase the likelihood that all students, including poor and minority students in urban districts, receive the high quality education they deserve.

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