

ABSTRACT

CHAVIS, WILLIAM M. No Turning Back: A Case Study Analysis of Leadership Practices of Organizational Turnaround at a North Carolina Historically Black High School. (Under the direction of Dr. Lance D. Fusarelli).

Despite the seeming progressiveness in moving from *Plessy v. Ferguson* to *Brown v. Board of Education*, and from the Jim Crow era to the Civil Rights Movement, schools continue to exist that are racially homogenous and segregated at the core. Many of these schools were created in times of harsh legislation that mandated a “separate but equal” philosophy, which oftentimes placed Black students in learning environments that were not, in fact, equal—leading to marked disparities and disproportionate circumstances, conditions, and outcomes. The Black High School as an institution of learning has therefore become a historical cornerstone of the community, providing students with experiences associated with cultural and racial identities while teaching the state-adopted curriculum. Although the resources including textbooks and materials were typically outdated “hand-me-downs” from institutions serving White students, these Historically Black High Schools nonetheless provided sound instruction to students.

Moving forward to today’s culture of increased accountability measures, we find that students in Historically Black High Schools are underperforming, compared to schools that are racially heterogeneous or have a majority of White students. Judge Howard Manning’s 2005 threat to shut down underperforming schools had critical implications to the Historically Black High Schools in North Carolina. In order to turn around a school that has historically maintained low performance, we look to the work of the principal as the school’s change agent to move it to higher levels of success. This study explored the leadership practices of turning around an underperforming, Historically Black High School in North

Carolina to a School of Distinction. Bolman and Deal's (2003) organizational frames were examined with regard to the turnaround process as a basis of the principal's leadership within the context of the school.

As a result of Judge Manning's mandate, the Department of Public Instruction devised a framework for turning around low-performing schools. In its initial stages, the study school partnered with one of the turnaround efforts of the state. With no significant changes to student performance in the initial years, the leadership of the study school discarded the state's turnaround program and created one specific to the school and its related culture. During the turnaround period, three principals led the Historically Black High School chosen for this study. For the purpose of this study, the turnaround period is defined through the 2004-2012 academic school years. During this time span, one principal (Principal 2) was identified as having significantly turned around the composite student performance, while the succeeding principal (Principal 3) sustained the turnaround of Principal 2; the first principal of this period (Principal 1) retired from their appointment after the second year in the timeframe. The replacement of Principal 1 with Principal 2's appointment was met with marked improvement of collective student and teacher performance. Both Principal 2 and 3 were interviewed for this study. Additionally, observations of the current principal in practice as well as of the school and student artifacts were considered in the data analysis for the study. A collection of research-generated documents, to include North Carolina Report Card Data, Graduation Rates, and Teacher Working Conditions Survey were analyzed to provide a broad perspective of the turnaround.

Findings from the research informed that the leaders who turned around the Historically Black High School used a mixture of organizational frames (structural, human

resource, political and symbolic frames) specific to Historically Black High Schools—reculturing and the utility of student voice. Other significant factors outside of principal leadership were identified in turning around the school, including the human capital and partnerships within the educational environment. From the findings, it is imperative that district personnel provide fiscal and equitable resources in sustaining student achievement and high performance.

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No Turning Back: A Case Study Analysis of Leadership Practices of Organizational
Turnaround at a North Carolina Historically Black High School

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

Educational Administration and Supervision

Raleigh, North Carolina

2016

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to both of my grandfathers and namesakes, Mr. William Edward Stowe and Mr. Edward Henry Chavis, Sr. You are the giants on whose shoulders I stand as I move through life, and I know that each of you are in Heaven pulling for me. While you both wanted to be here to see me cross the finish line, and while I too wish that were possible, there is solace in the fact that the lives you led, the people you encouraged and impacted, the service you provided to your country and community, and the love you displayed to your God and family, has been the only inspiration I have needed to get through this process. These attributes of integrity, strength, bravery, and love that characterized the two of you are ones I work to embody each day of my life—and can only hope to someday be the motivation to another as you both have been for me. I miss and love you both.

BIOGRAPHY

Will Chavis was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, the youngest child of Edward and Sandra Chavis and the sibling of Eddie and Joya Chavis. Due to new opportunities in the employment for his father, the family moved to North Carolina when Will was two years old. Will was educated through the Cumberland County School System in Fayetteville, and graduated from Westover High School in 2000.

After high school, Will obtained Bachelor's degrees in both Mathematics and Sociology from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Though already greatly interested in teaching, he decided to explore other career opportunities before making that decision. However, soon after graduation from college, he worked as a Mathematics teacher at the Freedom Project in Oxford, Mississippi, where he had the opportunity to help low-income, rural, middle school students prepare for their mathematics courses for the upcoming year, preventing them from the setback that often happens during the summer break. This experience confirmed Will's passion for teaching, and he began seeking a position in education in the fall of 2004.

He began his career in education when he was hired to teach high school mathematics at Graham High School, entering the field as a lateral-entry teacher. He obtained my teaching certification in 2007 from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. During his time as a classroom teacher, Will was appointed as the chair of the Mathematics Department, and earned accolades including Teacher-of-the-Year and Honorary Commencement Speaker. Under his leadership, the Mathematics Department showed significant improvement with accountability and high-stakes testing measures; in some cases,

student proficiency was doubled (over 30 percentage points), and there was marked growth in tested areas. Will remained in the classroom until receiving his degree and administrative license in 2010.

In 2010, Will transitioned to administration within the Wake County Public School System. He became an Assistant Principal during the fall of 2010, and was then appointed as Principal in 2013, serving the Fuquay-Varina community schools. Currently, Will serves as Principal of Fuquay-Varina Middle School, where he has been for three years.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-based solutions.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I can recall, around the time I was in first grade, my mother would drop me off at school. Prior to exchanging our “goodbyes” to each other, she would say, “Mike, don’t forget to…” and I would immediately respond with “think!” This was my mother’s way of expressing to me that the act of thinking alone could elevate me to heights of scholarship, creativity, and problem-solving—some of the true foundations of learning. Now, some 25 years later, I walk into my profession as principal, just as into the academic setting as a candidate for a doctoral degree, with the mindset of thinking. No portion of my professional, research, or personal life goes without remembering mom’s intimate way of instilling in me the power, privilege, and blessing of thought. Thank you most of all, for your spiritual guidance, prayers, support, and genuine way of teaching me the importance of thinking.

I must next thank my loving family for their support, words of encouragement, and, most of all, their continued and undying love. Without it, this process of research, study, and writing would not have been possible. More specifically, I want to thank my parents, Edward and Sandra Stowe Chavis, for their guidance, patience, and warm displays of pride. It was your praise of my effort and ability at a very young age that inspired me to overcome all obstacles and not to settle for anything mediocre.

I also want to express my gratitude and appreciation to the best older siblings in the world, my brother Eddie and my sister Joya. Through your examples, I have learned how to

strive for high goals and aspirations—and to see them through. You have always protected me as your younger brother, and you have long taught me invaluable life lessons that I could never find or learn from any amount of research. For this, I am very grateful.

There are others I must also acknowledge. Thank you to my in-laws, Jeffrey and Kenda, for your prayers, support, and encouragement. To my nieces Jayla and Jasmyn and my nephew Collin, you are all inspirations, and in your short time so far on this earth, you have a dynamic story that continues to resonate with me on a daily basis.

Finally, I would like to thank every teacher, student, peer, and colleague who has ever challenged me to delve deeper, to analyze and critically reflect upon my practice, and to push the limits of the status quo. You have each in your own way contributed to making me a better educator, scholar, and person.

Additionally, thank you to my dissertation committee for your work in encouraging and pushing me to write, research, and prepare. A special thanks goes to Dr. Lance Fusarelli for your dedication to this process, guidance in framing the work, and the rich and sustained feedback you have given me from start to finish. Thank you to Dr. Demetrius Richmond for providing an outlet to capitalize on the energy and motivation in moving forward in the research process. Yet another thank you goes to Dr. Paul Bitting for expecting the best out of his students throughout the writing and presentation phase in a never-ending push for excellence. In addition, I am very appreciative to Dr. Lisa Bass for providing me with expert feedback on my study and related methodology; your support has been invaluable. Thank you to my writing buddy, Jessica, for spending countless Tuesdays and Saturdays writing with me in Hunt Library. And thank you to my colleagues, Paige and Tyrone, for holding

down the fort and allowing me a few afternoons, duty-free, to conduct my study and finish my writing.

As my mother challenged me to think every day, I challenge any person who reads this dissertation to think critically, reflectively, and inclusively within your daily pursuits and happenings.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Horace Mann, the presumed Father of Education, coined the phrase, “Education as the great American equalizer” (Cremin, 1957, p. 8). As critical analyses of the historical dynamics and social complexities within education are considered, it is plausible that Mann’s claim, made more than 200 years ago, was simply a hope, a proposed desideratum to the intent behind educational attainment in the United States. With the hope that education would level the playing field for all Americans, undeniably, this has not been the case for all. Research and discussion taking place within the educational milieu around the United States have given a considerable amount of attention to this issue, attempting to answer challenges associated with underperformance of African-American students in schools. Theorists and educators alike tend to rely on historical, cultural, and social implications as possible explanations of the disparity in academic achievement among different ethnic groups. This implies that educators who are concerned with the performance of African-American students, should not ignore the historical implications and breakthroughs in this area. Such evidence alone has had a lasting effect on achievement for African-American students.

The historical development of schooling has shown an array of challenges that African Americans had to endure through the pursuit of school and educational attainment. Most notable in American history was the seminal *Plessy v. Ferguson* case that gave claim to the “separate but equal” doctrine (Duignan, 2015). As a result of this 8-1 Supreme Court ruling favoring the “separate but equal” doctrine, public facilities such as trains, buses, and school buildings were segregated into White-only, and in most cases separate facilities for Blacks or “colored” people were established. Jim Crow laws in the South reigned supreme,

allowing for these separate facilities to seem Constitutional. Southern African Americans were victims of whites who questioned the utility of providing blacks with anything more than a rudimentary education (Walker, 1996). It was not until *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) when the Supreme Court overturned the “separate but equal” doctrine. Nonetheless, schools across the south began to integrate at a very slow pace. Many schools did not fully desegregate under the Supreme Court ruling until they were forced to comply or lose federal funding as a response to the Civil Rights Act (1964) and subsequent legislation. African-American students, although integrated into White schools, received a great deal of pressure, backlash, and life-threatening attacks due to the resistance of White students. Many of these schools stayed segregated for a considerable amount of time, some of which are still serving similarly racially-segregated populations as they did during this time frame.

Historically Black High Schools

In the pre-Civil Rights era, unequal educational opportunities and related inequalities were an uncontested reality. The ideological perspective of White supremacy and Black intellectual inferiority continued to be standardized in communities within the south. Complex social relations, the exercise of power, and the distribution of economic resources, goods, and services were organized to support the erroneous notion of Blacks as less than human with an inability to be intellectual beings. In response to these realities, most, if not all, of the historically Black segregated schools that African-American children attended, were intentionally organized in opposition to the ideology of Black intellectual inferiority. In addition to being sites of learning, these schools instituted practices and expected behaviors and outcomes that not only promoted education but were also designed to counter the notion

of Blacks as uneducable and unworthy of scholarly learning. These institutions were founded to affirm Black humanity, Black intelligence, and Black achievement (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003).

The Black community organized intentional education institutions that scholars refer to as *counterhegemonic figured communities*. The labeling and nomenclature of these institutions as counterhegemonic was developed in opposition to the dominant ideology of White supremacy to the notion of Black's lack of intellectualism. Such communities and schools were designed to forge the collective identity of African Americans as a literate and achieving people. These historically Black schools were counterhegemonic as they institutionalized, ritualized, and symbolized the African-American philosophy of schooling, forged in slavery and passed on throughout history. They did so by maintaining the strong desire to achieve education for freedom, racial uplift, and the promotion of citizenship and leadership (Perry et al., 2003).

Many school buildings, as a result of segregation within the state, were designed to house African-American students. After the Civil Rights Act of 1964, schools began to integrate, which ended segregation in North Carolina schools for the most part. Although this integration would take several years to achieve, many schools are still faced with the remnants of segregation. These schools continue to serve predominately African-American populations. These schools, for this analysis, are classified as *Historically Black High Schools*. This indicates the consistency of a majority Black population within high schools, derived from segregation and which still exists in current times. Currently, in the state of North Carolina, very few of these high schools exist—approximately five in total. Although

many schools now may serve a population with a majority African-American or Latin-American, only a few high schools were created out of segregation and still serve the same population as in its inception.

In North Carolina as in other states, Historically Black High Schools are in the town or county's urban-most areas, usually in low-income locales. These schools often house many Free-Reduced Lunch-receiving students, indicating that those students are in poverty or near-poverty. This may also be indicative of the lack of financial resources families are able to provide for their students and for the school, such as a computer in the home and tutorial services. Oftentimes, high schools of minority-rationally homogenous populations suffer on so many levels: academically, lack of resources, lowered teacher quality, and lower student achievement. Due to this, in order to amend school-wide teaching practices, a strong school-level leader is needed. The necessity of an effective principal capable of transforming schools is a high priority for these schools, impacting the instructional design and culture of the school, as well as building a climate of student success and achievement.

Current State and Context

Many African-American students attend the lowest-performing schools in the county, and African Americans regularly score significantly lower on almost every indicator of academic well-being than do Whites and Asians (Holzman, 2006). In addition, high-minority and high-poverty schools perform much lower than do low-minority and lower poverty schools, yet 73% of African Americans attend high-minority schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), and 45% of African Americans attend high-poverty schools (U. S. Department of Education, 2015). African Americans constitute disproportionately high

numbers of students in special education as well, being more than twice as likely to be designated mentally retarded than any other racial group (U. S. Department of Education, 2006). On the other hand, White students are three times more likely to be enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) math and science courses than are African Americans. More shocking is the fact that the percentage of African Americans meeting proficiency in national assessments in reading and math is less than one fourth that of White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

There is a notable disparity in quality between high-minority and high-poverty schools (Knaus, 2007). These schools have the least experienced teachers, highest teacher mobility rates, highest percentage of teachers teaching outside of their field, and oftentimes have the highest student-to-teacher ratios (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Strauss & Sawyer, 1986). Analyses from the North Carolina High School Resource Allocation Study indicate that higher percentages of teachers with temporary, provisional, and lateral entry licenses are associated with lower average End-of-Course (EOC) test scores in low-performing schools (Carolina Institute for Public Policy, 2008). Moreover, African-American students are often provided a curriculum that denies their historical experiences. African Americans who resist this method of schooling and push back against the curriculum are often punished, which can result in students moving from mainstream schools to alternative schools, and later to juvenile justice systems (Casella, 2001; Knaus, 2007).

Almost two-thirds of African-American children still go to schools that are “majority minority,” and about 4 of 10 sit in classrooms that are 90% to 100% minority (Goldstein, 2007). Despite the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and decades of local integration

efforts that followed, K-12 public schools remain some of the most segregated institutions in the nation. Racial segregation in schools drives inherently unequal outcomes, and integration is key to closing student achievement gaps (PSEA, 2015). Research documents the deleterious effects of segregation on the achievement of students of color. After controlling for family background variables, previous achievement, and peer effects, students assigned to elementary schools with a majority of African-American students are likely to end up with lower test scores, lower grade point averages, and lower placements in secondary school curricular tracks (Mickelson, 2006). Consequently, the achievement and opportunity gaps between African-American students and their White counterparts continues to illustrate and suggest a significant disparity.

Minority segregation in schools remains a significant predictor of low graduation rates, even when the effect of several other school indicators is controlled (Swanson, 2004). In predominately White suburban schools, African Americans are often excluded from college preparatory curricula and tracked into remedial courses that teach the “basics” but do little to prepare students for the workforce or college (Connor & Boskin, 2001; Kraus, 2007). The negative impact of segregated schooling continues even after graduation; for instance, differences in wages earned by African-American adults from segregated and integrated schools are statistically significant, even after controlling for student social and background characteristics (Boozer, Krueger, & Wolken, 1992).

Judge Manning and the Leandro Case

Between 1999 and 2003, as part of his ruling in *Leandro v. State of North Carolina*, Superior Court Judge Howard Manning, Jr. issued a series of opinions in which he concluded that:

- Every student must be taught by a highly qualified teacher.
- Every school must have the resources necessary to provide each student with an equal opportunity to receive a sound, basic education.
- Every school must be led by a highly competent administrator.

On July 30, 2004, Judge Manning ruled that every child in North Carolina has a constitutional right to have an equal opportunity to receive a sound, basic education.

Subsequently, as part of his further rulings on the case in 2005, Judge Manning identified 44 low-performing high schools across the state, and threatened them with closure if their academic performance did not improve (North Carolina High School Resource Allocation Study, 2008). He accused failing high schools of “academic genocide.” Part of his stipulation for failing schools that did not improve was that they would be restructured and given new principals or face closure (North Carolina General Assembly, 2007). As a result of Manning’s ruling, North Carolina employed three main high school reform efforts: Learn and Earn Schools (Early Colleges), Redesigned High Schools, and the Turnaround High School model.

Based on 2004-2005 test scores, Turnaround Assessment Teams were sent to 44 high schools in 2005-2006 to investigate why these schools were performing poorly. Of these 44 schools, eight schools raised their performance composite score above 60% in the 2005-06

school year, while a ninth school opted to undergo a whole school redesign. The remaining 35 schools continued to perform subpar and took the next step in the process by developing a Framework for Action in the following school year. There are five components to each school's Framework for Action:

1. Principals receive professional development through the Principals' Executive Program (PEP), administered by the University of North Carolina.
2. A leadership coach is assigned to each school and visits weekly.
3. The school is asked to revise its School Improvement Plan to include certain elements deemed missing by the Turnaround Assessment Team, such as a plan to transition freshmen or a plan to help struggling students.
4. Teachers receive professional development.
5. The school must select a reform model to implement from the following choices:
 - a. America's Choice
 - b. Talent Development
 - c. North Carolina New Schools Project
 - d. Approved Alternate Plan

The 2007-2008 school year was the first year of implementation of the chosen reform model.

The 35 high schools were located in 22 LEAs across 21 counties of North Carolina. An additional 54 schools were entered into the Turnaround Phase because of performance composite dropping below 70% in the 2006-2007 school year (NCDPI, 2007).

Principal's Role

In a recent speech to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan spoke of the impact of effective school principals in shaping and facilitating success in school buildings. Duncan (2013) stated:

A school leader's impact is huge. They help shape school culture. They are, first and foremost, instructional leaders. School leaders create an environment in which students and teacher are excited about coming each day. Great principals nurture, retain and empower great teachers. A recent study of more than 7,000 principals in Texas found that effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven [months] of learning in a single school year. Ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount. (n.p.)

High schools that enable challenging student populations to outperform expectations and have thereby improved these students' performance confirm the conventional wisdom that a principal's leadership can make a meaningful difference in student learning. Such results furthermore show how principals make a difference—that is, what specific behaviors they use to foster organizational conditions that lead to better performance. Effective principals increase teachers' commitment to the school and its mission, hold teachers individually and collectively responsible for student outcomes, recruit and retain high quality teachers, assign strong teachers to teach EOC-tested courses to lower-skilled students, foster a disciplined and caring environment for learning, and put in place an extensive set of curricular, instructional, and assessment practices designed to improve student performance (North Carolina High School Resource Allocation Study, 2008).

According to the North Carolina High School Resource Allocation Study, Beating the Odds (BTO) and Improved High Schools shared a distinctive profile of leadership and associated organizational conditions that contrasted sharply not only with the Low-Performing and Priority schools but also with the High-Performing schools, based on the sample. The BTO-Improved Profile combined well-defined elements of both the will and the capacity to succeed with challenging student populations. The will-related elements included organizational commitment, authoritative accountability leading to internalized and collective responsibility, and resilience. Capacity entailed provision of adequate opportunities and incentives for all students to learn, assured by carefully chosen teachers using certain curricular, instructional, and assessment practices within an orderly and disciplined environment (North Carolina High School Resource Allocation Study, 2008).

Definitions

As one navigates through the current study, a few terms are necessary to define and provide a framework for understanding this overall analysis. Below, definitions are provided for key terms and phrases that will be used throughout this study. (Note: The term *Black* will serve as a synonymous with *African-American* throughout this study.)

Low-Performing High School. An existing educational setting (high school) whose performance composite at the end of an academic year is below 60%. A school is designated as a chronically low-performing school if the performance composite remains at or below 60% for five years; notably, Former North Carolina Governor Mike Easley would eventually change this standard to 55%.

Performance Composite. The percentage of students deemed proficient in the following test administrations of the North Carolina EOC Test: Algebra I, English I, and Biology. For consistency with Judge Manning’s ruling, the performance composite in this study was based on the administration of the following EOC Tests: Algebra I, English I, Biology, U.S. History, and Civics and Economics (NCDPI, 2007).

Historically Black High School. A high school created during historical times of segregation that served Black students. These schools continue to serve a predominately large percentage of Black students in current times. (Note: This terminology has been coined for this dissertation.)

Beat-the-Odds High School. A high school that was originally identified as low-performing, but showed significant improvement with regard to accountability standards, with the challenging student population based on set criteria.

Growth (Growth Designations). Defined by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) as the measure by which schools improve each academic year, schools are designated as “No Growth,” “Met Growth,” and “Exceeds Growth.” This is a formulaic, statistical measure defined by previous performance of students designed to indicate the amount of growth a student ought to obtain within one academic year of instruction. Growth for an entire school is the collective summation of all students and their performance on EOC examinations.

Student Achievement. Achievement in this analysis will be defined on the school’s performance composite, growth designations, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) attainment, Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) attainment, and graduation rates.

School Turnaround. The process that a school undergoes in an effort to increase their student performance, with respect to accountability measures, performance composites, graduation rates, and other indicators. Typically, schools in need of a turnaround are classified as low-performing or priority schools. A successful turnaround is one in which the organization develops processes that moves the organization out of the low-performance designation and is able to sustain higher productivity and measures of performance.

Achievement Gap. The collective disparity of educational measures, statistically analyzed, between African-American students and their counterparts of other ethnicities/races and gender, as well as other appropriate demographic labeling/backgrounds.

School-to-Prison Pipeline. A system of laws, policies, and practices that “push” African-American students out of school and into the juvenile and justice systems. It is designed to perpetuate a segregated and stratified society of individuals (ACS, 2011).

Purposeful Community. Educational community with the capability to develop and use assets to accomplish goals that matter to all community members through agreed-upon processes (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices in a successful organizational turnaround, a Historically Black High School. The researcher designed the study to serve as a framework for struggling schools within the state of North Carolina. This framework coincides with effective organizational restructuring practices for school building principals facilitating best practices in order to achieve student success on a holistic scale. The researcher then attempted to extend the framework to provide the basis of effective

leadership beyond the contextual nature of schooling in North Carolina, but to instead serve as a broad-level framework for schools in other states with the same characteristics of Historically Black High School, specifically in the southern parts of the United States. The current study was also intended to instigate and continue dialogue among educational leaders, policymakers, and researchers to critically examine these schools in the current context, in order to analyze what must be done on a larger scale to ensure Historically Black High Schools are successful with respect to student achievement, the achievement gap, and accountability measures, as well as appropriately funded and able to provide professional staff development to effectively transform and turn schools around.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. Are there organizational practices of principals in Historically Black High Schools that have significantly increased student achievement?
2. Are there leadership practices specific to Historically Black High Schools in building and sustaining high student achievement?
3. What other major factors contributed to significant turnaround and improvement of student performance?

This study worked to answer these questions through qualitative analyses obtained with professional staff who have worked in a turnaround Historically Black High School within the state of North Carolina that showed a great deal of improvement since the ruling of Judge Manning's mandate of 2004.

Significance of the Study

There is little research documenting the impact of effective leaders in Historically Black High Schools, especially low-performing schools serving a populace of Black students. While there is, however, a focus on leadership at the elementary school level, there is less focus on secondary principals in racially homogenous populations, specifically for Black students and how leadership practices affect positive change and student achievement. Additionally, a great deal of existing literature focuses on the implications of segregated schools, problematic structures, and devastating student outcomes, but many do not offer solutions to this problem, especially in the sense of transforming school-building principals through organizational turnaround.

Currently, the gaps in the literature show the need to examine the role of the principal in educational settings in which a turnaround is needed for high-minority populations (in this case, Black students) who have historically been underserved and failed to produce an effective change agent—the principal. This study is significant for that reason, as it provides more insight into the analysis of principals in Historically Black High Schools, effective practices in organizational turnaround within the school, and moving the school forward despite obstacles and adversities faced. Additionally, this study aimed to extend the body of literature on the theoretical underpinnings associated with the notion of building resilience of challenging student populations in developing the capacity for academic success. This study focused on how the principal serves as facilitator of this success through their practice, abilities, and capabilities to invoke change and contextualize the work of other professional staff in improving student performance.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review of literature provides a framework of organizational theory and the reframing of practices within organizational turnaround. References regarding Historically Black High Schools and the North Carolina Turnaround Program are initially stated as a means to give the reader appropriate context to the rich body of available literature. Implications for effective turnaround methodologies within the school setting follow the definitive characteristics and analysis of each organizational reframe. The implications thereof provide pragmatic examples to the context of leadership in successful organizational turnaround. This literature review seeks to specifically explore the research questions of this study:

1. Are there organizational practices of principals in Historically Black High Schools that have significantly increased student achievement?
2. Are there leadership practices specific to Historically Black High Schools in building and sustaining high student achievement?
3. What other major factors contributed to significant turnaround and improvement of student performance?

Historically Black High Schools

In August 1954, in response to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, North Carolina Governor William B. Umstead created a “Governor’s Special Advisory Committee on Education,” with former North Carolina Speaker of the House Thomas Pearsall as chairman. The Advisory Committee, made up of 12 Whites and 3 Blacks, concluded that integration in the public schools could not be accomplished, nor should it be attempted. In

the spring of 1955, the General Assembly enacted the Pupil Assignment Act to delay desegregation by giving local districts control over the assignment of students to particular schools, using race-neutral criteria to block options for African Americans to transfer to White schools (Dunn, 2015).

Later, Governor Luther Hodges continued to stall desegregation in the state. He created a new committee that became known as the Pearsall Committee, chaired by Thomas Pearsall. It had no Black representation, and soon recommended a state constitutional amendment that empowered the General Assembly to enact legislation to circumvent integration. This recommendation became known as the Pearsall Plan. North Carolinians voted 5 to 1 to uphold racial segregation in the state's public schools (Dunn, 2015). However, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 contained a provision prohibiting discrimination in public education, which ultimately declared the Pearsall Plan unconstitutional. Many schools nonetheless continued to allow the components of the Pearsall Plan and racial segregation to continue. It was only when schools were threatened with the loss of federal funds that schools began to integrate. More specifically, the *Godwin v. Johnston County Board of Education* (1969) case ruled the Pearsall Plan unconstitutional (Dunn, 2015).

Education has long been seen as an essential foundation of democracy. The extent to which individuals are afforded the opportunity to obtain knowledge speaks volumes about openness and power relations within any society. For African Americans, the struggle for access and parity in higher education has been emblematic of their larger fight for equality and group recognition in America. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) grew out of and were shaped by a mission to provide the opportunity for Black students to

obtain higher education (Allen & Jewell, 2002). HBCUs were created during the decades after the Civil War to educate the newly freed Black population. The bulk of the nation's public HBCUs emerged as a result of the second Morrill Act of 1890, which enabled southern states that were not willing to integrate their historically White institutions to continue receiving federal higher education funding by establishing a separate group of Black institutions (Gasman, 2009). As direct outgrowths of this struggle, HBCUs embody the African-American quest for education. In the face of numerous obstacles, HBCUs have functioned as multifaceted institutions, providing not only education, but also social, political, and religious leadership for the African-American community (Allen & Jewell, 2002).

Much like HBCUs served as institutions that educated African Americans during a time of segregation and unequal protection of the law, many high schools within the Black community were founded to educate students on the primary and secondary levels. These historical schools that continue to exist serve a predominant population of African-American students and are coined *Historically Black High Schools*.

North Carolina Turnaround Schools Program

Background on the Turnaround Program

In 2005, NCDPI began to organize its program to turn around low-achieving schools in response to judicial and gubernatorial actions (North Carolina General Assembly, 2007; SERVE Center, Friday Institute, & Carolina Institute for Public Policy, 2010). The judicial action was a ruling by Judge Howard Manning, Jr. in the *Leandro v. State of North Carolina* school finance suit. Judge Manning held that North Carolina's Constitution obligates the

state to give every child an opportunity to get a “sound, basic education.” The judge defined such an education not simply in terms of the educational services provided to students, but also in terms of the skills and knowledge that students acquire. He held that students should graduate prepared to compete on an equal basis for employment and post-secondary education. Whether students were making adequate progress toward a sound, basic education was to be measured by whether they achieved proficiency on the state’s End-of-Grade and End-of-Course (EOC) tests. By Judge Manning’s standards, a high school that was failing to enable at least 55% of its students to achieve proficiency was not fulfilling the state’s Constitutional obligation, and a school that persistently fell short of this bar deserved to be closed unless urgent steps were taken to turn it around. Thus, he ruled in 2006 that all high schools with performance composite scores below 55% must be assessed to determine why they were achieving so poorly and how they could be improved. Soon thereafter, Governor Mike Easley raised the bar to 60% (Thompson, Brown, Townsend, Henry, & Fortner, 2011).

In response, during 2005 and 2006, NCDPI sent assessment teams to 44 high schools with performance composites below 60% for two consecutive years (either 2003-04 and 2004-05 or 2004-05 and 2005-06). Of the 44, 8 schools raised their performance composites above the 60% bar in 2005-06. The remaining 35 entered the high school turnaround process in 2006-07. In 2007, an additional 31 high schools with performance composites below 60% for 2005-06 and 2006-07 were identified and entered the turnaround process in the 2007-08 school year, bringing the total number of turnaround high schools to 66 (Thompson et al., 2011).

After they had undergone a comprehensive needs assessment, the 66 turnaround high schools were permitted to choose among several different paths to improvement (SERVE Center, 2007). By partnering with other organizations offering support and permitting schools to choose among sources of support, NCDPI made use of a broad range of existing capacity to assist struggling schools. Fifty-three high schools elected to work primarily with NCDPI itself, or with NCDPI in cooperation with a third-party organization that specializes in assisting struggling schools (Thompson et al., 2011). With these 53 high schools, NCDIP used a “transformation” model emphasizing professional development and coaching at the school and classroom levels. The transformation model sought to change the leadership approach and practices employed in a school, sharpening the school’s focus on student learning, raising academic expectations, improving the use of data to inform decisions, increasing collaboration among teachers, and strengthening parent and community engagement. In addition to professional development and coaching, the transformation model sometimes involved replacement of the principal and several teachers, as well as other instruments of improvement (Thompson et al., 2011).

The turnaround process included three major components: (1) development of a plan consistent with NCDPI’s Framework for Action, (2) a centralized program of professional development for a leadership team from each school, and (3) onsite coaching and school-specific professional development designed to support implementation of the plan as well as other needed changes in the school. The Framework for Action was designed to prove an overall shape and structure for the improvement process. Professional development was designed to help the schools’ leadership teams understand the Framework for Action and

begin to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to implement it. At the same time, an onsite coach and school-specific professional development were made available to help schools develop the practical know-how to carry out their plans and make adjustments along the way (Thompson et al., 2011).

During the 2006-2010 period, NCDPI and its partner organizations worked with 66 low-achieving high schools, 37 middle schools, and 25 elementary schools. A school's *performance composite* is a percentage reflecting the number of End-of-Grade or EOC examinations its students passed out of the total number of examinations taken, and these schools were targeted for intervention primarily because their performance composites fell below 60% for two or more years. Across the elementary, middle, and high school levels, local educators pointed to similar factors contributing to low performance:

- Challenging economic and demographic conditions, whether newly developed or chronic
- Serious and widespread discipline problems
- Low academic demands and expectations among teachers, and low aspirations among students
- High principal and teacher turnover
- Negative school identity in the minds of teachers, students, and the surrounding community
- Ineffective school leadership, ranging from harsh top-down leadership to leaders that are too eager to please and fail to enforce discipline or follow through on decisions

- Alienated teachers marking time in survival mode, isolated within their classrooms (Thompson et al., 2011)

When intervention by NCDIP, the New Schools Project, and other partners was matched by energetic school leadership and district support, teachers took responsibility for student learning, overcame the challenges, and raised student performance, sometimes to striking degrees. The turnaround schools program of intervention included: (1) a requirement that schools submit plans consistent with a Framework for Action designed to focus the school on changing practices believed to affect student achievement, (2) a series of professional development sessions designed to build the schools' capacity to carry out the plans, and (3) follow-up coaching and school-specific professional development, all of which continued for as long as the school's performance composite remained below 60% (Thompson et al., 2011).

In the “stuck schools”—those that had made little or no progress despite strong pressure from Judge Manning and assistance from NCDPI, the New Schools Project, and other organizations enlisted by the NCDPI and local districts—attempts at reform were undermined by stop-and-start reform initiatives with no sustained follow-through, continued principal and teacher turnover, principals who were unable to mobilize teachers behind efforts to enforce discipline and step up demands for academic achievement, and breakdowns in basic policies and procedures at both the district and school levels. Without sustained, competent, and authoritative leadership at both the district and school levels, these schools were simply unable to break out of the doldrums of despair (Thompson et al., 2011).

Framework for Action Plans

Soon after the initiation of NCDPI's turnaround interventions at the high school level, the leaders of the effort formulated the High School Framework for Action which enumerated nine points that each school entering the process was required to address through a formal plan for improvement:

- Plan for ninth-grade transition
- Plan for formative assessment
- Plan for students who are struggling academically
- Plan for address literacy issues and needs
- Plan for professional development based on student achievement data
- Plan for reviewing all school processes and procedures to ensure that they are structured to help all student achieve proficiency
- Process for involving the school community in address the needs of the school
- Process for establishing a professional learning community
- Process for determining whether the school will design or reform (Thompson et al., 2011).

Professional Development

In 2006, Judge Manning issued a call for assistance to low-achieving high schools. UNC System President Erskine Bowles responded by offering professional development services by the Principals' Executive Program (PEP) in collaboration with the Kenan-Flagler Business School at UNC-Chapel Hill (Thompson et al., 2011). The business school's contribution to the professional development program was based on a model that Kenan-

Flagler had developed with the UNC School of Public Health, the Management Academy for Health Professionals (SERVE Center, 2007). The Academy:

teaches public health managers to better manage people, information and finances. Participants learn how to work in teams with community partners and how to think and behave as social entrepreneurs. To practice and blend their new skills, teams develop a business plan that addresses a local public health issue. (SERVE Center, 2007, p. 6)

Participants reported that the program worked to improve their skills in managing people, information, resources, and instruction, and that they had since implemented some new practices in these areas. However, the new skills were not reflected in significant improvements in either Teacher Working Conditions Survey data nor in student achievement scores for the subsequent year (Thompson et al., 2011).

Impact of the Program

The impact of the Turnaround Schools program at the high school level was analyzed via a comparison of student achievement data and graduation rates in change in turnaround high schools with those of a set of high schools that performed only slightly better in the years before the Turnaround Schools intervention began (Thompson et al., 2011). The results revealed that the Turnaround Schools intervention made a significant contribution to improved student test scores in the high schools it served. Though the contribution was modest—about $\frac{3}{4}$ point on average on EOC tests—it grew progressively larger over the period of treatment. This important implication of the findings at the high school level indicated that improvement in the state’s lowest-achieving schools is seldom immediate, but requires sustained support over three or more years (Thompson et al., 2011).

Principals and teachers in the improved schools were learning how to construct and operate a well-functioning school as they were constructing it. The learning process seems nicely captured in contemporary learning theorists' notion of cognitive apprenticeship. Such apprenticeships are "cognitive" in the sense that they involve the acquisition of new ideas and intellectual skills rather than manual arts or crafts. An accomplished practitioner teaches novices by first modeling and explaining good practice, then guiding and coaching the novices as they try it for themselves, and gradually withdrawing support as they gain skill and confidence. New skills are acquired right in the context of use, "scaffolded" by the accomplished practitioner. Consistent with the concept of cognitive apprenticeship, principals and teachers in turnaround schools learned largely from accomplished practitioners in the context of actual use—that is, from leadership and instructional facilitators who were accomplished principals, and from good practices by teachers and coaches right in their schools (Thompson et al., 2011).

Scaffolded Craftsmanship

In virtually every case in the improved schools, the turnaround process began with the appointment of a new principal who replaced a substantial number of teachers and sparked a series of changes focused on key areas of school operation, including: (1) the commitment, climate, and culture affecting student learning; (2) the knowledge and skills that school leaders, teachers, and other staff bring to their jobs; (3) the structures and processes that support instruction within the school; and (4) the strength of linkages between the school and both the district central office and the community served by the school. This change process has been characterized and coined as *scaffolded craftsmanship*. The scaffolding consisted of

the Framework for Action, professional development, and coaching provided by the NCDPI and its partner organizations (Thompson et al., 2011).

Commitment, Climate, and Culture

In the area of commitment, climate, and culture, successful school leaders simultaneously asserted strong accountability pressures as they cultivated relationships of trust, and as they engaged the teaching staff more actively in planning, making policy, and solving problems within the school. In improved schools, it appears to have been this paradoxical combination of strengthened accountability pressures and tighter professional ties that mobilized teachers and other staff behind the leadership's new goals, standards, and policies. This new commitment led teachers to challenge students with more demanding lessons and assignments (Thompson et al., 2011).

Accountability pressures within the context of strong relationships and engagement of teachers in planning and problem-solving generated commitment to new goals and standards for student behavior and learning. Similarly, strong and consistently enforced discipline policies, together with energetic efforts to cultivate caring relationships with students, combined to help schools create safer and more orderly environments. But while the initial mobilization of commitment seems to have been crucial, it does not seem to have been sufficient to consummate the culture-building process. *Culture* is defined as beliefs, expectations, and norms that have a force of their own in shaping teachers' and students' ongoing behavior. In the improved schools of turnaround, culture-building and improved performance were part of a spiraling process. Assertive accountability, strengthened

relationships, shared decision-making, and an infusion of new colleagues begot commitment to new goals and standards (Thompson et al., 2011).

In successful turnaround schools, a parallel combination of tough assertion and strengthened relationships, between leaders and staff on the one hand and students on the other, appears to have produced an environment that was substantially more orderly and conducive to learning (Thompson et al., 2011). At the low ebb, most improved high schools were challenged simultaneously by serious problems of discipline and low expectations for student achievement, and the early actions that successful leaders took combined attention to both issues. Action on both issues generally involved a combination of tough assertion and active efforts to forge bonds and mobilize engagement. Over time, these processes led to the creation of a more orderly and caring environment, and to the establishment of a climate of stronger pressure and rising expectations for student learning (Thompson et al., 2011).

Throughout the high schools that made substantial progress, principals held all teachers strictly accountable for implementing the policies. They tracked implementation by gathering information from classroom visits, chats with students and other teachers, records of referrals, and reports from assistant principals (Thompson et al., 2011). Another major factor in most of the successful principals' ability to mobilize teachers' energies behind the push to improve performance in their schools was the replacement of a substantial number of teachers and other staff. The principal of the most improved schools and some moderately improved schools had hired as many as half of the teachers in the school (Thompson et al., 2011). Yet, it is also clear that personnel replacement is not by itself the key to turning around a low-performing school. After all, most of these schools had been plagued for years

by rapid turnover of principals as well as teachers, and the resulting instability had undermined repeated attempts to build a faculty unified behind strong discipline policies and higher academic standards. Without stable, competent, open leadership from the principal, paired with careful selection of the new teachers and strategic management of core instructional processes, personnel replacement is just turnover (Thompson et al., 2011).

Thus, through a combination of (a) holding teachers responsible for student achievement and for enforcing discipline, (b) simultaneously cultivating close, trusting relationships with teachers, and (c) bringing in a new cadre of teachers with energy for reform and allegiance to the principal and his reform program, the principals in the most improved and moderately improved high schools and mobilized broad commitment to the school's new standards, goals, and policies (Thompson et al., 2011).

Improved schools used a variety of devices to communicate new and higher expectations for their students. For instance, principals met with students frequently to stress the importance of academic work. A major challenge in establishing higher expectations for academic performance was overcoming the ingrained belief that poor or mediocre performance was best that could be expected of students. Despite this, accountability pressures within the context of strong relationships and engagement of teachers in planning and problem-solving generated commitment to new goals and standards for student behavior and learning. Strong and consistently enforced discipline policies, together with energetic efforts to cultivate caring relationships with students, combined to help schools create safe and more orderly environments (Thompson et al., 2011).

Improved Knowledge and Skills

School leaders' and teachers' knowledge and skills—the “human capital” available to the school—were improved through three main approaches: selectively replacing administrators and teachers, focusing professional development on the school's most pressing problems, and providing sustained follow-through with coaching at both the leadership and instructional levels. In most improved high schools, the installation of a new principal was generally followed by replacement of a substantial number of teachers. New teachers brought new energy and commitment as well as new talents to the school, but in the short term, personnel replacement sometimes exacerbated mistrust between administrators and staff as well as among teachers themselves. Successful principals devoted substantial time and care to mending these frayed bonds. When teachers new to the school were also novices in teaching, professional development to strengthen their classroom management skills and knowledge of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study was also necessary to transform their potential into improved performance. Without this follow-through, personnel replacement can be viewed as simply another form of turnover. Coaching from leadership and instructional facilitators complemented personnel replacement as a strategy for building human capital (Thompson et al., 2011).

Structures and Support for Instruction

To make effective use of the increased commitment, order, and demands for performance, as well as new knowledge and skills, carefully crafted structures and support for instruction were required in turnaround schools. However, instruction had not been strategically organized or managed in these schools. Needed improvements included more

systematic attention to (1) coordinating curriculum and assigning students and teachers strategically; (2) supervising instruction, building professional community, and using multiple forms of assessment to guide revision of curriculum and teaching as well as to pinpoint the objectives that individual students are having trouble with; and (3) organizing extra assistance for struggling students (Thompson et al., 2011).

External Support

Improved schools also took advantage of opportunities for external support by having stronger links with district central office administrators and the broader communities served by the school. For instance, school leaders often hosted meetings and offered building tours to school boards and county commissioners. They also involved parents in major school cleanup efforts, organized mentorship programs in partnership with local businesses, spoke at churches and civic clubs, and used a variety of other devices to improve the school's relationships with the surrounding community (Thompson et al., 2011).

Supervising Instruction, Building Professional Community, and Using Assessments

In addition to structuring and supervising instruction closely and leveraging external support, principals in improved schools organized teachers into collaborative groups. This created a strong complement to administrative supervision that came from collaborating groups of teachers. These groups took different forms in different schools, but were referred to across schools as *professional communities*, or *professional learning communities (PLC)*. In these groups, teachers worked together to develop pacing guides and lesson plans, observed and gave each other feedback, created formative assessments, and used the results to improve their teaching as well as to pinpoint which of their students needed further

instruction, and for which objective(s). One step in the creation of PLCs was to schedule common planning times for the teachers of a subject, or sometimes more specifically, of a course that used an EOC Test (Thompson et al., 2011).

Another strategy promoted the use of benchmark and formative assessment to check students' learning regularly, which helped to guide the assistance provided for struggling students, as well as to hone and improve weak areas in teaching (Thompson et al., 2011). To ensure that the North Carolina Standard Course of Study was taught effectively, a pacing guide was developed that was coordinated with benchmark assessments for checking students' progress at regular intervals. This helped teachers distribute learning objectives effectively over time, while also giving them the information they need to hone their pedagogy as required for better student performance. In most of the improved high schools, pacing guides and benchmark assessments were either modified or actually developed by collaborating groups of teachers within individual schools. Using common lesson formats and holding frequent classroom observation were also regular practices in the improved schools, although they took various forms in different schools (Thompson et al., 2011).

Organizing Assistance for Struggling Students

In improved schools, principals and teachers did provide extra help to struggling students, and they focused the help by using information from benchmark tests and formative assessments. Because transportation was limited and because some students either worked or had responsibility for younger siblings, many students apparently found it difficult to get to school early or stay late for extra help. Improved high schools scheduled periods during the regular school day for this purpose (Thompson et al., 2011).

Section Summary

Of note is the fact that principals who demonstrate the ability to turn around a struggling school seem to attract attention and job offers from other districts and agencies who need their skill. When the culture of a school has changed in a deep way, with productive norms and routines established, the school may be able to withstand setbacks of many sorts. However, the loss of a turnaround principal and his or her key lieutenant, whether they are assistant principals, lead teachers, or others, may prove more than even the most resilient school can withstand. But it is at the beginning of the turnaround process and at times of leadership transition that district action is not just helpful but appears to be critical. So, if district leaders are ready to step in, reassure the staff, and select a new principal who can rapidly win teachers' confidence, they may be able to sustain the momentum and continue turning the school around (Thompson et al., 2011).

The former body of literature provides context to the case of the Historically Black High School and the framework of turnaround schools. The following section examines the bases of facilitating successful, organizational turnaround, beginning with an understanding of organizational frames.

Overview of Organizational Frames

In describing frames, Bolman and Deal (2003) mixed metaphors in referencing them as windows, maps, tools, lenses, orientations, and perspectives, because all of those images capture part of the ecumenical idea to convey. As a mental map, a *frame* is a set of ideas or assumptions one can carry, which helps one to understand and negotiate a particular "territory." Frames are windows on the world of leadership and management, and a good

frame makes it easier to know what one is up against and what can be done about it. Frames are also tools for navigation, with every tool having distinctive strengths and limitations; the right tool makes a job easier, but the wrong one can get in the way. The four frames described in organizational literatures are: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Drawing from sociology and management science, the structural frame emphasizes goals, specialized roles, and formal relationships. Structures, commonly depicted by organizational charts, are designed to fit an organization's environment and technology. Organizations then allocate responsibilities to participants, a sort of division of labor. They create rules, policies, procedures, and hierarchies to coordinate diverse activities into a unified strategy. Problems arise when structure is poorly aligned with current circumstances. At that point, some form of reorganization, redesign, or turnaround is need to remedy the mismatch (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Second is the human resource frame, an organizational concept embedded into the human side of the workplace. Based particularly on ideas from psychology, the human resource frame sees an organization as much like an extended family, made up of individuals with varied needs, feelings, prejudices, skills, and limitations. The frame acknowledges that people have a great capacity to learn, yet often possess even greater capacity to defend old attitudes and beliefs. Thus, from a human resources perspective, the key challenge is to tailor organizations to individuals—that is, to find ways for people to get the job done while feeling good about what they are doing (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The third frame is the political frame, which sees organizations as arenas, contests, or jungles wherein parochial interests compete for power and scarce resources. In these arenas, conflict is rampant because of enduring differences in needs, perspectives, and lifestyles among competing individuals and groups. Thus, bargaining, negotiation, coercion, and compromise as tools for dealing with conflict are a normal part of everyday life. Coalitions form around specific interests, and change as issues come and go (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

With an emphasis on cultural change as the key to organizational transformation, the symbolic frame draws on social and cultural anthropology and treats organizations as tribes, theaters, or carnivals. It abandons assumptions of rationality that are more prominent in other frames, seeing organizations as cultures which are propelled more by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths than by rules, policies, or managerial authority. In this symbolic frame, organization is also viewed as theatre; actors play their roles in the organizational drama, while audiences form impressions from what they see (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Each of these four frames has its own image of reality. Some frames may seem clear and straightforward, while others are more puzzling. However, it is by learning to apply all four that a leader can deepen his or her appreciation and understanding of an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The following review of literature explores the four frames of organizations and its implications to school leaders in turning around low-performing schools. The discussion then provides pragmatic examples of leadership practices in the context that are aligned and specific to each frame.

Structural Frame

The structural frame looks beyond individuals to examine the social architecture of work. It is based upon the notion that an organization often misdirects energy and resources if structure is overlooked. The right structure depends on prevailing circumstances and considers an organization's unique goals, strategies, technology, and environment. By understanding the complexity and variety of design possibilities, organizations can help create structures that work for, rather than against, both their people and purposes (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

At the heart of organization design is the foundational concept that every living system finds a way to create specialized roles. There are two primary design issues in organizational structure: how to allocate work (differentiation), and how to coordinate roles and units once responsibilities have been parceled out (integration). For both of these, division of labor is the cornerstone (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Leaders who wish to see improvements in the school are charged with creating opportunities that amalgamate differentiation and integration within the structure of the organization's labor. They can channel behavior by assigning a job that tells someone what to do, or not to do, to accomplish a specific task, through things like job descriptions, procedures, routines, or rules (Mintzberg, 1979). Arguably, formal constraints on one's job can be burdensome and lead to apathy, absenteeism, and resistance (Argyris, 1957, 1964), but they do help ensure predictability, uniformity, and reliability. Once an organization specifies positions or roles, leaders face a second set of key decisions—how to group people

into working units, known as the task of integration. Mintzberg (1979) suggests several basic options:

- Functional groups based on knowledge or skill
- Units created on the basis of time
- Groups organized by product
- Groups established around customers or clients
- Groups organized around place or geography
- Groups organized by process

Creating roles and units yields the benefit of specialization, but creates problems of coordination and control (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Successful organizations employ a variety of methods in order to coordinate individual and group efforts and link local initiatives with corporation-wide goals. They do this in two primary ways: vertically, through the formal chain of command; and laterally, through meetings, committees, coordinating roles, or network structures (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Team Structure and High Performance

Structure is critical to team functioning (Bolman & Deal, 2003). A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Six distinguishing characteristics of high-performing teams have been identified by Katzenbach and Smith (1993):

- High-performing teams shape purpose in response to a demand or an opportunity place in their path, usually by higher management.

- High-performing teams translate common purpose into specific, measure performance goals. Purpose yields an overall mission, but successful teams take the additional step of recasting purpose into specific and measurable performance goals:

If a team fails to establish specific performance goals or if those goals do not relate directly to the team's overall purpose, team members become confused, pull apart, and revert to mediocre performance. By contrast, when purpose and goals are built on one another and are combined with team commitment, they become a powerful engine of performance. (p. 113)

Specific goals define collective products of work, facilitate clear communication and constructive conflict, keep the team focused on getting results, and offer a yardstick for gauging small wins along the way.

- High-performing teams are of manageable size, with the optimal size for an effective team falling somewhere between 2 and 25 people.
- High-performing teams have the right mix of expertise, stressing the critical link between specialization and expertise that is part of the structural frame. Effective teams should seek out the full range of necessary technical fluency, as teams that include a variety of complementary skills are apt to be more successful. In addition, exemplary teams find and reward expertise in problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills to keep the group focused, on task, and free of debilitating personal squabbles.
- High-performing teams develop a common commitment to working relationships.
“Team members must agree on who will do particular jobs, how schedules will be set

and adhered to, what skills need to be developed, how continuing membership in the team is to be earned, and how the group will make and modify decisions” (p. 115).

Moreover, effective teams take the time to explore who is best suited for a particular task, as well as how individual roles come together.

- Members of high-performing teams hold themselves collectively accountable.

Although some may argue that pinpointing individual responsibility is crucial to a well-coordinated effort, effective teams still find ways to hold the collective group accountable: “Teams enjoying a common purpose and approach inevitably hold themselves responsible, both as individuals and as a team, for the team’s performance” (p. 116).

To sum up, the structural frame mandates that a focused, cohesive structure is a foundation for high-performing teams. Even highly skilled people zealously pursuing a shared mission will falter and fail if group structure constantly generates confusion and frustration (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Leadership Implications of the Structural Frame

Structures and procedures tend to accumulate (Goodman, 1982) in failing organizations, so that “decreases in structure occur at a slower rate during decline and in some cases may even increase” (Ford, 1980, p. 595). Turnaround managers and analysts disclose the importance of changing organizational structures and processes in the service of organizational recovery, as the ways in which people and systems are organized in troubled organizations “can have a major impact on effectiveness” (Grinyer, Mayes, & McKiernan, 1988, p. 141). New structures are therefore required to effectively implement turnaround

plans (Motroni, 1992) and accomplish new visions and missions. Failure often occurs because new strategies and goals are not accompanied by “the organizational changes need to accomplish them” (Mirvis, Ayas, & Roth, 2003, p. 45). Grzymala-Busse (2002) notes that “significant organizational changes” are often essentials to make “programmatically transformation feasible, credible and sustainable” (p. 52). In fact, such significant organizational change may be necessary to ensure that refocusing actually occurs (Slatter, 1984). Large payoffs can result from thoughtful efforts to strengthen organizational processes and structures, especially in conjunction with the other pillars of recovery (Khandwalla, 1983-1984). Grinyer and Spender (1979) posit that structural change is one of the four key elements of turnaround work, which include structure, strategy, personnel, and ideology. Rosenblatt, Rogers, and Nord (1993) similarly view structure as one of three key components of recovery, along with perception and politics.

Within the structural frame, various leadership practices are aligned with organizational turnaround. Consistent with the current study and its related research questions, crucial elements in the juxtaposition of leadership practices and organizational turnaround in the context of the school environment relate to primary and secondary conditions, strengthening the academic program, improving instruction and professional development, and redesigning the organization. The next section explores what these aforementioned areas are comprised of in a successful school turnaround.

Primary and Secondary Conditions

When it comes to turning around a low-performing school, there is no substitute for leaders with expertise in organization diagnostics (Duke, 2010). New principals are likely to

be confronted with a set of inherited conditions of leading a low-performing school, which can be divided into primary and secondary conditions. Primary conditions involve student learning and behavior, while secondary conditions are school-based conditions that are likely to influence student learning and behavior (Duke, 2010).

Literacy. All low-performing schools have one condition in common—a significant number of students struggle with aspects of literacy (Duke, Tucker, Salmonowicz, & Levy, 2007; Stullich, Eisner, & McCrary, 2007). Literacy problems subsume a variety of distinct issues, from vocabulary, reading comprehension, and phonemic awareness, to listening and writing. Thus, literacy is the key that unlocks the door to all subjects (Duke, 2010).

Absenteeism. Student attendance constitutes another primary condition. Academic achievement results from exposure to good instruction, so students who miss a lot of school get less instruction and are at risk of falling behind in their assignments. Notably, low-performing schools are often characterized by much higher absenteeism rates than other schools. It should be noted that some absenteeism may in part be a function of discipline problems; when students disobey school rules, they are subject to suspension, and expulsion may even be warranted if the offenses are serious enough. Other students miss school not because they misbehave, but because they fear for their own safety in school (Duke, 2010). When a school is subject to high levels of absenteeism and behavior problems, teachers and administrators must devote significant portion of their time and energy to checking on attendance and taking action for discipline. As a result, they are less able to concentrate on teaching and instructional support (Duke, 2010).

Time and schedule. It takes time during the school day for teams of teachers and school leaders to collaborate on analyzing student achievement data, developing lesson plans, and aligning the curriculum with state standards. Time also is needed to plan and implement interventions to help struggling students. Whether adequate time is available to support these activities is a function of the school schedule. Turnaround specialists have therefore frequently noted that low-performing schools lacked a daily schedule that facilitated teamwork and instructional interventions (Duke, 2010). School leaders must examine the school schedule in order to find times when teachers can meet together on a regular basis (Duke, 2010), if the school is to be successful.

School-based conditions. High-poverty schools can in fact succeed, which suggests that chronically low-performing schools with large numbers of poor students must have conditions at the school that are contributing in some way to their academic problems. The secondary conditions for business for school leaders in these schools to address, therefore, is to determine what school-based conditions need to be improved (Duke, 2010).

Professional development. In a survey of 430 schools identified as needing improvement under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002) school leaders reported the greatest need for assistance concerned the professional development of teachers (Stullich et al., 2007). Yet without a focused mission and limited set of specific improvement targets, it is difficult for school leaders to know how to allocate scarce resources for professional development, and to determine if their efforts are producing desired results (Duke, 2010).

Curriculum. One reason why some schools are designated as low-performing is that students are not being taught content based on state curriculum guidelines aligned to the state tests. In some cases, little effort has been made to have teachers design lessons according to the approved content standards. In others, there have been curriculum alignment efforts, but school leaders have failed to monitor classroom instruction carefully to ensure the curriculum is taught as designed (Duke, 2010). Additionally, school leaders must be aware of struggling students, understand why students are struggling, and know the competence of the educator working with the struggling student. Commitment and persistence are other conditions needed to ensure effective assistance is available to every student who struggles (Duke, 2010). School leaders should also make an effort to engage teachers in developing comprehensive checklists of possible interventions that can be used as part of regular class instruction (Duke, 2010). To ensure that teachers persist in their delivery of assistance, school leaders must check on struggling students on a regular basis, and inquire as to what strategies teachers are using and their effectiveness (Duke, 2010).

Triaging students. A turnaround school cannot continue to improve if it leaves some groups of student behind. While triaging students may help schools attain acceptable passing rates on state tests and thereby avoid sanctions, it leaves highly needy students in precarious circumstances. Left unassisted, these students become prime candidates for dropping out of school. Since graduation rates now are examined as part of educational accountability systems, high schools will eventually pay the price for triaging students in elementary and middle schools (Duke, 2010).

Tracking progress. Interestingly, high-achieving students are another group that may not necessarily benefit from the initial school turnaround initiatives. In analyzing test results, school leaders must be careful to track the progress of students who previously performed at the top of their class. If the percentage of high-achieving students drops, even as the scores of low-achievers improve, efforts must be made to address the needs of high-achievers (Duke, 2010).

Strengthening the Entire Academic Program

Teachers who wish to strengthen their school's academic program must provide quality content that is challenging to students. If teachers concentrate solely on getting students to pass state tests, students are likely to miss out on developing an in-depth understanding of the various academic subjects. To ensure that students are exposed to challenging content in high school may require a reduction in low-level courses (Duke, 2010). Assigning students to basic and remedial courses tends to have the adverse impact of them developing less positive attitudes about themselves, and having lower aspirations than their counterparts in honors or advance courses (Oakes, 1985; Weinstein, 2002). Moreover, the quality of instruction in low-track classes often is questionable, in part because less experienced teachers frequently are assigned to teach these classes (Duke, 2010). Turning around a low-performing school can produce new structural arrangements, such as school improvement teams, vertical and horizontal groups of teachers, and instructional intervention teams (Duke, 2010).

For his or her part in turning the entire academic program around, the school principal's assessment process should include an analysis of the school improvement plan, an

examination of school achievement data, and a comparison of student work related to the state standards in reading, language, and math to increase achievement. It should also include an examination of the status of the present level and type of parent, community, business, and university support, a budget analysis for optimal leveraging of resources, and facility and personnel management reviews (Ward, 2004). In addition, the principal must monitor classroom instruction on a daily basis, with formal teacher assessments that can include classroom observations, individual meetings, and an analysis of classroom test scores. Teachers can also be coached on individual professional development and career plans (Ward, 2004). Educational excellence among low-income children can no longer be seen as the work of isolated superstars (Carter, 2000).

Principals can also affect other student outcomes, including reducing student absences and suspensions and improving graduation rates. Principals in low-achieving or high-poverty, minority schools tend to have a greater impact on student outcomes than principals at less challenging schools (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Unfortunately, principals typically transfer to less challenging schools as they gain experience (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2011).

Improving Instruction

One of the conditions most frequently noted by the turnaround specialists was ineffective instruction. Ineffective instruction goes beyond failing to teach required content. It involves how well content is taught, required or not. Concerns are noted include teachers' failing to inform students of lesson objectives and giving unclear or misleading directions.

Notably, teachers in low-performing schools often neglected to differentiate instruction based on student needs, and did not reteach material to students who did not get it right the first time. Lessons frequently lacked the high degree of structure that many at-risk students need. Considerable instructional time was lost because teachers had to deal with classroom management issues (Duke, 2010).

Effective principals should spend time in classrooms to evaluate instruction or, especially in the case of secondary schools where they cannot be reasonably expected to be experts in all academic disciplines, they must ensure that someone who is qualified does so. Principals should make close observations of what is and is not working, and discuss what they have found with teachers. In the cause of improving instruction, effective principals take advantage of the collaborative culture they work to create in their schools (Mendels, 2012). To create opportunities for teacher collaboration and learning, supervisory leaders across school sites turned to the school schedule to create the time and endorsement for this kind of work to occur. Some principals moved to a block schedule, others gave up administrative meeting time to build in more planning time for teachers, while others used the master schedule as a tool to create opportunities and accommodate various teacher professional development activities, such as lab sites, peer observations, grade-level meetings, and professional development sessions (Portin, Knapp, Dareff, Feldman, Russell, Samuelson, & Ling Yeh, 2009).

While both effective and ineffective principals said they frequently visit classrooms, effective principals made feedback to help improve their teachers' performance, no matter if the teacher was a novice or a veteran (Louis et al., 2010). Effective principals emphasize

research-based strategies to improve teaching and learning, and initiate discussions about instructional approaches, both in teams and with individual teachers. The Wallace Foundation found that principals who were highly rated overall by their teachers ranked high in both giving specific instructional guidance and setting an overall tone of research-based instruction (Seashore-Louis, et.al. 2010). They pursue these strategies despite the preference of many teachers to be left alone (Wallace Foundation, 2013). This includes providing support to teachers by having regular, ongoing, and informal interactions with them throughout the year, rather than simply wait for the annual, formal evaluations to give feedback (Wallace Foundation, 2013). By making more unscheduled observations and providing immediate feedback, effective principals are more likely to provide their teachers with the support and motivation they need to be good teachers (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Professional Development

Turnaround schools make progress because the entire organization learns new tasks and how to do old tasks better (Zimmerman, 1991), and at the heart of transition toward recovery is extensive training (DeWitt, Harrigan, & Newman, 1998). Studies regularly reveal that employees in failing firms lack appropriate skills and abilities (Contino & Lorusso, 1982; Finkin, 1985), and that systems for correcting the deficiency are conspicuous by their absence (Umbreit, 1996). Thus, to help build the infrastructure to support the strengthening of teams and get teachers and school leaders to employ new strategies, training is almost always required (Mirvis et al., 2003).

Teachers can develop competency by sharing with each other in various kinds of teams. They also can acquire competence through staff and professional development

activities. In dozens of case studies of successful school turnarounds, virtually every case involves additional training for teachers—but not just any training; staff and professional development must target specific areas of need (Duke, 2010). Staff development in many low-performing schools was judged to have been ineffective, either because it was too highly generalized to be of practical value, or it was not linked to programs in place at the school. Another component of ineffective staff development involved the failure of outside resource people to work with teachers over an extended period of time. So-called one-shot workshops were regarded as relatively unproductive, given the extensive needs of teachers in chronically low-performing schools (Duke, 2010). Indeed, the inadequate training of teachers is the single most debilitating force at work in American classrooms today. Overcoming this failure is perhaps the greatest accomplishment of high-performing, high-poverty schools (Carter, 2000), as high-poverty schools have the hardest time attracting qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 1999). All high-performing schools must make it their professional obligation to improve the daily course of instruction, because teacher quality has to improve first before academic outcomes can (Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

Redesigning the Organization

In school turnaround efforts, it is essential that effective leaders redesign the organization as part of the structural frame. In this category of successful practices, Leithwood and Riehl (2005) include building a collaborative school culture, creating structures to encourage participation in decision-making, and building productive relationships with parents and the wider community. Successful principals in most counties

encourage cultures of collaboration by distributing leadership and de-privatizing teaching practice.

Providing opportunities for individuals and groups of teachers to examine new research and innovative practices is another important responsibility for school leaders (Duke, 2010). Involving teachers in the process of evaluating how well new programs have been implemented has been found to be an effective way to promote teacher growth (Manning, Sisserson, Jolliffe, Buenrostro, & Jackson, 2008). This is because, when teachers participate in determining the extent to which new practices are being adopted by their colleagues, their own understanding of these practices is enhanced (Duke, 2010).

Human Resource Frame

The human resource frame highlights the relationship between people and organizations. Organizations need people for such things as energy, effort, and talent, and people need organizations for the many intrinsic and extrinsic rewards they offer—but these respective needs are not always aligned. When the fit between people and organizations is poor, one or both suffer; individuals may feel neglected or oppressed, and organizations sputter because individuals withdraw their efforts or even work against organizational purposes. Many highly successful organizations utilize the human resource frame by investing in people on the premise that a highly motivated and skilled workforce is a powerful competitive advantage (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Unfortunately, many, if not most, organizations either lack an explicit human resource philosophy or ignore the one they espouse. Yet success often hinges on a thoughtful, explicit strategy for managing people. Strong companies are therefore clear about the kinds

of people they want, and only hire those who fit the mold. To get and keep the people they want, successful companies attempt to keep employees, protect jobs, promote from within, and share the wealth among employees (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The research associated with the human resource frame explores this frame and its connection to leadership practices that result in successful school turnaround. In this discussion, areas such as internal and external factors, development of people, motivation and morale, teamwork, efficacy, and capacity-building will be examined.

Internal and External Factors

Leithwood (2005) outlines both internal and external conditions that help create successful leaders within schools. These characteristics have served as beneficial to principals who have the goal of transforming school performance.

The internal conditions of successful leaders are purposefully created and orchestrated, and include trust, collaboration, innovation, and a relentless focus on teaching and learning that are not randomly allocated or aligned. Successful leaders brought key dispositions, skills, and cognitive styles to their work, such as tremendous passion and enthusiasm for the education of children. This enthusiasm or passion was typically harnessed to an ethic of care, a set of values about social justice and the equitable education of all students. Effective principals' high need to achieve the goals established for their schools, paired with their considerable persistence and optimism in pursuit of those goals, provide a substantial part of the explanation for their success. These successful leaders also demonstrated a high degree of emotional sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of their

colleagues, as well as to the parents and students served by their schools (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). The external factors are discussed herein in the Political Frame section.

Amalgamating the internal and external factors of schools and leaders within the confines of the schools, Leithwood (2005) developed a list of practices of effective leaders. These practices are aimed at the basics of successful leadership, and include setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization.

Development of People: Mobilizing, Growing, and Empowering

Another attribute of effective leadership deals with the development of people. Success depends on the ability of the organization to grow its people (Mirvis et al., 2003). Growing people is comprised of three overlapping dimensions: empowering people, building teams, and training employees (Murphy & Meyers, 2009). Goldstein (1988) declares that to truly energize the organization, employees must actively participate in the turnaround program.

Among the practices in this category, Leithwood and Riehl (2005) include supporting individual colleagues' ideas and initiatives, modeling important values and practices, and providing intellectual stimulation, such as by reflecting on existing practices, questioning taken-for-granted assumptions, and considering new practices. U. S. leaders were reputed to mentor their colleagues, as well as to model the values and instructional practices considered productive for their schools. Most successful leaders were also reported to be visible and accessible to staff, students, and parents, and so were readily available to provide assistance as needed (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). It should additionally be noted that the perception of a leader's fairness, or the lack thereof, has been found to influence the willingness of

organization members to extend the extra effort necessary to mobilize a turnaround (Zimmerman, 1991).

As products, markets, and organizations become more complex, the value of people's knowledge and skills must likewise increase. Undertrained workers hurt organizations in many ways, leading to shoddy quality, poor service, higher costs, and expensive mistakes. Yet many organizations are reluctant to invest in developing their human capital, because despite the fact that training costs are immediate and easy to measure, the benefits are more elusive and often only realized in the long-term. Even still, the human resource-oriented organization must embrace training while also recognizing that learning must occur on the job as well as in the classrooms (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Learning in an organization takes place when three elements are in the workplace: good mentors who teach others, a management system that lets people try new things as much as possible, and a very good exchange with the environment (Aubrey & Tilliette, 1990).

Progressive organizations empower employees as well as invest in their professional and personal development. Such organizations also encourage autonomy and participation, redesign work, and foster teams (Bolman & Deal, 2003). It is essential that in growing an organization, members feel empowered to make choices and be a part of the decision-making processes. Factors that contribute to such a feeling include motivation and morale, grouping, teamwork, and communities.

Motivation and morale. Turnaround artists hold that “a motivation climate must be set” (Ross & Kami, 1973, p. 30). Similarly, Deutschman (2005) argues that we must figure out how to motivate people on the basis of their seeing and experiencing that they can feel

better. In most turnaround schools, it should be noted, teachers do not feel they are the source of the solution; if anything, they are given the message that they are part of the problem.

According to turnaround analysts, “the rallying and mobilizing function” (Khandwalla, 1983-1984, p. 13) is a central element of rebuilding the work ethic in a troubled firm, especially given trauma that accompanies failure and the types of reforms associated with the retrenchment phase of reintegration (Bibeault, 1982; Slatter, 1984). Further, Bibeault (1982) and Shook (1990) hold that letting employees in a troubled organization get to know the leader personally and vice-versa is a robust motivational strategy.

One of the strongest themes that emerged from studies of turnaround was the need for leaders to gain the commitment to motivate and harness the energies of people at all levels within the company purposively (Grinyer et al., 1988). Studies of successful organizational recovery expose motivation as the engine to “get the necessary enthusiasm and commitment to make a difficulty change” (Grinyer et al., 1988, p. 127). Motivation also works to sustain reform (Bibeault, 1982), to “restore the confidence of the employees that they can succeed in turning the company around” (Finkin, 1987, p. 29). Khandwalla (1983-1984) documents an assortment of motivational mechanisms, including “greater challenge in the job, peer-group pressures, competition for excellence, a sense of participation, operating autonomy coupled with fairly clear responsibility for performance, and example setting.”

Morale increases when leaders build confidence, a shared belief in the management mission and a growing conviction that the frustrations of the past are on the way out and a new period of success is on the way in (Goodman, 1982). Morale keeps as a culture of positivism and a climate of success begin to spread (Grinyer et al., 1988; Magee, 2003).

Morale is associated with what Zimmerman (1991) identifies as “an atmosphere of justice” (p. 190), with evidence suggesting that “successful turnaround companies embrace traditional concepts of morality and fairness” (p. 259).

Years of teaching in a low-performing school can undermine teachers’ confidence and sense of efficacy. Successful turnaround specialists understand the necessity of taking actions to raise the self-efficacy of individual faculty members, as well as to boost the collective efficacy of the entire faculty. Two keys to this process are teamwork and training (Duke, 2010). Additionally, recognition for and appreciation of contributions have been connected to enhanced morale in organizational recovery (Zimmerman, 1991).

Grouping. Groups are indispensable in modern organizations. They solve problems, make decisions, coordinate work, promote information-sharing, build participation and commitment, and negotiate disputes (Handy, 1993). Groups operate on two levels: an overt, conscious level focused on task, and another, more implicit level of process that emphasizes group maintenance and interpersonal dynamics (Bales, 1970).

In groups and teams, roles are often much more informal and implicit, with both tasks and personal dimensions. The correct setting of task roles helps get the work done and makes optimal use of each member’s resources. Every group develops informal rules to live by, norms that govern how the group functions and how the members conduct themselves (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Moreover, group members hold each other accountable for adhering to the norms established by the group. These norms are necessary in moving a collective group forward with the same vision, expectations, and purpose. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) found that a key characteristic of high-performance teams was mutual accountability,

fostered when leaders shared in the work and team members shared in the leadership. Indeed, leadership plays a critical role in group effectiveness and individual satisfaction, and effective leaders are sensitive to both task and process; they enlist others actively in managing both (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Teamwork. Especially in a turnaround situation in which the problems are deep-seated and the organization is after a breakthrough into unaccustomed high performance, the best in teamwork is required to get the best in performance from personnel (Goodman, 1982). Teamwork provides the launching pad for sustaining rejuvenation (Stopford & Baden-Fuller, 1990), as a well-orchestrated corporate comeback requires a team of trained people (Goldstein, 1988). For an organization in a spiral of failure to rebound, members of the institution need to become especially effective in working together (Finkin, 1987; Stewart, 1984).

The sociotechnical systems perspective emphasizes a close connection between work design and teamwork. Likert (1961) argued that an organization chart should depict not a hierarchy of individual jobs, but instead a set of interconnected teams. Each team would be highly effective in its own right, and linked to other teams via individuals who served as “linking pins” (Bolman & Deal, 2003). In fact, the failure of teachers in many low-performing schools to meet and review student test data was symptomatic of a more general lack of teamwork. In these schools, teachers tended to work in isolation, academic and behavioral issues were rarely addressed collectively, and teachers did little planning in groups. However, by shifting some responsibility for student performance from individuals

to teams, principals can promote a spirit of cooperation and reduce feelings of isolation (Duke, 2010).

Improving adult performance at every level in schools and districts requires teamwork and collaboration that produces new learning and solves the inevitable problems of practice that emerge during adaptive work. Sharing problems helps to provide a good means of identifying and exploring standards of practice, which can be adapted to the particular situation of a particular classroom (Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, & Garnier, 2006). To ensure that the curriculum content at each grade level is articulated, teachers from different grade levels also need to work together. Additionally, vertical teams of teachers should be formed to review instructional objectives and lesson content on a periodic basis (Duke, 2010).

Research on team learning at the Harvard Business School stresses that the strongest predictor of real engagement is the level of psychological safety or trust that exists within a group (Edmonson, 2002). The presence or absence of a trust culture can be traced directly back to the leadership of the turnaround firm (Shook, 1990). Thus, teamwork must begin at the top. Principals should model the importance by creating a leadership team to assist in the process of diagnosing conditions in need of improvement and guiding the school turnaround process (Duke, 2010).

Purposeful communities. A purposeful community has collective efficacy, the sharing by group members of the perception or believe that they can dramatically enhance the effectiveness of their organization (Marzano et al., 2005). A purposeful community is also marked by the development and use of all available assets, tangible and intangible, being

key. Tangible assets include financial and physical resources, technology, and personnel in the school and their individual talents. Intangible assets involve a shared vision, shared values, and shared ideals and beliefs about the core mission of the school (Marzano et al., 2005). With all the shared views, it is important that a purposeful community accomplishes goals that matter to all community members. Purposeful communities are distinguished from “accidental communities” by their strong, well-articulated reasons for existing. Members decide whether they wish to be part of the community, which leads to the final defining characteristic of a purposeful community: agreed-upon processes. These are processes that enhance communication among community members, provide for efficient reconciliation of disagreements, and keep the members attuned to the current status of the community (Marzano et al., 2005). To create the collective efficacy that typifies a purposeful community, the school leader must effectively execute the responsibilities of optimizer and affirmer; s/he must be the champion for the belief that the staff operating as a cohesive group can actually effect substantive change. Because some teachers tend to operate from the perspective that their contribution to student learning is more of a function of their individual efforts than the collective efforts of the staff, the school leader must foster a belief in the power of collective efficacy.

Sergiovanni (2004) states that the belief in collective efficacy must be backed up by fact; that is, the community must have evidence that it works. The school leader accomplishes this by executing the responsibility of affirmation, in which s/he recognizes and celebrates the legitimate success of individuals within the school and the school as a whole. Such acknowledgement provides evidence to the faculty that their efforts are

producing tangible results. To this end, a principal may want to devote a portion of each faculty meeting to acknowledging accomplishments of the school as a whole and of specific individuals working toward the common good of student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). The North Carolina evaluation appraisal for principal and assistant principals, under the standard of Cultural Leadership, focuses on the leader's ability to "acknowledge failures; celebrate accomplishments and rewards" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2009, p. 30). As stated on the rubric, via this standard, principals should acknowledge failures and celebrate accomplishments of the school in order to define the identity, culture, and performance of the school. Further, principals in North Carolina are required to expand their cultural leadership by leading staff towards efficacy and empowerment. As stated, the principal develops a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff which influences the school's identity, culture, and performance (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2008).

Overall, the more a principal builds the collective capacity of teachers through the actions of good school leadership, the more they see parents and communities as part of the solution instead of the problem. The less the capacity of teachers, the more they attempt to play it safe behind the classroom door or school walls (Fullan, 2006).

Professional learning communities. The notion of professional learning communities (PLC) has become imperative in low-performing schools to ensure that teachers do not work in isolation, but instead work collaboratively with a focus on student development and achievement. Developing sustainable leadership to keep the focus on staff and student learning across the school is a difficult task, but building PLCs creates ongoing

conversations and encourages participation and sharing of educators' learning. These must be part of the principal's role and responsibilities (Hord & Summers, 2008).

The principal, more than any other position in the school, identifies, models, and brings the policies and procedures to life. The principal's actions, not just his/her words, make believers out of teachers. Even more, beyond the principal's actions, it is the actions of the teachers that create inclusive leadership. When the principal and staff members focus on their own learning, together they begin to develop ways to make such learning happen. In turn, this collegial learning creates PLCs. Additionally, when the principal sustains focus on staff learning, student learning increases (Hord & Summers, 2008).

Leadership in schools requires a network of formal and informal leaders working together for common goals, and their interactions are indicative of collaboration and a focus on learning. The strength of the interactions between the leaders and the followers are also primary in sustaining PLCs (Spillane, 2006). Thus, if vague or excessive priorities diffuse and fragment the work of an organization, the isolation already inherent in the profession is exacerbated (Wagner et al., 2006). Of note is the fact that teachers who work in schools that have been low-performing for a while often work in isolation. They rarely collaborate to share ideas, discuss struggling students, or plan improvements (Duke, 2010).

Wegner and Snyder (2000) describe communities of practice as networks of professionals that exist to develop member's capacities, build and exchange knowledge, transfer best practices, and solve problems in the practice. Being part of a community that has standards of practice and works collectively to solve authentic problems of practice can also help provide a greater sense of efficacy, a factor that has been correlated with job

satisfaction and increased student learning. Effective teacher communities of practice must have real student data to inform the conversation; this data should be disaggregated by teachers, not to expose those who may be getting poor results, but rather to identify and learn from those teachers who are getting results far above average with comparable groups of students (Wagner et al., 2006).

Capacity-building. As educators, we need to reframe our entire reform strategy so that it focuses relentlessly and deeply on capacity-building and accountability. Capacity-building involves any policy, strategy, or other action undertaken that enhances the collective efficacy of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning. It usually consists of the development of three components in concert: new knowledge and competencies, new and enhanced resources, and new and deeper motivation and commitment to improve things (Fullan, 2006).

Capacity-building experiences have the impact of developing skills, clarity, and motivation. To secure the new beliefs and higher expectations that are critical to turnaround situations, people first need new experiences that lead them to different beliefs. Capacity-building strategies work to give people concrete experiences which show that improvement is possible (Fullan, 2006).

Kanter (2004) correlates capacity-building with the framing around three connected cornerstones of accountability, collaboration, and initiative. The personal commitment of turnaround leaders—and the emerging culture of accountability for implementing new practices and improving student performance evident in the turnaround schools—made the

capacity-building efforts in which they participated more meaningful (Leithwood & Strauss, 2009).

Personnel. It is important to get the right individuals who have the experience and skills to be successful in their role at the school. Some faculty members, especially those in special education, lacked appropriate credentials. In other cases, the problem concerned teachers who were resistant to change. Low-performing schools tend to have high turnover rates, and, as a result, many teachers are in their first or second year of teaching. These individuals often lack the experience and expertise to provide effective instruction for students performing well below grade level (Duke, 2010). On the other hand, high-performing schools use the hiring and firing of staff to communicate the ideals of their mission. The principals attribute their success to their ability to unload low-performing staff as needed to ensure quality education is being provided to students (Carter, 2000). Thus, if early improvements in a formerly low-performing school are to be sustained, school leaders must find ways to develop and retain a reasonably stable staff of capable and committed professionals (Duke, 2010).

A key element in developing a capable staff is recruitment. School leaders must be clear about the kinds of expertise needed to serve their students, and then identify the places where they are most likely to find this expertise. Leaders must also recognize that improving schools typically involves the implementation of various reforms. To sustain these reforms, school leaders must recruit and hire staff members who are unlikely to resist or resent these reforms (Duke, 2010).

Teachers are often more willing to confront daunting academic challenges if they know they will be treated as professionals. This means respecting teachers' judgments and insights, and providing opportunities for them to participate in school decision-making processes. Efforts to retain as well as recruit capable teachers are strengthened when prospective staff see that teachers are able to exercise leadership. Even more, in addition to great teacher job satisfaction, offering leadership opportunities to teachers has been associated with high student achievement (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

Political Frame

The initial discussion of the political frame defines key areas and propositions of politics within the organization. This section then explores the political frame in context of leadership practices within the school setting, using a practical lens to connect the leadership practices to successful organizational turnaround. The lens is focused upon political skills, finances and allocation of resources, distributive and collective leadership, and external indicators within the organization.

Propositions of the Political Frame

Five propositions summarize the perspectives that make up the political frame:

- Organizations are coalitions of diverse individuals and interest groups.
- There are enduring differences among coalition members in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality.
- The most important decision involves allocating scarce resources—who gets what?
- Scarce resources and enduring differences make conflict central to organizational dynamics and underline power as the most important asset.

- Goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among competing stakeholders.

The political frame emphasizes that organizations are coalitions that assume a set of power dynamics. The potential ability to influence behavior, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things they would not otherwise do, defines power in the context of organizations (Pfeffer, 1992). More succinctly, power is the capacity to get things done (Bolman & Deal, 2003). A coalition forms because members have interests in common and believe they can do more together than apart. Its members are interdependent; they need one another, even though their interests may only partly overlap. Individual and groups have their insular objectives and resources, and they bargain with other players to influence goals and decisions (Bolman & Deal, 2003)—and to get things done.

Power and Decision-Making

Structural theorists typically emphasize authority as the legitimate prerogative to make making binding decisions. Conversely, human resource theorists place little focus on power; they emphasize limits of authority instead. With a broader view, the political frame examines authority as only one among many forms of power. This frame recognizes the importance of human needs, but also emphasizes that scarce resources and incompatible preferences cause needs to collide. Moreover, the concept of scarce resources suggest that such politics will be more salient and intense in difficult times. Indeed, schools and colleges have lived through alternating times of feast and famine in response to peaks and valleys in economic and demographic trends (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Conflicts in Organizations

Conflict is particularly likely to occur at boundaries, or interfaces, between groups and units. Horizontal conflict occurs in interfaces between departments or divisions; vertical conflict occurs between levels. Cultural conflict occurs between groups with differing values, traditions, beliefs, and lifestyles, and in the larger society is often imported into the workplace (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The focus of the political frame is not on resolution of conflict, as it typically is the case in the structural and human resource frames, but instead is on strategy and tactics. If conflict will not go away, the question becomes how to make the best of it. Looking at it positively, conflict challenges the status quo and stimulates interest and curiosity. It also encourages new ideas and approaches to problems, stimulating innovation (Heffron, 1989). Even more important than the amount of conflict is how it is managed. Poor conflict management leads to levels of infighting and power struggle. But well-handled conflict can stimulate the creativity and innovation that make an organization a livelier, more adaptive, and more effective place (Kotter, 1985).

Political Skills

The manager acting as politician exercises basic, key skills. These include agenda-setting, mapping the political terrain, and networking and forming coalitions. Structurally, an agenda outlines a goal and a scheduled series of activities. Politically, agendas are statements of interests and scenarios (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The effective leader creates an “agenda for change” with two major elements: a vision balancing the long-term interests of key parties, and a strategy for achieving the vision, while also recognizing competing internal and

external forces at work (Kotter, 1988). The agenda must impart direction and also address the concerns of major stakeholders (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Kanter (1983) and Pfeffer (1992) underscore the close relationship between gathering information and developing a vision. Pfeffer's (1992) list of key political attributes include knowing how others think and what they care about so that the agenda responds to the concerns of people, which is referred to as *sensitivity*.

When launching a new initiative, it is important that leaders scout the political turf (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Pichault (1993) suggests four steps for developing and mapping the political terrain:

1. Determine channels of informal communication.
2. Identify principal agents of political influence.
3. Analyze possibilities for both internal and external mobilization.
4. Anticipate strategies that others are likely to employ.

In networking and building coalitions, Kotter (1985) suggests four basic steps for exercising the political influence cited in the second point above:

1. Identify relevant relationships (figure out who needs to be led).
2. Assess who might resist, why, and how strongly (figure out where the leadership challenges will be).
3. Develop, wherever possible, relationships with potential opponents to facilitate communication, education, or negotiation.

4. If step three fails, carefully select and implement either subtler or more forceful methods.

People rarely give their best efforts and fullest cooperation simply because they are ordered to do so. Instead, people accept direction when they perceive those in authority as credible, competent, and sensible (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Thus, the first task in building networks and coalitions is to figure out whose help you need. As a manager, one needs friends and allies to get things done, and one needs to cultivate relationships in order to get the support. Thus, the leader then needs to develop relationships in order that people will be there when they are needed (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Finances and Allocation of Resources

High-performing principals manage their money in an effort to improve student performance—which is, as a result, the bottom line. Effective principals spend their money on two things: curricula (instructional support and additional instructional materials) and teachers (staff development). On the other hand, low-income schools are underfunded because they have high mobility rates and serve itinerant populations; larger percentages of children enter and leave the school in a given year. However, with many school budgets determined by October 1 of each year, many schools are forced to make do with budgets that do not reflect the actual population attending their school (Carter, 2000).

Cultivating Shared, Distributive, and Collective Leadership

Effective principals make good use of all the skills and knowledge possessed by the faculty and others, encouraging the many capable adults who make up a school community to step into leadership roles and responsibilities. It is indeed true that higher-achieving

schools provided all stakeholders with greater influence on decisions than did lower-achieving schools (Mendels, 2012). Effective leadership depends on a trifecta of “expectations, efficacy, and engagement” (NewsLeader, 2010), and effective leaders are able to engage others into shared leadership, supporting efficacy while holding high expectations.

Shared leadership helps ameliorate the strong sense of disengagement felt by many teachers in urban schools, who are twice as likely to report dissatisfaction with their jobs as are teachers in suburban or rural schools. Thus, it seems teacher satisfaction correlates at least in part with the poverty of the school’s students. As the percentage of students from low-income families rises, the level of teacher satisfaction decreases (MetLife, 2012). However, when urban leaders affirm teachers’ commitment, effort, and loyalty, they create stability, foster program cohesiveness, and bring consistency to the chaos of wildly mixed expectations, values, and beliefs (Jackson & McDermott, 2012). For this reason, teachers who have frequent and satisfying interactions with administrators report higher job satisfaction.

Project management can be a useful vehicle for promoting distributed leadership in schools. Once improvement targets have been established to focus school initiatives over a designated period of time, the principal can assign a teacher or other staff member to “manage” efforts to achieve each target. This manager does not necessarily do all the work to achieve a target, but they do oversee the efforts of all staff members involved in achieving the target, monitors progress toward the target, and report regularly on progress to the principal and fellow member of the school leadership team (Duke, 2010).

Sharing leadership with teachers, parents, and the community, as well as engaging stakeholders to take an active role in student learning, helps to improve student achievement. Based on research in Minnesota/Toronto, the more open a principal is to spreading leadership around, the better it is for student learning. Effective leadership from a variety of sources—principals, teachers, staff teams, and others—is notably associated with better student performance on math and reading tests (Mendels, 2012). Such collective leadership has a stronger influence on student learning than any individual source of leadership; the higher-performing the school, the greater the likelihood that more people are involved in school decisions. Principals who champion collective leadership and take on “helicopter” roles do not distribute leadership to reduce their administrative workload. Instead, along with their management responsibility, they involve themselves in many other endeavors to improve teaching and learning (NewsLeader, 2010). A national study examining the characteristics of effective school principals has found that high student achievement is directly linked to collective leadership – the shared influence of educators, parents, stakeholders, and community members. The higher performance of these schools might be explained as a consequence of the greater access they have to collective knowledge and wisdom embedded within their communities (Louis et al., 2010).

External Indicators

External factors of leadership can also take the shape of educational policy and initiative governing school performance. Successful principals worked in state or national policy contexts that were preoccupied with holding schools more public accountable. Successful leaders in the more mature accountability contexts were less consumed with, or

had become desensitized to, worries over the sometimes negative steering effects of many accountability initiatives—reduced autonomy and public shaming through publication of league tables, for example—and became more intent on harnessing government accountability initiatives to their own school’s priorities (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005).

In a micropolitical lens, external indicators integrate to involve families of students and the surrounding community. Leaders aimed to transform schools and foster relationships between the school and the community. Communicating with and involving family and community members in this way breeds understanding and trust, and often leads to community advocacy for teachers and administrators (Jackson & McDermott, 2012). Those who view students as children with hopes, innate intelligence, and motivation to learn recognize the value of partnering with families and the community to determine how best to foster children’s development (Epstein, 1995).

Symbolic Frame

The symbolic frame seeks to interpret and illuminate basic issues of meaning and belief that make symbols so powerful (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Symbols should provide a basic understanding of the vitality, culture, and expectations within an organization. Just as the American flag is a symbolic representation of patriotism and allegiance to the United States, organizations also have symbols that they hold dear and pass on to other members, newcomers, and those who may not be fully affiliated with the organization.

Myths, Values, and Vision

Myths, operating at the deepest reaches of consciousness, are the story behind the story (Campbell, 1988). They are a narrative to anchor the present in the past (Cohen, 1969),

and can anchor an organization's values. *Values* define what an organization stands for, those qualities worthy of esteem or commitment for their own sake; they are intangible, and define a fundamental character that distinguishes an enterprise from others. *Vision* turns an organization's core ideology, or sense of purpose, into an image of what the future might become. It is a shared fantasy illuminating new possibilities within the realm of existing myths and values (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Rituals and Ceremonies

Historically, cultures have relied on ritual and ceremony to create order, clarity, and predictability, particularly around issues or dilemmas too complex, mysterious, or random to be controlled otherwise. *Rituals* are meaningful, day-to-day routines of an institution that give structure and meaning to daily life. Rituals of initiation induct newcomers into communal membership, making initiation one important role of ritual. Rituals play an equally powerful role in bonding a group together and imbuing the enterprise with the traditions and values that enable people to carry out the organizations' mission. By comparison, *ceremonies* are grander, more elaborate, less frequent occasions that punctuate our lives at special moments, such as baptisms, bar mitzvahs, weddings, and graduations. Ceremonies serve four major roles: they socialize, stabilize, reassure, and convey messages to external constituencies (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Leadership Implications of the Symbolic Frame

This section explores the symbolic frame in the context of leadership practices within the school setting and organizational turnaround. The literature in this section reviews replacements of school leaders, the creation of a school climate and culture, cultural

proficiency, nonacademic support, and the theory of resiliency. The attributes and practices within this frame, symbolic in nature, coincide with the overall research questions and the design of the current study.

The responsibility of the school leader is to provide a vision inclusive of the academic and social needs of all students (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). The symbolic frame seeks to interpret and illuminate basic issues of meaning and belief that makes symbols of the organization so powerful. Symbols are the basic building blocks of the meaning systems, or cultures, that an organization inhabits (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Within the symbolic frame, leaders are charged with creating a vision, culture, climate, and processes that benefit all students in the educational environment.

Replacement of Leader as Symbolic

The first step or first priority in a turnaround is to address leadership (Breault, 1993). Managers in failing firms often lack the ability to lead their organizations successfully through a turnaround that they cannot get the business out of trouble on their own (Goldstein, 1988). Scholars report that these leaders often lack the mindset and skills needed to support reorientation (Mirvis et al., 2003). The introduction of new executives is especially significant when turnaround involves a reorientation of the business and giving up long established activities (Grinyer et al., 1988).

Thus, a precondition for almost all successful turnarounds is the replacement of the current business' top management (Hofer, 1980), as such a change in management appears to represent a clear signal to all interested parties that the firm is serious about its attempt to turn itself around (O'Neill, 1986). Replacing top leaders can often be an essential step in

turning around declining organizations (Meyer, 1988). Replacing a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has the additional benefit of serving as a symbol of the need for major change and providing a scapegoat to relieve tension (Weitzel & Johnson, 1989). According to Bibeault (1982), leadership change can unfold in a number of ways, and can mean either changing management or change in its approach. More specifically, it is almost impossible for a cultural change to be made without an agent for change who is not beholden to company tradition—in other words, a new top manager (Finkin, 1987). Proponents of the competence argument claim that even if CEOs desire to shift perspectives and strategies, they may not possess the skills needed to deal with decline. As such, executive change moves need to be linked to assessments of what caused the performance decline (Castrogiovanni, Bahga, & Kidwell, 1992). Arogyaswamy, Baker, and Yasai-Ardekani (1995), in turn, deduce from their analyses that the type of decline should be used as a moderator when examining top management changes.

Creating a Climate Hospitable to Education

New principals of low-performing schools have arrived at their job feeling that they needed to change a toxic culture at the school to do what they needed to do. Others spoke of building, moving toward, or leading a culture of change (Portin et al., 2009). Effective principals in turnaround settings are aware of the need to create an educational environment that amalgamates the culture and climate of a school while also being hospitable to education. In addition, effective principals shape school buildings characterized by the basics—safety and orderliness—but they also see to it that schools create an atmosphere in

which students feel supported (Mendels, 2012). The key elements of a climate hospitable to learning are:

a sense of student and staff safety; respect for all members of the school community, without regard to the professional status or position; an upbeat, welcoming, solution-oriented, no-blame, professional environment; an effort to invite and involve staff in various school wide functions; and a parallel outreach to students that engaged and involved them in a variety of activities. (Portin et al., 2009, p. 59)

Principals ensure that teachers work collaboratively rather than in isolation from one another, giving each other help and guidance to improve instructional practices (Louis et al., 2010).

Creating a Vision

Successful leaders create a compelling sense of purpose in organizations by developing a shared vision of the future, helping build consensus about relevant short-term goals, and demonstrating high expectations for colleagues' work (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). Those strong in school leadership have not only a vision but also the skills to communicate that vision to others while creating a shared vision that becomes a "shared covenant that bonds together leader and follower in a moral commitment" (Sergiovanni, 1990, p. 25). By developing a shared vision with their faculty, school administrators establish common ground that serves to facilitate or compel action to the realization of this common vision (SEDL, 1993).

Effective leadership begins with the development of a schoolwide vision of commitment to high standards and the success of all students (Wallace Foundation, 2013). For educational leaders who implement change in their school or districts, vision is "a hunger

to see improvement” (Pejza, 1985, p. 10). Leaders of educational change have a clear picture of what they want to accomplish and the “ability to visualize [their] goal” (Mazzarella & Grundy, 1989, p. 21). Their vision of their school or districts gives purpose, meaning, and significance to the work of the school, while also enabling the leader to motivate and empower the staff to contribute to realization of the vision (SEDL, 1993).

Principals can influence student learning by developing a school mission that provides an instructional focus for teachers throughout the school (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1990). Notably, no other dimension of principal behavior is more consistently linked to school improvement by current empirical research than goals, defined as the long-term aspirations held by principals for work in their schools (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1984). With a goal of high expectations for all, including clear and public standards, principals can help close the achievement gap between advantaged and less advantaged students and raise the overall achievement of all students (Portin et al., 2009).

Finally, the principal’s vision has to communicate a strong enthusiasm for reform and change at the school. If the principal him/herself is responsible for bringing the reform to the school, the reform is likely to be something they strongly support. However, in some instances, a reform has been mandated by the district or state, and it may not be something that the principal would have adopted on their own. In such a case, the principal plays an important role in helping teachers understand the mandate and obtain what support is available from the district or state, and in communicating the general feeling of “we’re all in this together” (Marsh & Datnow, 2003).

Culture of the Organization

The pervasive impact of culture on every aspect of the business enterprise makes it a most important factor for sustaining a turnaround process. The hallmark of a successful turnaround is a culture where employees embrace change as a challenge to be met rather than an obstacle to be overcome. (Shelley & Jones, 1993). Hence, for turnarounds to succeed, leaders must fully understand the cultural dimensions that inhibit or enhance the improvement process (Shelley & Jones, 1993). Using this understanding, they must create a new corporate culture that becomes embedded in the operating environment (Breault, 1993; Finkin, 1987). Every troubled company is embroiled in much the same crisis, but how management goes about the task of relieving organizational stress by creating a climate for success makes all the difference in determining whether those affiliated with the company begin to pull together or continue to pull the company apart (Goldstein, 1988).

Both memory and mental modes in organizations can be shared across groups of individuals, and these can inform collective and individual action (Schein, 1992). Organizational memory is the organization's collective knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, and norms that shape procedures, policies, and culture over time (Cohen, 1991; Cousins, 1998; Levitt & March, 1988). As people join an organization, they assimilate organizational memories and mental modes that are shared by other people in the organization. Newcomers also can dynamically shape organizational memory, frameworks, and routines by negotiating new norms and introducing different ways of working or solving problems (Cyert & March, 1963; Robinson, 2002). In this way, they contribute to the organizational memory and mental modes that increase engagement in an organization.

Engagement does not necessarily imply total agreement, however, but rather suggests the creation of a culture wherein working together to address problems becomes the norm at every level in the organization. It requires leaders to model learning and actively express differences in views, drawing on those differences as resources for learning. It furthermore asks people to openly share what is and is not working in their classrooms and schools. Thus, engagement demands the presence of social norms that create the psychological safety necessary for people to make suggestions, offer challenges, and try new ideas. These kinds of actions result in a culture of highly engaged individuals, characterized by a strong sense of personal and shared responsibility for the school's goals and for strategies of the collective teaching and leading enterprise (Wagner et al., 2006).

School cultures consists of shared beliefs about students, teaching, and learning. They also embody norms that govern how people relate to each other and how work is carried out. Some turnaround specialists have commented on the negativity of their schools' cultures. Teachers expressed the belief that many of their students were incapable of mastering content. In these cases, instead of focusing on the continuous improvement of instruction, faculty members dwelled on making excuses for low performance and blaming it on conditions beyond their control (Duke, 2010).

Reculturing

Culture is conveyed in the way staff members think of themselves, their colleagues, and their work. It is embodied in assumptions about students, and parents, beliefs about teaching and learning, and values regarding what it means to be an educator (Duke, 2010).

Maehr and Midgley (1996) maintain that the only way to affect changes in school culture is

to alter the way people think, including how school leaders, teachers, and students view their roles, responsibilities, and capabilities (p. 201). School leaders' intent on sustaining early successes must diagnose weaknesses in the existing school culture and engage in efforts to correct them. This reculturing of a school is, by definition, a long-term process, and the culture of a school is unlikely to be completely changed in the early stages of efforts at improvement (Duke, 2010).

In order to better serve underperforming student subgroups, leaders may need to confront dysfunctional school cultures. Such cultures are characterized by beliefs that certain students are unlikely to perform well in school. Unless such beliefs are address directly, the likelihood of sustained school improvement is slight (Duke, 2010).

Cultural Proficiency in Educational Context

In connecting the symbolic frame to the culture of a Historically Black High School setting, it seems plausible that one would analyze cultural implications by way of cultural proficiency within the context of the school. Educators engaged in the journey to cultural proficiency learn of the impact that their expectations have on all students, expectations which shape the culture of the school and schooling in ways that facilitate or impede the learning of students of color. Culturally proficient educators expand their repertoire of individual values and behaviors, as well as their school's policies and practices, so that these are inclusive of students' cultures in ways that facilitate learning. Such a shift in thinking occurs when professionals cease blaming students or their culture, parents, or neighborhood for lack of success in schools, and instead, engage in examining the current educational

practices and changing them when necessary to respond to the educational needs and learning styles of the students for which the school serves (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009).

Terrell and Lindsey (2009) constructed the cultural proficiency continuum to provide a framework for seeing and understanding educators' values and behavior as well as the school's overall policies and practices. The continuum provides language to describe unhealthy and healthy values and behaviors of organizations. Movement along the continuum represents a shift in thinking from holding the view of tolerating diversity to one of transformation for equity. The continuum can be readily organized into two phases. To the left side of the continuum are personal values and behaviors or institutional policies and practices that, at best, tolerate diversity:

- Cultural Destructiveness – Leading in a manner that one seeks to eliminate cultures of others in all aspects of the school and in relationship with the community served.
- Cultural Incapacity – Leading in a way that one trivializes other cultures and seeks to make the culture of others appear to be wrong.
- Cultural Blindness – Leading where one does not see or acknowledge the culture of others and chooses to ignore the discrepant experiences of cultures within the school.

In contrast, to the right side of the continuum are personal values and behaviors or institutional policies and practices that seek to transform for equity:

- Cultural Precompetence – Schools have a beginning awareness that current practice does not serve all students equitably; this can be a breakthrough phase in development where one becomes aware that they and the school can move in positive, constructive directions.

- Leadership Implications – Leading with an increasing awareness of what the leader and the school do not know about working in diverse settings.
- Cultural Competence – The personal and professional work of an organization is an interactive arrangement in which colleagues respond to diverse settings in a manner that is additive to cultures which are different from others.
- Leadership Implications – Leading with personal values and behaviors, and the school’s policies and practices being aligned in a matter that is inclusive with cultures that are new or different.
- Cultural Proficiency – Colleagues make commitment to life-long learning for the purpose of being increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of cultural groups; there is a strong sense of social justice accompanied by a demonstrated commitment to advocacy for doing what is right for our students and the communities they represent.
- Leadership Implications – Leading as an advocate for life-long learning with the purpose of being increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of cultural groups; also, holding the vision that the leader and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy. (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009)

Nonacademic Supports and Practices

If affiliation and support function as the engines of healthy youth development, hope serves as the source of energy. Hope powers ambition. Without ambition, the road to academic success can turn out to be a dead end (Duke, 2010). Researchers studying adolescent motivation have noted the tendency of some young people from disadvantaged

backgrounds to have misaligned ambitions (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999). Students need to be exposed to a number of opportunities, to include people and experiences, which provides support to future ambitions. One such experience is that of a constructive role model, an important source of support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Research has found that teachers, mentors, and other adults to whom students can relate guide the students as to how to achieve desirable targets (Ormrod, 1998). When students are never exposed to exemplary models, either living or symbolic, that share their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disabling condition, and gender, and they are less likely to undertake challenging goals (Duke, 2010).

Affiliation, hopefulness, and role models all concern psychological needs. Many students from disadvantage backgrounds also have a variety of more tangible needs. When these needs, including adequate shelter, nutrition, and clothing, are not met, the chances for school success are markedly reduced. Working with various social welfare agencies, school leaders can make certain that students' physical needs are not neglected (Duke, 2010).

Recognizing that classroom evaluations and grading practices can undermine student confidence and commitment to learning, it is important that educators modify their practices (Duke, 2010). Educators need to embrace a new vision of assessment that can tap the wellspring of confidence, motivation and learning potential that resides within every student (Stiggins, 2007). Teachers are encouraged to balance assessment of learning with assessment for learning (Duke, 2010).

Resiliency Theory

There are two themes that consistently appear in the literature on effective schools (Fiske, 1992), both of which are equally applicable to student resiliency building: caring and personalization. More than any other way, schools build resiliency in students by creating an environment of caring personal relationships. Resiliency-building relationships in schools are also characterized by a focus on students' strengths. Adults in schools, in fact, need to look for student strengths with the same meticulousness that is usually used to uncover students' problems. This is because a student's strengths are what will propel him or her from "risk" behavior to resiliency (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). Moreover, for change to happen, people have to have a sense of self-efficacy. They have to believe and have hope that they have the strengths and the abilities to make positive changes (Bernard, 1993).

The most critical resiliency-builder for every student is a basic, trusting relationship (Werner, 1991). Resiliency is also built in students by one-to-one interactions that convey optimism and a strength and focus, and it is strengthened by students' encounter of the six resiliency-building factors in the structure, teaching strategies, and programs in the school. The six factors include increasing bonding; setting clear, consistent boundaries; teaching life skills; providing care and support; setting and communicating high expectations; and providing opportunities for meaningful participation.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, an exploration of organizational frames in context to the principal and turnaround practices has been established. The subsequent chapters will inform of the methodology of the current study's research, findings, and implications. The remainder of

this analysis includes a critical examination of the case of the Historically Black High Schools and related organizational and leadership practices of the principal.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a framework and description to the methodology, data collection, and analysis for the current study. This study, qualitative in nature, employed the approach of case study analysis. Using a single-case study approach, the researcher specifically sought to answer the following questions:

1. Are there organizational practices of principals in Historically Black High Schools that have significantly increased student achievement?
2. Are there leadership practices specific to Historically Black High Schools in building and sustaining high student achievement?
3. What other major factors contributed to significant turnaround and improvement of student performance?

This chapter begins with overview of case study analyses and defines the case of this study. Information regarding site and sample selection and data collection methods, including interviews, research-generated documents, observation, and data analysis, is provided. The chapter ends with a review of the limitations of the current study, validity and reliability, and the ethics associated with carrying out the study.

Case Studies

Case study research is a qualitative approach involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (Creswell, 2007). In case study research, the investigator explores a bounded system (*case*) or multiple bounded systems (*cases*) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (such as observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports). The

investigator then reports a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007). Case studies are differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system (Smith, 1978), such as an individual, program, event, group, intervention, or community (Merriam, 1998).

Case study research has a long, distinguished history across many disciplines. Qualitative case studies in education are often framed with the concepts, models, and theories from anthropology, history, sociology, psychology, and educational psychology. The case study approach is familiar to social scientists because of its popularity in psychology (Freud), medicine (case analysis of a problem), law (case law), and political science (case reports) (Creswell, 2007).

A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit (Merriam, 1988). The focus of the current study was on the organizational turnaround efforts at a Historically Black High School in North Carolina, specifically the principal's role and other significant factors in facilitating the effective change. This section describes the data collection methodologies employed to answer the questions articulated at the onset of the study. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than in a specific variable, in discovery rather than in confirmation (Merriam, 1998). The following section provides the structure used for carrying out the data collection method process of this case study, its contextual nature, as well as the protocol employed for ensuring sound results.

Types of Case Studies

Types of qualitative case studies are distinguished by the size of the bounded case, such as whether the case involves one individual, several individuals, a group, an entire program, or an activity. They may also be distinguished in terms of the intent of the case analysis. Three variations exist in terms of intent: the single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study (Creswell, 2007). In a single instrumental case study (Stake, 1995), the researcher focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects one bounded case to illustrate the issue. In a collective or multiple case study, again, the one issue or concern is selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate it. The researcher might select to study several programs from several research sites or multiple programs within a single site (Creswell, 2007).

Procedures for Conducting a Case Study

First, researchers determine if a case study approach is appropriate to the research problem. A case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). Researchers next need to identify their case or cases. These cases may involve an individual, several individuals, a program, an event, or an activity. In conducting case study research, it is recommended that investigators first consider what type of case study is most promising and useful (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). The case can be single or collective, multi-sited or within-site, focused on a case or an issue (intrinsic, instrumental) (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). In choosing which case to study, an array of possibilities for purposeful sampling is available (Creswell, 2007). For this study, the

investigator examined a single case—the Historically Black High School—examining the leadership practices that led to a significant turnaround in it moving from being a low-performing, priority school to being labeled as a School of Distinction. Three principals were identified in leading the school during the turnaround efforts between the years of 2004 and 2010. The principals themselves were unique for this study as they were able to describe the organizational practices that ultimately led to the turnaround in the Historically Black High School setting. Concomitantly, this study also investigated other significant factors of turnaround; therefore, certified teachers and teacher leaders of the turnaround process were also integrated into the research design process.

Data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials (Creswell, 2007). Yin (2003) recommends six types of information to collect: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts.

The type of analysis of these data can be a holistic analysis of the entire case, or an embedded analysis of a specific aspect of the case (Yin, 2003). Through this data collection, a detailed description of the case (Stake, 1995) emerges in which the researcher details such aspects as the history of the case, chronology of events, or a day-by-day rendering of the activities of the case (Creswell, 2007). After this description, the researcher might focus on a few key issues for an analysis of themes, not for the purpose of generalizing beyond the case, but for understanding the complexity of the case. One analytical strategy would be to identify issues within each case and then look for common themes that transcend the cases (Yin,

2003). This analysis is rich in the context of the case or setting in which the case presents itself (Merriam, 1988). The researcher reports the meaning of the case, whether that meaning comes from learning about the issue of the case (instrumental case) or learning about an unusual situation (intrinsic case) (Creswell, 2007).

Challenges

One of the challenges inherent in qualitative case study development is that the researcher must identify his/her case. The case study researcher must decide which bounded system to study, recognizing that several might be possible candidates for the selection. They must also acknowledge that the case itself is an issue, which one or many cases are selected to illustrate, and is worthy of a study. Furthermore, the researcher must consider whether to study a single case or multiple cases; the study of more than one case dilutes the overall analysis, while the more cases an individual examines, the less in-depth any single case. Typically, the researcher chooses no more than four or five cases if choosing multiple cases. Rather than looking at why the cases are as they are, when a researcher chooses multiple cases, the issue becomes, “How many cases?” Selecting a case requires that the researcher establish a rationale for his or her strategy of purposeful sampling and selecting the case and gathering information about the case (Creswell, 2007).

Deciding the “boundaries” of a case – how it might be constrained in terms of time, events, and processes – may be challenging. Some case studies may not have clean beginning and ending points, and the researcher will need to set boundaries that adequately surround the case (Creswell, 2007). The boundaries for this study were the organizational processes and leadership practices that occurred within the building of a successful turnaround high school

servicing a predominant population of African-American students. This school was identified as low-performing and had been placed by Judge Manning on the list of schools to be shut down unless it dramatically improved student performance. The scope of this study looked at the processes and practices that occurred within the confines of this one educational setting, but also included leadership practices that extended throughout the building. The study was bounded by the principal leadership and other significant change factors of the school from the onset of turnaround mandated by Judge Manning through 2012, where the turnaround efforts were sustained. As a result, this case was bounded by the three principal leaders and the certified, instructional personnel (teachers) of the school during the duration of turnaround work.

Site Selection

Within the state of North Carolina, approximately five schools fall under the designation of a Historically Black High School. For this study, one of the five schools were chosen for case analysis; it was chosen for its unique ability of having moved from the labeling of a Low-Performing School to a School of Distinction as defined by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. This school had made remarkable improvement with regard to school turnaround efforts and student achievement. Additionally, the case was of particular interest since the turnaround efforts had been sustained through the administrations of three principals. At the time of this study's publication, this school was continuing to perform well and had received several accolades from its district and state for increased performance, results, and accountability. Having chosen the site for the case, the next area for the researcher's consideration was the sample space.

Sample Selection

Once the general problem has been identified, the task becomes to select the unit of analysis, or the *sample* (Merriam, 1998). The researcher needs “to consider where to observe, when to observe, whom to observe, and what to observe. In short, sampling in field research involves the selection of a research site, time, place and events” (Burgess, 1982, p. 76).

There are two types of sampling. Nonprobability sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research designs. Purposeful sampling is the most common non-probabilistic sampling strategy (Chein, 1981), and is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight, so must therefore select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). Patton (1990) argues:

the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 169)

To begin purposeful sampling, the researcher must first determine what selection criteria are essential in choosing the people or sites to be studied. In criterion-based selection, the researcher “creates a list of the attributes essential” to the study and then “proceed[s] to find or locate a unit matching the list” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 70). The criteria that the researcher establishes for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guides in the identification of information-rich cases (Merriam, 1998). For the current study, the criteria necessary were to pick from the case (Historically Black High Schools) those that made significant improvement with regard to the mandates of Judge Manning’s ruling,

specifically improved student performance and state-based measures of accountability. To select the schools that were exemplars of school turnaround, a focus on school-wide assessment data (such as End-of Course [EOC] composites, school composite, graduation rates, and ABC Designation) must be considered. From these data, one school was chosen for the study. Since the focus of the current study was on the leaders' practices and overall change efforts during the school years 2004 to 2012, the principal(s) appointed to the school during the turnaround period and the certified personnel (teachers) constituted the purposeful sample of the study.

Sample Size

A sample size always depends on the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, and the resources one has to support the study (Merriam, 1998). In purposeful sampling, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend that "the size of a sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled unites; thus redundancy is the primary criterion" (p. 202). Engaging in purposive sampling means selecting respondents on the basis of what they can contribute to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Two levels of sampling are usually necessary in qualitative case studies. First, the researcher must select "the case" to be studied. Then, unless the researcher plans to interview, observe, or analyze all the people, activities, or documents within the case, the researcher will need to do some sampling within it. To find the best case to study, the researcher would first establish the criteria that will guide case selection, and then select a case that meets those criteria (Merriam, 1998).

The researcher first identifies the case – the bounded system, the unit of analysis – to be investigated. Within every case there exists numerous sites that could be visited, events or activities that could be observed, people who could be interviewed, and documents that could be read. A sample within the case needs to be selected either before the data collection begins, or while the data are being gathered (Merriam, 1998). The sample within the current study's case were the three principals appointed to the Historically Black High School during the years of 2004 to 2012, when the school underwent organizational turnaround efforts. Of the three leaders, one principal began the turnaround process, and the other two principals served as the first principal's successors; altogether, three principals led the school during the North Carolina Turnaround Program's initiative. This study's sample also extended to the instructional team of the case, identifying three to five teachers that worked under the all three principals during the sustained turnaround period. Weiss (1994) contends that a good person to start with in any study requiring a panel is a knowledgeable insider willing to serve as an informant of informants. An informant located within the case helped to identify three to five teachers that worked in the case during the full period of turnaround, under all three principals. Ultimately, this case was bounded by the time span of 2004 to 2010 in which this school showed progress in marked turnaround and improvement.

Interviews

In all forms of qualitative research, some and occasionally all of the data are collected through interviews. Interviewing gives us access to the observation of others (Weiss, 1994). Interviews may be used in two ways; they may be the dominant strategy for data collection, or they may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or

other techniques. In all of these situations, the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006).

An *interview* is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more (Morgan, 1997), directed by one participant in order to get information from another (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). The most common form of interview is the person-to-person encounter wherein one person elicits information from another, which Merriam (1998) notes can be defined as a conversation. Dexter (1970) defines an interview with greater specificity, as a "conversation with a purpose" (p. 136), with this purpose being to obtain a special kind of information (Merriam, 1998). Patton (1990) writes, "the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind" (p. 278). Since the contents of someone's mind cannot be directly observed or measured, the interviewer must ask questions in such a way as to obtain meaningful information (Merriam, 1998).

Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate (Merriam, 1998). Interviewing is also the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals (Merriam, 1998). The decision to use interviews as the primary mode of data collection should be based on the kind of information needed and whether interviews are the best way to obtain it (Merriam, 1998). Because the current study was interested in the leadership and organizational practices of an effective school turnaround efforts, the interview technique

was essential in captivating each principal's role in facilitating the turnaround and other significant changes and factors that occurred throughout their school building.

Interview Format

The most common way of deciding which type of interview to use is to determine the amount of structure desired. On the continuum from highly structured to unstructured interviews, the semi-structured interview is halfway between; either all of the questions are more flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions. Usually, some specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a highly structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the semi-structured interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, with neither the exact wording nor order of the questions determined ahead of time. This semi-structured interview format allowed the current researcher to respond to the situation at hand, the emerging worldview of the respondent, and new ideas on the topic (Merriam, 1998).

In the intervening time between the conducting of multiple interviews, a respondent may have begun thinking about the areas discussed and additional memories may have surfaced. A respondent may also have been made more sensitive to the issues of the interview, and may therefore have newly noted incidents worth reporting (Weiss, 1994). For the current study, then, the respondents were interviewed more than once. The initial meeting consisted of developing rapport, establishing guidelines for the interview, and providing opportunities for the respondent to expound and elaborate on items contained within the interview guide. Subsequent meetings took the form of follow-up sessions that included validation of responses. During these meetings, the investigator also had the opportunity to

ask questions based on research-generated documents and data, including the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, North Carolina Assessment Data, and data on teacher and principal effectiveness. Follow-up interviews took the form of electronic communication between the researcher and respondent.

Asking Questions

The central goal of an interview is understanding how an interviewee thinks. Thus, the researcher must be captive to this larger goal of the interview—understanding—not to the devices, gimmicks, questions, or the like that were invented as strategies and techniques of obtaining information. The key to getting good data from interviewing is to ask good questions (Merriam, 1998), making pilot interviews crucial for trying out the questions and serving to field-test a draft of the interview guide. A single pilot interview can suggest where a guide is overweighed or redundant and where it is skimpy, but three or four pilot interviews might be the minimum for safety (Weiss, 1994).

For the current study, a group of four school-based administrators served as pilot interviewees, answering questions pertaining to the topic at hand. As a researcher must always be prepared to let go of the plan and jump on opportunities that the interview situation may present (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006), modifications to questions as well as suggestions were considered and made appropriately.

Confidentiality

Early in the interview, the investigator should briefly inform the subject of the interview's purpose, and make assurances that what is said will be treated confidentially (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). The respondent should read and sign a Statement of

Confidentiality in the Informed Consent Form (See Appendix E). As part of the mandated process of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the respondent must consent to participate in an interview. In this study, the respondent received a copy of the signed Letter of Confidentiality at the first meeting, and another signed copy of the letter was stored away in a secure place for the duration of the study. Due to the confidentiality of the study and interviews, pseudonyms were used to allow the respondent to maintain confidentiality, even in the final phases of the research process.

Researcher as Listener

Good listening usually stimulates good talking. By being empathetic through expressing appropriate feelings when subjects tell about the ups and downs of their lives, making strong contact, and showing the informants that you take them seriously, an investigator can help get subjects to open up (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). In addition, one approach to open-ended interviewing found to be effective is that in which the researcher treats the person being interviewed as an expert. Such an approach sets the interview up in a way that establishes the subject as the one who knows, while the researcher is the one who has come to learn, thereby effectively serving to let the subject in on the study. It also displays to the the interviewee that the researcher respects his/her ideas and opinions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006).

Probing

Probes are questions or comments that follow-up on something already asked. It is virtually impossible to specify these ahead of time because they are dependent on how the participant answers the lead questions. Notably, it is here that using the interview as the

primary instrument of data collection has its advantages, especially if the researcher is a highly sensitive individual who can readily make adjustments in their interviewing as they go along. Probing can come in the form of asking for more details or further clarification on a response (Merriam, 1998). A list of clarifying or probing questions used in the current study are included in the Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Principals (Appendix A) and the Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Teachers (Appendix B).

Interview Guide

The *interview guide*, or schedule, is nothing more than a list of questions that the researcher intends to ask in an interview (Merriam, 1998). It may contain a listing of topics or questions that together will suggest lines of inquiry (Weiss, 1994). The interview guide for semi structured interviews often contains several specific questions that the researcher will ask of all respondents, some more open-ended questions that could be followed-up with probes, and perhaps a list of some areas, topics, and issues about which the researcher wants to know more, but does not have enough information at the outset of the study to form specific questions (Merriam, 1998). Even when an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews give the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics, and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview. When the interviewer controls the content too rigidly, hindering the subject from telling his or her story personally in their own words, the interview falls out of the qualitative range (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). An interview guide, with the list of selected questions used in this study for principals and teachers, respectively, is included in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Generally, it is a good idea to seek relatively neutral, descriptive information at the beginning of an interview. Respondents can be asked to provide basic descriptive information about the phenomenon of interest, be it a program, activity, or experience, or to chronicle their history with the phenomenon. This information lays the foundation for questions that access the interviewee's perceptions, opinions, values, emotions, and so on (Merriam, 1998). Still, questions are at the heart of interviewing, and a researcher must ask good questions in order to collect meaningful data. To create strong questions, pilot interviews were considered and utilized in the current study to help strengthen the level and appropriateness of questions, and to evoke depth, meaning and clarity in responses.

Recording and Evaluating Interview Data

The most common way to capture interview data is via tape recording (Merriam, 1998), because it ensures that everything said is preserved for analysis. The interviewer can also listen for ways to improve his or her questioning techniques by reviewing the recorded interviews (Merriam, 1998). In the current study, the researcher used a tape recorder for the purpose of capturing the interview, and took notes on responses throughout the process. The notes, when typed, provided an index to the recording, and enabled transcription to be done as needed (Weiss, 1994).

Ideally, verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best data for analysis (Merriam, 1998), so the researcher used a trusted, web-based program called *Casting Words* to transcribe the recorded interview based on the taped conversation; the transcription was typed and provided to the researcher on a computer-based software application, Microsoft Word. The researcher also listened to the recorded interviews to

ensure accuracy of the written accounts of the participants. Categories were then determined, and information gleaned from the interviews placed into these categories. This information was chunked by the categories, placed on index cards, and compiled for future analysis.

Research-Generated Documents

When documents are included in a study, what is most commonly being referred to are public records, personal documents, and physical material already present in the research setting. They can contain clues, even startling insights, into the phenomenon under study. *Research-generated documents* are those prepared by the researcher or for the researcher by participants after the study has begun, with the specific purpose being to learn more about the situation, person, or event being investigated. Quantitative data produced by the investigator also fall into the category of documents. Projective tests, attitudinal measures, content examinations, and statistical data from surveys on any number of topics can all be treated as documents in support of a qualitative investigation (Merriam, 1998).

Once documents have been located, their authenticity must be assessed. Since they were not produced for the researcher, the investigator must try to “reconstruct the process by which the data were originally assembled by somebody else” (Riley, 1963, p. 254). It is important to determine “the conditions under which these data were produced, what specific methodological and technical decisions may have been made...and the consequent impact on the nature of the data now to be taken over (Riley, 1963, p. 252). Burgess (1982) writes that documents should not be used in isolation. Rather, it is the investigator’s responsibility to determine as much as possible about the document, its origins and reasons for being written, its author, and the context in which it was written. An important distinction for historians that

qualitative researchers might also attend to is whether documents are primary or secondary sources. *Primary sources* are those in which the originator of the document is recounting firsthand experiences with the phenomenon of interest. The best primary sources are those recorded closest in time and place to the phenomenon by a qualified person (Merriam, 1998). After assessing the authenticity and nature of documents or artifacts, a researcher must adopt some system for coding and cataloging them. By establishing basic descriptive categories early on for coding, the researcher can gain easy access to information in the analysis and interpretation stage (Merriam, 1998).

The documents analyzed through the current study consisted of school-based assessment data reports that spanned the school years of 2004 to 2012. These documents were assessed by the researcher and generated by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. These documents analyzed for this study include: North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, North Carolina Report Card, ABC Data, Graduation Rates, Teacher Experience, and Turnover Rates. Additional onsite documents analyzed included minutes of meetings (administrative, teacher collaborative, Parent-Teacher Association [PTA]), program evaluation and assessments, current and prior written School Improvement Plans (SIP), and student performance assessment data specific to the school and district mandates but not included in high-stakes reporting data.

Observations

Observation is a major means of collecting data in qualitative research. It offers a firsthand account of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis, allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated.

It is the technique of choice when an activity, event, or situation can be observed firsthand, when a fresh perspective is desired, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the topic under study (Merriam, 1998).

An investigator might want to gather data through observation for many reasons. As an outsider, an observer may notice things that have become routine to the participants themselves, things that may lead to a better understanding of the context. Observation makes it possible to record behavior as it is happening, as the participant observer sees things firsthand and uses his or her own knowledge and expertise in interpreting what is observed rather than relying upon once-removed accounts from interviews. Observations are also used in conjunction with interviewing and document analysis to triangulate and substantiate emerging findings. Another reason to conduct observations is to provide some knowledge of the context or specific incidents, behaviors, and so on that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews. This is a particularly helpful strategy for understanding ill-defined phenomena (Merriam, 1998).

What to Observe

Determining what to observe is partly a function of how structured the observer wants to be; that is, just as there is a range of structure in interviewing, there is also a range of structure in observation. What to observe in an observation is decided by several factors, the most important of which is the researcher's purpose in conducting the study in the first place—in other words, the conceptual framework, problem, or questions of interest determine what is to be observed. The researcher can decide ahead of time to concentrate on observing certain events, behaviors, or persons. Where to begin looking depends on the

research question, but where to focus or stop action cannot be determined ahead of time. The focus must be allowed to emerge and, in fact, may change over the course of the study.

For the current study, the researcher observed the case of the Historically Black High School. Within the case, the researcher observed the principal of the school carrying out their respective duties and responsibilities, as well as their interaction with students, faculty and staff, parents, and other stakeholders. The researcher also observed the principal in faculty meetings and opportunities for leading the team of teachers through professional learning. Additionally, the researcher observed the school environment, physical space within the building, banners, posters, written expectations, bell schedule, classroom structure, and learning spaces in an effort to paint an accurate picture for the reader and fill in the necessary gaps from the interview record. The researcher scribed notes of all observations and data.

Data Collection with Observations

The process of collecting data through observations can be broken into three stages: entry, data collection, and exit. Gaining entry into a site begins with acquiring the confidence and permission of those who can approve the activity, a step that is more easily accomplished through a mutual contact who can recommend the researcher to the “gatekeepers” involved. Once the researcher becomes familiar with the setting and begins to see what is there to observe, serious data collection can begin; there is little glamour and much hard work in this phase of research. It requires great concentration to observe intently, remember as much as possible, and then record in detail what has been observed. Conducting an observation, even a short one, can be exhausting, especially in the beginning of a study. It is probably best to do

more frequent, short observations at first, because a researcher who feels familiar with and comfortable in the setting can observe the situation longer.

Field Notes

What is written down or mechanically recorded from a period of observation becomes the raw data from which a study's findings eventually emerge. This written account of the observation constitutes *field notes*, and these are analogous to the interview transcript. In both forms of data collection, the more complete the recording, the easier it is to analyze the data. It is much more likely that a researcher will jot down notes during an observation and wait until afterward to record in detail what has been observed. Even if the researcher has been able to take notes during an observation, it is imperative that full notes be written, typed, or dictated as soon after the observation as possible (Merriam, 1998).

Field notes based on observation should be in a format that allows the researcher to find desired information easily. Formats vary, but a set of notes usually begins with the time, place, and purpose of the observation. It is also helpful to list the participants, or at least to indicate how many and what kinds of people are present, described in ways meaningful to the research (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the researcher took field notes during all observations, then typed observation notes within 24 hours of the field observation, using an appropriate format with specific descriptors (time, place, people, and purpose).

An important component of field notes is observer commentary, consisting of comments that can include the researcher's feelings, reactions, hunches, initial interpretations, and working hypotheses. Over and above factual descriptions of what is going on, such comments include thoughts about the setting, people, and activities. In raising

questions about what is observed or speculating as to its meaning, the researcher is actually engaging in some preliminary data analysis. The joint collection and analysis of data is essential in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998), so comments were included in the field notes of the observations conducted by the researcher of this study. Follow-up sessions or interviews were conducted to gain additional information on observational data that needed to be explained in greater detail by the participants.

To summarize data collection methods in this study, participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A and Appendix B), research documents were generated and analyzed, and observations were conducted within the case. Table 3.1 shows the alignment of research questions to the aforementioned data collection methodologies and related interview questions.

Table 3.1: Data Collection Table

Research Question	Data Collection Method	Sample Interview Question
<p>Question 1:</p> <p>Are there organizational practices of principals in Historically Black High Schools that have significantly increased student achievement?</p>	<p>Interview</p> <p>Research-Generated Document Analysis</p> <p>Observation</p>	<p>From Appendix A: All questions</p> <p>From Appendix B:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the principal as a leader. 2. What role do you believe the school principals play in the school turnaround? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What practices, if any, are specific to the Historically Black High school context? 3. What more could the principal have done to improve the school? 4. Cite the strengths and weaknesses of the principal(s), as you perceive them. 5. How could the principal(s) improve? 6. What other factors led to the turnaround? 8. What was the principal's vision? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To your knowledge, how was the vision developed? b. How did the principal establish culture?

Table 3.1 Continued

Research Question	Data Collection Method	Sample Interview Question
<p>Question 2:</p> <p>Are there organizational practices of principals in Historically Black High Schools that have significantly increased student achievement?</p>	<p>Interview</p> <p>Research-Generated Document Analysis</p>	<p>From Appendix A:</p> <p>3. Describe your turnaround strategy for (study) school.</p> <p> a. Was any part of the strategy specific to the Historically Black High School context?</p> <p> b. What steps did you take to implement your strategy?</p> <p>4. What was your vision for the school?</p> <p> a. How did you obtain buy-in and support?</p> <p>5. Did you engage students in the creation of your vision for the (study) school?</p> <p>6. Do you engage students in helping to determine school culture? How so?</p> <p>8. How do you manage instructional practices in (study) school?</p> <p>9. How do you plan instructional support and professional development?</p> <p>11. What changes did you implement during your tenure at (study) school?</p> <p>12. How did you prioritize your proposed changes?</p> <p>13. Did your changes support successful school turnaround? How do you know?</p> <p>From Appendix B:</p> <p>2. What role do you believe the school principals play in the school turnaround?</p> <p> a. What practices, if any, are specific to the Historically Black High school context?</p> <p>8. What was the principal's vision?</p> <p> a. To your knowledge, how was the vision developed?</p> <p> b. How did the principal establish culture?</p>
<p>Question 3:</p> <p>What other major factors contributed to significant turnaround and improvement of student performance?</p>	<p>Interview</p> <p>Observation</p>	<p>From Appendix B:</p> <p>6. What other factors led to the turnaround?</p> <p>7. Could the turnaround have happened in the absence of the principal(s)?</p> <p>9. Do you believe that the principal's vision spurred the school to a successful turnaround?</p> <p>10. Are there other significant factors that led to the turnaround?</p>

Data Analysis

Category construction begins with reading the first interview transcript, the first set of field notes, and the first document collected in the study. As a researcher reads, they jot down notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins next to pieces of data that strike them as interesting, potentially relevant, or important to the study. The researcher should think of themselves as having a conversation with the data in this way, asking questions of it, making comments to it, and so on. After working through the entire transcript in this manner, the researcher reviews the marginal notes and comments, and tries to group those that seem to go together. The researcher should keep a running list of these groupings attached to the transcript on a separate paper or memo. Documents, field notes, and observations should be scanned and group in the same manner (Merriam, 1998).

Naming Categories

The names of the categories can come from at least three sources: the researcher, the participants, or sources outside the study such as the literature. The most common situation is that in which the investigator comes up with terms, concepts, and categories that reflect what s/he sees in the data. Several important guidelines can be used to determine the efficacy of categories derived from the constant comparative method of data analysis:

- Categories should reflect the purpose of the research.
- Categories should be exhaustive.
- Categories should be mutually exclusive.
- Categories should be sensitizing.
- Categories should be conceptually congruent.

Of these, conceptual congruence is probably the most difficult criterion to apply, because investigators are usually so immersed in their data and analysis that it is hard for them to clearly see whether or not a set of categories make sense together. One of the best strategies for a researcher to use in checking all the criteria against their applied category scheme is to display the set of categories in the form of a chart or table; this can be as simple as list of one-word categories (Merriam, 1998).

Organizing Data

To prepare for further analysis or writing the results of the study, there are four basic strategies for organizing all the data, including using index cards, file folders, information retrieval cards, and computer programs (Merriam, 1998). The researcher in the current study used index cards for the organization of data in the interview and research-generated documents. Each unit of information can be put onto a separate index card and coded according to any number of categories, ranging from situation factors (who, what, when, where) to categories representing emerging themes or concepts (Merriam, 1998). Once data was organized in this study, relevant themes began to emerge that led to thematic categories and the development of the study's theory.

Validity and Reliability

The applied nature of educational inquiry makes it imperative that researchers and others have confidence in the conduct of the investigation and the results of any particular study. Assessing the validity and reliability of a qualitative study involves examining its component parts. Validity and reliability are concerns of research that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were

collect, analyzed, and interpreted, as well as the way in which findings are presented (Merriam, 1998).

Internal Validity

Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality, and therefore hinges on the meaning of reality in all research (Merriam, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985) define reality as “a multiple set of mental constructions...made by humans; their constructions are on their minds, and they are, in the main, accessible to the humans who make them” (p. 295). Because human beings are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research, interpretations of reality are accessed directly through observations and interviews. Qualitative research works to understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework, and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening (Merriam, 1998). By viewing reality in this manner, qualitative research has strong internal validity. Strategies used to enhance internal validity include:

- Triangulation – Using multiple sources of data or multiple methods to confirm emerging findings, such as interviews and research-generated documents
- Member Checks – Taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible, which should occur during the second and subsequent interviews, if needed
- Peer examination – Asking colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerge
- Researcher’s biases – Clarifying the researcher’s assumptions, world view, and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. In a research design, reliability is based on the assumption that there is a single reality and that studying it repeatedly will yield the same results. This makes reliability problematic in the social sciences, simply because human behavior is never static. Moreover, qualitative research is not conducted so that the laws of human behavior can be isolated. Rather, researchers seek to describe and explain the world just as those in the world experience it. Since there are many interpretations of what is happening, there is no benchmark by which to take repeated measures and establish reliability in the traditional sense (Merriam, 1998).

Since the term reliability in the traditional sense seems to be something of a misfit when applied to qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest instead thinking about the “dependability” or “consistency” of the results obtained from the data. That is, rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, a researcher wants outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense—that they are consistent and dependable. The question, then, is not whether a finding will be found again, but whether the results are consistent with the data collected. Investigators can use several techniques to ensure that results are dependable:

- Investigator’s position – The investigator should explain the assumptions and theory behind the study and his or her position vis-à-vis the group being studied, the basis for selecting informants and a description of them, and the social context from which data were collected (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

- Triangulation – Triangulation is the practice of using multiple methods of data collection and analysis.
- Audit trail – In order for an audit to take place, the investigator must describe in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. (Merriam, 1998)

The connection between reliability, or dependability, and internal validity from a traditional perspective rests on the assumption that a study is more valid if repeated observations in the same study or replications of the entire study have produced alike results. Notably, in the social sciences, simply the fact that a number of people have experienced the same phenomenon does not make the observations more reliable (Merriam, 1998).

External Validity

External validity is concerned with the extent to which the finding of one study can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 1998). Overall, the issue of generalizability centers on whether it is possible to generalize from a single case or from qualitative inquiry in general. When multi-site studies are impractical, or if the phenomenon of interest is unique, the question of external validity remains. Reconceptualizations of generalizability include, with regard to the current study, working hypotheses (Cronbach, 1975; Donmoyer, 1990) and user or reader generalizability (Walker, 1980; Wilson, 1979).

Working hypotheses not only take account of local conditions, but also offer the educator some guidance in making choices—the results of which can be monitored and evaluated in order to make better future decisions. This practical view of generalization is shared by Patton (1990), who argues that qualitative research should “provide perspective

rather than truth, empirical assessment of local decision makers' theories of action rather than generation and verification of universal theories, and context-bound extrapolations rather than generalizations" (p. 491). Reader or user generalizability involves leaving the extent to which a study's finding applies to other situations up to the people in those situations. The researcher has an obligation to provide enough detailed description of the study's context to enhance readers to compare the "fit" with their situations (Merriam, 1998).

Limitations of the Study

While the aim of the case in the current study was to investigate the turnaround of a racially homogenous, minority-based population of African-American students, it may not be appropriate to apply the results of the study to a school serving any other major, minority populations (such as Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and so on). The goal of the current study was to determine practices of leaders and other certified personnel (namely teachers) in the organizational turnaround of a Historically Black High School. Furthermore, the results of this study may not be applied to other levels of schooling, such as elementary or middle schools, as it solely examined turnaround at a high school serving a historically Black population.

Another limitation of this study related to the observation of principals selected for the analysis. Three principals served the school during the period of turnaround, but only one of those three principals is the current leader of the case. The observations, as a result, were based on their leadership practices in carrying out their role as leader within the building. Thus, the observations are consequently limited to what can be evaluated from only one

principal, and the data collected cannot and should not be applied to the former two principals.

This study focused on the significant factors in principals' and teachers' perspectives of effective leadership and organizational turnaround. Teachers attend faculty meetings, professional development sessions, and in most cases are evaluated by the principal—all which have implications of directly working with the principal. As a result, this study hoped to capture those effective practices, skills, and dispositions that the principal employed to affect teacher capacity and positive change. This study, consequently, amalgamated the principal's personal perspective of turnaround, while also examining the principal's leadership practices from the teachers' perspectives. Other stakeholders such as the instructional staff, although integral parts of the educational community, may not have had a direct line with the principal, especially as it relates to student performance and achievement. As such, this is a delimitation of the study.

Ethics

Concerns about validity and reliability are common to all forms of research, as is the concern that the investigation be conducted in an ethical manner (Merriam, 1998). In qualitative studies, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and the dissemination of findings. Overlaying both the collection of data and the dissemination of findings is the researcher-participant relationship. This relationship and the purpose of the research itself determine how much the researcher reveals about the actual purpose of the study, how informed the consent given can actually be, and how much privacy and protection from harm is afforded the participants (Merriam, 1998).

Internal Review Board Process

Before conducting research, the investigator provided the North Carolina State University IRB with an outline of the scope of the proposal for the protection of human subjects in research. This process ensured the ethical use of human subjects and protected the right and welfare of those involved in the research and data collection processes.

Ethics in Data Collection

The standard data collection techniques of interviewing and observation in qualitative research present their own ethical dilemmas (Merriam, 1998). Interviewing, whether highly structured with predetermined questions or semi structured and open-ended, carries with it both risks and benefits to informants. Respondents may feel their privacy has been invaded, they may be embarrassed by certain questions, and/or they may tell things they had never intended to reveal (Merriam, 1998). To alleviate these concerns, the researcher in the current study developed safeguards and protocols to include pilot interviews, a semi structured interview guide (allowing for flexibility in questioning techniques), and developing rapport with the respondents in the initial and subsequent interviews.

Analysis and Dissemination

Since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, data is filtered through his or her particular theoretical position and biases. Deciding what is important, what should or should not be attended to when collecting and analyzing data, is almost always up to the investigator. Opportunities thus exist for excluding data contradictory to the investigator's views. Sometimes, these biases are not readily apparent to the researcher. Crandall (1978) suggests, "Biases that cannot be controlled should be discussed in a written

report. Where the data only partly support the predictions, the report should contain enough data to let readers draw their own conclusions” (p. 162). The biases of the current researcher to this study and to the field of research are articulated in the data results and interpretations sections of the study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter provides an analysis of the data collection following the current researcher's examination of the case, the Historically Black High School, in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there organizational practices of principals in Historically Black High Schools that have significantly increased student achievement?
2. Are there leadership practices specific to Historically Black High Schools in building and sustaining high student achievement?
3. What other major factors contributed to significant turnaround and improvement of student performance?

This chapter begins with a review of the methodology of data collection and a timeline of principal leadership within the case during the turnaround period. Immediately following, each data collection component (research-generated documents, observations, and interviews) is analyzed and the findings interpreted within the scope of the research design. Finally, this chapter ends by setting the stage for the conclusions, implications for practice, and further analyses as are discussed in Chapter 5.

The data collected within this study are appropriate to the scope of the research questions and consistent with qualitative methodologies aligned with case study analysis. The analysis of the principal leadership practices of organizational turnaround was derived from research-generated documents, interviews, and observations. Research-generated documents helped to explain the overall turnaround process with regard to student performance, composition of teachers, and other metrics associated with the state's accountability system

indicating the school's composite and designations. Another level of this study's analysis is the exploration of leadership practices pertaining to the current principal through observation in determining what factors and behaviors were most effective and sustainable throughout the turnaround period. An observation of the actual school building and artifacts within the learning environment is also appropriate in order to provide a collective understanding of the culture of high student achievement. To understand the true significance and essence with the turnaround, it was important to align the hard numbers and measures collected within the data recorded by the state to the lived experiences of the actual turnaround process from instructional personnel. Two groups were interviewed for this study: the three principals who led the school through the duration of the turnaround period, and certified personnel (teachers, assistant principals, and teacher leaders) who experienced working with the three principals in the same timeframe. As articulated in the data methodology section, pseudonyms were used for all of the participants of the interviews and observations, and are as follows:

- Principal 1 – Ms. Dennis
- Principal 2 – Mr. Williams
- Principal 3 – Ms. Anderson
- Teacher 1 – Ms. Henderson
- Teacher 2 – Ms. McNeill
- Teacher 3 – Mr. Parks
- Teacher 4 – Ms. Bundy
- Teacher 5 – Ms. Holmes

- Teacher 6 – Mr. Smalls
- Teacher 7 – Ms. Wilson
- School Name – Elmer Vanray Wilkins High School (better known as Wilkins High)
- School Mascot – Golden Royals

Table 4.1 indicates the experience of each faculty member while working at EV Wilkins High during the time of turnaround. There is a notably varied level of expertise and strong cross-section of experience of the certified individuals within the school building.

Table 4.1: Wilkins High Principal and Teacher Timeline

	2005-06*	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Principals							
Dennis	Principal		Retired				
Williams	Assistant Principal at another school in LEA		Principal of EV Wilkins High				Resigned
Anderson	English Teacher		Assistant Principal		Principal of Early College at another school		Principal
Teachers							
Henderson	English Teacher						
McNeill	English Teacher		Assistant Principal at another school in LEA		Assistant Principal		
Parks	Student		English Teacher				
Bundy	Science Teacher						
Holmes	Special Education Teacher						
Smalls	Career Technical Education Teacher			Assistant Principal			
Wilson	Science Teacher						

* Position was also held prior to the start of the 2005-2006 school year

It is important to note that the three principals in the current study served at different time periods throughout the turnaround. Ms. Dennis, the initial principal of the turnaround, served Wilkins High from 2005-2007, and retired as principal of the school at the end of the

2007 school year. Mr. Williams was then appointed as the principal of Wilkins High starting in the 2007-2008 school year; he served in this capacity for four academic years until he resigned and took a position in another Local Education Agency within the state. At the tail end of the turnaround period, during the 2011-12 school year, Ms. Anderson was hired to lead the school, and she is currently serving in the same capacity. Unlike her predecessors, Ms. Anderson is the only principal that matriculated through Wilkins High as a student; she returned to Wilkins High after graduating from college, first serving as an English teacher, next as Assistant Principal, and then as Principal at the time of the current study. Ms. Anderson was a student and teacher under the leadership of Ms. Dennis, and was an assistant principal for Mr. Williams.

In the subsequent sections, the data collected for this study are analyzed and interpreted with regard to the current study's research questions. The data were analyzed by research-generated documents, observations, and interviews of the current principal of Wilkins High School, Ms. Anderson.

Research-Generated Documents

Historical documents were generated in order to analyze student performance, teacher composition, and other state accountability measures. The research-generated documents prepared for this analysis included: North Carolina School Report Card for school years 2004 through 2012 (Overall Student Performance, Composite Performance, Accountability Designation, Graduation Rates, School Safety, Quality Teachers, Teacher Experience, and Turnover), as well as the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey for 2010 and

2012. The following analysis includes findings from each document and delves deeply into the critical components of the school turnaround period with regard to the school leadership.

Overall Student Performance

As state accountability measures mandate, school performance is based on a myriad of metrics. One of those metrics is student proficiency on high-stakes, standardized assessments. For comprehensive high schools, the assessment by which students are measured is the End-of-Course (EOC) tests. From 2004-2012, the years of the turnaround period, EOC tests have been revised, renormalized, and even discontinued. This section of the analysis examines each EOC testing area and the students’ performance in those areas, as well as the performance level obtained by each principal (and its subsequent net gain through their tenure as principal). Table 4.2 shows overall student performance from 2004-2012.

Table 4.2: Overall Student Performance (Percentages), 2004-2012

Year	English I	Algebra I	Algebra II	Geometry	Biology	Chemistry	Physical Science	Physics	Civics & Economics	U.S. History
2005-2006	72.0	63.0	62.1	40.6	48.4	60.7	62.7	N/A	44.0	37.7
2006-2007	58.0	44.0	63.0	46.0	52.0	---	---	---	48.0	54.0
2007-2008	60.5	32.6	76.0	49.4	54.1	46.8	29.1	90.0	55.2	42.1
2008-2009	65.9	36.4	87.2	57.2	61.0	37.1	65.3	86.7	77.8	53.9
2009-2010	73.5	64.5	>95	87.2	84.5	---	>95	---	82.5	90.2
2010-2011	75.9	68.9	>95	E	84.4	E	91.4	E	84.9	93.4
2011-2012	80.1	75.6	E		90.4		E		E	E

(North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.)

Key:



First Year in which the given test was eliminated from the ABC Accountability Model



Second Year in which the given test was eliminated from the ABC Accountability Model

For students taking the End-of-Course test for English I, the collective data showed marked improvement every year after the 2006-2007 school year. As End-of-Course tests were re-normalized during the 2006-2007 school year, results were consequently lower during that year across and throughout the state. Following the 2006-2007 school year, though, there were significant gains: 2007-2008 (+2.5 percentage points), 2008-2009 (+5.4 percentage points), 2009-2010 (+7.6 percentage points), 2010-2011 (+2.4 percentage points), and 2011-2012 (+4.2 percentage points). The largest gain made was more than 7 percentage points during the 2009-2010 school year, from 65.9% to 73.5% proficiency, as compared to the previous school year. Collectively, compared to the initial student performance composite as noted from the onset of the turnaround period, English I scores were raised by 8.1 percentage points.

Analysis of the Algebra I scores indicated significant gains in the composite performance of students taking the EOC test. During the year of re-norming scores (2006-2007), the Algebra I composite performance showed a significant dip down to 44% proficient as compared to the previous year in which 63% of students were proficient on the exam. In the following school year (2007-2008), the composite performance dropped to 32.6%, the lowest it had been during the initial phases of turnaround. Starting in the 2008-2009 school year, the composite Algebra I scores increased significantly. In 2008-2009, there was an increase of 3.8% in the scores, followed by the largest and most dramatic increase of all tested areas in the 2009-2010 school year, in which the scores grew by 28.1 percentage points. The increase continued to happen in both 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, with an increase of 4.4 and 6.7 points, respectively. Juxtaposed with the initial composite score from 2005-

2006 and the increase of scores in 2011-2012, there was a net gain of 12.6 percentage points during the time of turnaround.

While some testing areas show a dip in the composite student performance when the state tests were re-normalized in 2006-2007, the Algebra II scores reveal a different trend. The Algebra II composite student performance scores show a positive trend for each year in which the test was administered. During the 2006-2007 school year, there was a small gain of 0.9 percentage points compared to the previous school year. In 2007-2008, a significant gain of 13% was made, and the same trend continued in 2008-2009, in which the increase was 11.2 percentage points. For both the 2009-2010 and the 2010-2011 school years, the composite student performance and collective scores were greater than 95%. An exact value is not provided due to standard deviation calculations and confidence intervals. Throughout the turnaround period, the students' composite score for Algebra II, as compared to its initial year of performance (2005-2006) increased by 32.9 percentage points.

With regard to annual gains in the composite student performance in Algebra II, the analysis of Geometry scores indicate annual gains from 2005 until the test was eliminated during the 2010-2011 school year. In 2005-2006, the performance composite for Geometry ranged just above 40%, one of the lowest tested areas in all EOC testing administrations of the school. During the 2006-2007 school year, an increase in performance raised the composite 5.4 percentage points. This was followed by a 3.4 and 7.8 percentage points gain in the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years. The most significant gain came in 2009-2010, when the performance composite increased by 30 points, from 57.2% to 87.2%. Overall, the

composite scores, which had an initial performance standard of 40.6% in 2005-2006, increased by 46.6 points in four academic school years to 87.2%.

With the exception of the 2010-2011 school year, the composite scores of the EOC Biology examination indicate positive gains when compared to each preceding school year. Even in the 2010-2011 school year, the net gain dipped, showing a -0.1 percentage points decrease in from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011. In the 2006-2007 school year, there was a increase of the composite score by 3.8 percentage points. In the next two school years, 2007-2008 to 2008-2009, there was a 2.1% and 6.9% gain, respectively, for a combined increase of 9 percentage points . In the 2009-2010 school year, Biology scores increased by 23.5 percentage points, the largest in the entire turnaround process. In 2011-2012, there was an increase by 6 percentage points, after a slight -0.1 percentage points dip during the 2010-2011 school year. Collectively, over the course of the turnaround period, the composite Biology scores increased from 48.4% to 90.4%, a net gain of 42 percentage points.

The End-of-Course test for Chemistry was administered, statewide, for only three of the years of the turnaround process: 2005-2006, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009, with no testing in the 2006-2007 school year. During this time, the total enrollment of students in Chemistry decreased from 21 to 16 students, and the composite performance fell in the years that the test was administered to students. Some explanations for this decline lies in continuous personnel shifts in this content area, including teacher turnover as well as a lack of teaching experience with content standards needed to sustain a highly functional professional learning community. The Chemistry test was not administered in 2009-2010, and was discontinued after 2010, the last test administration coinciding with the second year of Mr. Williams's

leadership within the school. Due to the discontinued testing, no data exists after his first year as principal to determine if his leadership could have positively impacted the scores for this tested area.

During the school's turnaround period, the Physics End-of-Course examination was administered for two years only, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. In both years, more than 86% of the students tested showed proficiency, with 90% in 2007-2008 and 86.7% in 2008-2009. Students placed in Physics oftentimes enrolled in the class for an additional Advanced Science credit, as the requirement by the state to graduate from high school included Physical Science, Biology, Earth Science, or Chemistry. Students enrolled in this course elected to take the course, either at the general, honors, or AP level. The data described here not only indicate high student performance on the Physics EOC test, but also point out the academic motivation of students and the electing of taking higher placement courses when not required for graduation nor by institutions of higher education.

In the 2005-2006, school year, prior to the re-norming of scores in the 2006-2007 school year, approximately 62.7% were proficient on the Physical Science EOC test. The subsequent year, the Physical Science EOC assessment was not administered statewide, but was administered the year after, during the 2007-2008 school year. During this school year, just over a quarter of the students were proficient on this assessment, which led school administration and teachers to focus a great deal of effort, attention, and support in unpacking the Physical Science curriculum and content standards and providing additional resources. During the 2008-2009 school year, 65.3% of students were proficient on the Physical Science EOC test, an increase of over 36%. Over 30% were gained in the following year, the 2009-

2010 school year, where over 95% of students tested in Physical Science were proficient. In 2010-2011, the school maintained high performance in Physical Science, with 91.4% of students showing proficiency on this examination. During the period of turnaround, there was an overall increase of 28.7%, from the onset of the period in 2005-2006 to 2011, when the test stop being administered.

Throughout the period of turnaround, the composite performance on the Civics & Economics End-of-Course examination indicates continual progress and student proficiency testing gains. Beginning in 2005-2006, less than half of the students tested were proficient on the End-of-Course test, which was also true during the 2006-2007 school year; however, there was a gain of 4% during this academic year. In the next school year, 2007-2008, the proficiency rate increased by 7.2%, with over 55% of students showing proficiency on the examination. In the 2008-2009 school year, there was a dramatic increase of 22.6%, moving from a proficiency level of 55.2% in 2007-2008 to one of 77.8%. Gains were evident in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 as well, with 4.7% and 2.4% increases, respectively. The EOC test for Civics and Economics was discontinued in the 2011-2012 school year. Overall, for the years of the turnaround period, there was an increase of 40.9% of the metrics of student proficiency, from 44% in 2005-2006 to 84.9% in 2010-2011.

With the exception of a dip in 2007-2008, the percentage of students deemed proficient on the United States History EOC test continue to climb throughout the turnaround process. The biggest gain with this assessment took place in the 2009-2010 school year, when the proficiency rate increased by 36.3%, going from 53.9% of students proficient in 2008-2009, to 90.2% proficient in 2009-2010. Overall, the proficient rate for the United

States History End-of-Course examination increased by 55.7% from 2005 to 2011. The test was discontinued in the 2011-2012 school year. Tables 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 below illustrate the collective student performance composite for the turnaround period per principal tenure. It shows the differential between the student performance composite in the school year and the year preceding it. The last column displays the net gains that coincide with the principals' leadership during the organizational and turnaround efforts.

Table 4.3: Ms. Dennis – EOC Student Proficiency (3 years) and Net Gain Table

Subject/Year	2005-2006 (% proficient)	2006-2007 (% loss or gain)	Net Gain
English I	72.0	-14.0	-14.0
Algebra I	63.0	-19.0	-19.0
Algebra II	62.1	+0.9	+0.9
Geometry	40.6	+5.4	+5.4
Biology	48.4	+3.8	+3.8
Chemistry	60.7	----	----
Physics	N/A	----	----
Physical Science	62.7	----	----
Civics & Economics	44.0	+4.0	+4.0
U.S. History	37.7	+16.3	+16.3

Table 4.4: Mr. Williams – EOC Student Proficiency (4 years) and Net Gain Table

Subject/Year	2007-2008*	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	Net Gain
English I	+2.5	+5.4	+7.6	+2.4	+17.9
Algebra I	-11.4	+3.8	+28.1	+4.4	+24.9
Algebra II	+13.0	+11.2	>30.0	>30.0 (08-09)	+54.2
Geometry	+3.4	+7.8	+30.0	----	+41.2
Biology	+2.1	+6.9	+23.5	-0.1	+32.4
Chemistry	-13.9	-9.7	----	----	-23.6
Physics	---	-3.3	----	----	-3.3
Physical Science	-33.6	+36.2	+30.0	----	+32.6
Civics & Economics	+7.2	+22.6	+4.7	+2.4	+36.9
US History	-11.9	+11.8	+36.3	+3.2	+39.4

**This calculation is the differential between the 2007-2008 to the 2008-2009 school year, which coincides with the change in leadership of the case. Every year, there after is the differential from the results of the preceding year. Refer to Table 4.2 for actual Proficiency Levels per year.*

Table 4.5: Ms. Anderson – EOC Student Proficiency (1 year) and Net Gain Table

Subject/Year	2011-2012*	Net Gain
English I	+4.2	+4.2
Algebra I	+6.7	+6.7
Biology	+6.0	+6.0
Physical Science	-4.0	-4.0

**This calculation is the differential between the 2011-2012 to the 2010-2011 school year, which coincides with the change in leadership of the case. Refer to Table 4.2 for actual Proficiency Levels per year.*

The analysis of the data displayed in the tables above indicated that Ms. Dennis had net gains in Algebra II (+0.9%), Geometry (+5.4%), Biology (+3.8%), Civics and Economics (+4.0%), and U.S. History (+16.3%). The areas where composite performance decreased show significant drops of 11% or higher: English 1 (-14.0%) and Algebra I (-19.0%). While there was modest improvement in five tested areas, it was not enough to keep Wilkins High school off Judge Manning’s list. As a result, the school had to create an improvement plan for underperformance. Under the leadership of Ms. Dennis, the school chose America’s Choice as an improvement model for the 2007-2008 school year.

The analysis of Mr. Williams’ tenure, as the data displays in the table, indicated significant net gains: English I (+17.9%), Algebra I (+24.9%), Algebra II (+54.2%), Geometry (+41.2%), Biology (+32.4%), Physical Science (+32.6%), Civics & Economics (+36.9%) and U.S. History (+39.4%). All of these were gains of 20% or more over a span of four academic years. Algebra II scores had the most drastic increase, gaining 54.2% from the onset of the turnaround through the end of Mr. Williams’ tenure at the school. This data indicates that the leadership of Mr. Williams had a significant impact on the students’ performance on high-stakes testing, so much so that the school was no longer threatened to

be shut down by the mandate of Judge Manning. Although there were no gains in Chemistry and Physics during Mr. Williams' tenure, it is likely and plausible that, if these tests were continued for more than his first year in the principal role, significant gains would also have been made in these areas.

Overall, the composite performance score of students within this school grew from 50.1% in the 2005-2006 school year to 81.5% during the 2011-2012 administration. Performance peaked at its highest level in 2010-2011, where the total composite reached 83.5% of students showing proficiency in all tested areas. In the first four years of the school turnaround period, the composite score fell beneath the threshold of 60% required by Judge Manning and Former North Carolina Governor Hunt to keep schools from additional state assistance and mandated improvement plans. During this time, the school was provided support from the reform model aligned with America's Choice School Design, a K-12 comprehensive school reform model designed by the National Center on Education and the Economy. America's Choice focuses on raising academic achievement by providing a rigorous standards-based curriculum and safety net for all students. The design model was centered on five tasks: standards and assessments, learning environments, community services and supports, high performance management, and parent and public engagement. In most cases, the primary reason a school or district chose to implement America's Choice was a history of low student achievement. (Corcoran, et.al, 2000). Table 4.6 displays the overall composite scores for the period of school turnaround.

Table 4.6: Composite Student Performance, 2004-2012

School Year	Composite Student Performance	Gains
2004-2005	50.9%	---
2005-2006	53.5%	+2.6
2006-2007	51.7%	-1.8
2007-2008	49.6%	-2.1
2008-2009	61.8%	+12.2
2009-2010	83.2%	+21.4
2010-2011	83.5%	+0.3
2011-2012	81.5%	-2.0

(North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.)

Proficiency levels took on a different trend in the latter part of the turnaround process. Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, the school met a composite performance target above the 60% mandated threshold, in which 61.8% of the students met proficiency on standardized state tests. A year later, in 2009-2010, the school improved this mark by raising the proficiency level more than 20% to 83.2% of students being proficient on state examinations, a distinction that had not been met in previous years. A year later, student performance on these high-stakes tests was sustained, and rose slightly to 83.5%, the highest of the entire turnaround period.

Table 4.7 illustrates the school performance designation, growth, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)/Annual Measure Objectives (AMO) data for the period of school turnaround. In the first three years of the turnaround efforts, the school was identified as a priority school, having 50% to 60% of students at grade level and proficient on state examinations. Growth measures are included within the designations. Growth calculations takes in students' previous performance on examinations, and provide an estimate as to how students are likely to perform in subsequent and future tests. The growth designation for the

2005-2006 school year indicates that students, as a composite, met expected growth. During the 2006-2007 school year, students met high academic growth, but did not meet expected growth in the 2007-2008 school year. It appears that, as one amalgamates the proficiency data with that of growth calculations, an emphasis on student performance was placed on academic growth rather than on the proficiency, or mastering, of content standards and objectives on the EOC tests.

Table 4.7: School Performance Accountability Designations, 2004-2012

Year	Designation	Performance	Growth Achieved	AYP Results
2005-06	Priority School	50-60% of students at grade level, or less than 50% of students at grade level	Expected Growth	Met AYP Met 16 of 16 performance targets
2006-07	Priority School	50-60% of students at grade level, or less than 50% of students at grade level	High Growth	Did not meet AYP Met 11 of 17 performance targets
2007-08	Priority School	50-60% of students at grade level, or less than 50% of students at grade level	Expected Growth Not Achieved	Did not meet AYP Met 11 of 15 performance targets
2008-09	School of Progress	60-80% of students at grade level	Expected Growth	Did not meet AYP Met 8 of 13 performance targets
2009-10	No Recognition	60-100% of students at grade level	Expected Growth Not Achieved	Did not meet AYP Met 11 of 17 performance targets
2010-11	School of Distinction	80-90% of students at grade level	High Growth	Did not meet AYP Met 15 of 19 performance targets
2011-12	School of Distinction	80 to 90% of students at grade level	High Growth	Did not meet AMOs; School met 18 of the 19 Annual Measurable Objectives (94.7%).

(North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.)

Proficiency and growth calculations at the school began to change during the second half of the turnaround period. In 2008-2009, for the first time, the school moved from being designated as a Priority School to a School of Progress in which 60% to 80% of students were on grade level. Students met expected growth during this school year and, for the first time in this turnaround period, both proficiency and growth levels increased among students. Although an increase in student proficiency performance took place in the 2009-2010 school year, composite student performance did not demonstrate academic growth. As a result, the school was designated with No Recognition. In the following two school years, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, the school met higher standards with student proficiency and achieved high growth. The school was then designated as a School of Distinction. This school, which once was threatened to be shut down due to the underperformance of students and its long-standing history as a low-performing, Historically Black High School, became an example for other schools to model and emulate with regard to high performance, academic standards, and overall turnaround efforts.

AYP is a measure by which schools, districts, and states are held accountable for student performance under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002). State tests must be the primary factor in the state's measure of AYP, but the use of at least one other academic indicator of school performance is required. For secondary schools, the other academic indicator is the high school graduation rate. A state's AYP must include separate measures for both reading/language arts and math. In addition, the measures must apply not only to students on average, but also to students in subgroups including economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, English-language learners,

African-American students, Asian-American students, Caucasian students, Hispanic students, and Native-American students.

To make AYP, at least 95% of students in each of the subgroups, as well as 95% of students in a school as a whole, must take the state tests, and each subgroup of students must meet or exceed the measurable annual objectives set by the state for each year (Center on Education Policy, 2011). AYP was considered an “all or nothing” model, as schools seeking to “meet AYP” were tasked with meeting all accountability targets. In the first year of the turnaround period, Wilkins High hit all of their AYP targets and thus met AYP. For the remaining years of the AYP measure, however, Wilkins High did not meet all of the AYP targets, though there were some years in which more performance targets were met than in the preceding year. In the 2011-2012 school year, the state modified the AYP definitions and changed the performance target to AMOs, which are synonymous in nature to AYP. For the 2011-2012 school year, Wilkins High met 18 out of 19 (or 94.7%) of its annual measureable objectives, a marked increase from previous school years.

Another metric identified as a key component of the effectiveness of instructional programming of schools and state accountability measures is the annual four-year graduation rate. This accountability measure is determined by the rate of students which enter ninth grade for the first time as a cohort, and then finish all graduation requirements within four years; though some students may graduate after four-years, this metric only takes in account those students who meet graduation standards within four instructional years. The graduation rate for Wilkins High showed a significant increase from the start of the turnaround period to the 2011-2012 school year. In the 2005-2006 school year, over half-of the school’s students

(59.1%) graduated in four-years. For the next two school years, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, respectively, the graduation rate increased more than 5.6% to 64.7%. Notably, the following 2009-2009 school year had the largest annual increase in graduation rates, gaining more than 8% to raise the overall rate to 73.5%. In 2009-2010, there was a decrease of approximately 3%, yet this still kept the graduation rate above 70%. In the next two academic years, the graduation rate would continue to climb to reach 80% in the 2011-2012 school year. Table 4.8 illustrates the graduation rates at Wilkins High during the turnaround period.

Table 4.8: Cohort Graduation Rate, 2004-2012

School Year	Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	
2005-2006		
	School	59.1%
	District	64.7%
	State	68.7%
2006-2007		
	School	61.2%
	District	67.4%
	State	69.5%
2007-2008		
	School	64.7%
	District	71.3%
	State	70.3%
2008-2009		
	School	73.5%
	District	73.2%
	State	71.7%
2009-2010		
	School	70.1%
	District	75.1%
	State	74.2%
2010-2011		
	School	73.7%
	District	78.1%
	State	77.9%
2011-2012		
	School	80.0%
	District	80.7%
	State	80.4%

Further analysis of the graduation rates indicates that, for some years, the school graduation rates increased at a much faster pace compared to district and state levels. In the 2007-2008 school year, the district increased graduation rates at a rate of 6.9%, while the school increase its graduation rate by 8.8%. The same is true for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, as the rate for the district was 0.6% and 3.7%, respectively, compared to that of 3.6% and 6.3% achieved by the school. In fact, the school increased graduation rates at a faster pace than that of the state for all years of the turnaround period, closing the gap between their four-year graduation rate and that of the district and state. Furthermore, the graduation rate for the school increased during all years. Most notable was the 2008-2009 school year, in which the graduation rate grew from just over half of the students graduating in four years to more than three-fourths of students by the end of the period.

Discipline data during the turnaround period shows a decrease in the acts of violence, crime, and long-term suspensions. At the start of the turnaround period, there was a reported three acts of violence and crime per 100 students, or 21 acts in total. This figure was sustained during the 2006-2007 school year, but the total number of reported incidents lowered in this category in the 2007-2008 school year to 11, or 2 per 100 students, a decrease of 10 acts of violence in the year. In the 2008-2009 school year, this figure increased by 7 per 100 students, with a reported total of 18 acts of violence and crime. During the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, however, this figure continued to drop and tied with 2007-2008 in having the lowest rate during the turnaround process, with 11 acts of violence and crime. In the academic year of 2011-2012, a slight increase of 3 acts of violence and crime was noted by school officials. Long-term suspensions remained at or close to zero for every year

after the 2005-2006 school year. During the 2005-2006 school year, long-term suspensions at Wilkins High were at 4, which is just under the district’s average of 5. Table 4.9 displays discipline data from 2004-2012.

Table 4.9: Discipline Data, 2004-2012

School Year	Acts of Crime or Violence*	Short-Term Suspensions	Long-Term Suspensions*	Attendance Rate
2005-2006	3 (21 total)	42	4	93%
2006-2007	2 (21 total)	50	0	92%
2007-2008	2 (11 total)	62	0	92%
2008-2009	2 (18 total)	37	0	93%
2009-2010	2 (16 total)	30	0	92%
2010-2011	1.04 (11 total)	27.58	0.09	93%
2011-2012	1.24 (14 total)	46.95	0	93%

*Values are per 100 students
(North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.)

Short-term suspensions at Wilkins High during the turnaround period were mostly greater than that of the district’s average. Although there was at times a decrease in the short-term suspension rates during the period, there is not an overall trend to indicate a true reduction or increase overtime. During the first three years of the turnaround period, there was an increase of 20 short-term suspensions, moving from 42 in 2005-2006 to 62 in 2007-2008. There was a drop in suspension rates for the next three school years, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011, at 37, 30, and 27.58, respectively. In 2011-2012, the short-term suspension rate rose to 46.95, the largest rate since the end of Ms. Dennis’ tenure during the 2007-2008 school year. It should be noted that this school year coincided with the first year of Ms. Anderson’s appointment as leader within the school, which is a plausible explanation for the increase of suspension rates during this last year of data within the turnaround period.

This trend is apparent with Mr. Williams' initial year as principal; each year thereafter, under his leadership, the amount of short term suspensions decreased.

The percentage of fully licensed teachers increased from the onset of the turnaround process through the 2010-2011 school year, when that number had dipped slightly in the preceding year. Overall, the percentage of fully licensed teachers at Wilkins High increased from 74% in 2005-2006 to 93% in 2011-2012. The number of highly qualified teachers, as articulated in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) legislation, increased from 84% in 2005-2006 to 95% in 2011-2012. After the 2005-2006 school year, highly qualified teachers represented 89% to 99% of the total teaching population. In addition to the licensure and quality of teachers, the number of teachers with advanced degrees grew from 19 teachers to 28 during the span of turnaround, a 47.4% increase. Implications of this number consider teachers who were pushed to obtain advanced degrees in regional programs by the leadership within the school for the benefit of propelling their instructional craft and practices. Teachers attended the local university adjacent to the school for advanced teacher development and professional learning.

The number of National Board-Certified Teachers also increased during the time of turnaround. The total number of National Board teachers increased by one teacher every year after the 2006-2007 school year. By 2011-2012, there were a total of seven teachers with this designation, more than three times the initial number noted in 2005-2006. The number of National Certified teachers implies the quality of teachers that both principals searched for when hiring new teacher candidates in the building, and it also speaks to teachers' willingness and ability to earn such certifications, as well as the support provided by the

school leadership to help teachers advance their certification to a national platform. Table 4.10 shows information pertaining to the qualifications of the teacher make-up at Wilkins High for the period of turnaround.

Table 4.10: Teacher Qualifications, 2004-2012

School Year	Fully Licensed Teachers	Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers	Teachers with Advanced Degrees	National Board Certified Teachers
2005-2006	74%	84%	19%	2
2006-2007	79%	96%	20%	2
2007-2008	84%	96%	24%	3
2008-2009	90%	94%	28%	4
2009-2010	92%	99%	25%	5
2010-2011	94%	89%	27%	6
2011-2012	93%	95%	28%	7

(North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.)

Teacher turnover at the school vastly decreased during the period of turnaround. The highest teacher turnover rate was noted in the 2006-2007 school year, with 30% of teachers leaving the school. This is 1% more than the turnover rate reported in the preceding 2005-2006 academic year. The teacher turnover rate then decreased in 2009-2010, lowering from 17% to 12% of teachers leaving. Overall, the turnover rate decreased from 29% at the start of the turnaround process to 15% in 2011-2012, a decrease of approximately one-half in the span of the turnaround period. Initially in the turnaround phase, teachers left the school at higher rates than they did towards the end of the turnaround period; this implies that more teachers opted to stay in the school environment as positive changes were made by school leadership. Table 4.11 shows the data associated with teacher turnover rate in years 2004-2012.

Table 4.11: Teacher Experience and Turnover, 2004-2012

School Year	0-3 Years	4-10 Years	10+ Years	Teacher Turnover Rate
2005-2006	39%	16%	46%	29%
2006-2007	37%	18%	45%	30%
2007-2008	32%	19%	50%	17%
2008-2009	27%	19%	54%	15%
2009-2010	21%	25%	54%	12%
2010-2011	12%	35%	53%	18%
2011-2012	13%	36%	51%	15%

(North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.)

Close to half or slightly more than half of the composition of teachers within this school had 10 or more years of teaching experience. During the first four years of the turnaround process, the majority was either novice teachers or veteran teachers with more than 10 years of experience. This trend started changing in the 2009-2010 school year, when majority of the teachers fell in the range of having 4-10 years of experience and more than 10 years of teaching service. Along with the reduced teacher turnover rate, such a trend suggests that many of the novice teachers stayed in the school after the initially licensed phase of three years, as they were fully vested into the structure and changes taking place within the school. By the end of the turnaround period, 87% of the teachers had four or more years of total teaching experience.

North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey

The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions (NC TWC) Survey (New Teacher Center, n.d.) is a statewide survey of school-based licensed educators to determine if they have the supports necessary for effective teaching. Developed in the Office of the Governor as part of the Governor's Teacher Working Conditions Initiative (2002-2008), the work continues the biennial statewide survey out of the North Carolina Department of Public

Instruction. The results of this survey are one component of the ongoing process for collaborative school and district improvement plans. Results are also used as artifacts in the educator and administrator evaluation instruments in our state. For the analysis of the current research, the NC TWC Survey for 2010 and 2012 were juxtaposed to determine teachers' perceptions regarding their school-based leadership, working environment, and other factors important to the examination of the school turnaround period (New Teacher Center, n.d.). The survey results from 2010 represent Mr. Williams' third year at the helm of the school, while the 2012 results are indicative of Ms. Anderson's first year as the principal of Wilkins High.

During the 2010 school year, results of the turnaround period were gathered for Mr. Williams, while the 2012 NC TWC Survey results provide a portrait of the school-based leadership under Ms. Anderson's tenure. In both administrations of this survey, both principals were marked high regarding their school leadership in the question prompts for both item Q7.1 and Q7.3. For all questions, at least 67.5% of teachers surveyed agreed to a degree—marking either agree or strongly agree—with the characteristics, attributes, or dispositions displayed by school-based leadership. This figure indicates that at least two-thirds of the teaching force at Wilkins High at agreed with all questions regarding the leadership practices within the school setting. Both principals were marked highest in the following sub-questions of Item Q7.1:

- e. Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.
- f. The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.
- g. Teacher performance is assessed objectively.

Mr. Williams was rated at 98.9%, 97.7%, and 92.6%, respectively, for the aforementioned questions, showing that he held teachers to very high standards for delivering quality instruction to students. This also suggests that the school-based leadership used data on a consistent and appropriate basis in order to improve teaching and student learning outcomes. Table 4.12 displays the results from the 2010 and 2012 NC TWC Surveys for School Leadership.

Table 4.12: Teacher Working Conditions Survey - School Leadership

Item	Question	% Agree	
		Year 2010	Year 2012
Q7.1	Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about school leadership in your school.		
	a. The faculty and staff have a shared vision.	91.9	77.2
	b. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.	75.9	67.5
	c. Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.	78.6	71.4
	d. The school leadership consistently supports teachers.	83.5	76.0
	e. Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.	98.9	94.9
	f. The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.	97.7	87.0
	g. Teacher performance is assessed objectively.	92.6	81.7
	h. Teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching.	86.9	81.1
	i. The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	88.9	81.1
	j. The school improvement team provides effective leadership at this school.	81.0	74.0
	k. The faculty are recognized for accomplishments.	81.4	82.1
Q7.3	The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about:		
	a. Leadership issues	81.7	79.7
	b. Facilities and resources	79.5	78.7
	c. The use of time in my school	83.8	78.7
	d. Professional development	88.6	80.8
	e. Teacher leadership	88.0	81.6
	f. Community support and involvement	93.8	79.7
	g. Managing student conduct	84.1	72.4
	h. Instructional practices and support	92.5	82.4
	i. New teacher support	87.3	75.4

(New Teacher Center, n.d.)

Ms. Anderson was rated slightly lower on the three questions, with response rates of 94.9%, 87.0, and 81.7%, respectively. Since both principals were marked highest in these categories, and in the same relative order, then evidence exists that the leadership in these areas were sustained over time. This implies that both principals held high standards with instructional delivery, evaluation, and feedback provided to teachers regarding instructional performance, and that the utilization of data analytics to inform instructional practices was connected to improved student learning.

There is, however, a difference between Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson with the fourth highest rating of Item Q7.1 for school-based leadership. Mr. Williams had his fourth highest rating with the following question: a) “The faculty and staff have a shared vision.” Approximately 91.9% of teachers agreed with this statement, while 77.2% agreed with the statement under the leadership of Ms. Anderson. It should be noted here that the administration of the NC TWC Survey coincided with Ms. Anderson’s first year as leader within the building when, typically, a principal may not have fully established or articulated their complete vision to the staff, or may require additional time to get buy-in from multiple stakeholders. On the other hand, Ms. Anderson’s fourth highest rating on Item Q7.1 aligns with that of the following question: k) “Faculty is recognized for accomplishments.” Close to 82.1% of teachers agreed that Ms. Anderson acknowledged teachers who have achieved success within their professional roles and endeavors. This statistic, however, is slightly higher than Mr. Williams’s reporting rate in 2010, where 81.4% of teachers agreed with this statement.

Interestingly, both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson were rated highest in Item Q7.3 in the same categories, with respect to their sustained effort to address teacher concerns in the following areas:

- d. Professional development
- e. Teacher leadership
- f. Community support and involvement
- g. Instructional practices and support

While the rates by which teachers agreed and the order of the rankings differed, both principals were seen as leaders who were open to feedback in areas that supported teaching practices, upward mobility through leadership, professional development, and community outreach and engagement.

The questions and response rates displayed in Table 4.13 are examples of survey prompts most closely aligned with the scope of the current case study. Item Q2.1 provides data regarding the use of time within the school setting, a structure which is created by school-based leadership, namely, the principal. When interpreting this data, it is apparent that Mr. Williams provided sufficient, instructional time for teachers to collaborate on the professional development and improvement plan for building instructional capacity. Time was also provided within the instructional period for teachers to meet the needs of all students. Teachers agreed to both responses with a rate of more than 82%. More than 80% of teachers agreed that both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson provided instructional time to meet the needs of students. In talking with teachers, it was discovered that many teachers initially had the fear that the seminar period, originally created by Mr. Williams and

sustained through Ms. Anderson’s appointment, would take away from core instructional time. Due to the nature of this strategic period, time was devoted to increasing students’ capacities in content areas in which they were deemed to be deficient, allowing for student success and mastery.

Table 4.13: North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey – Other Results

Item	Question	% Agree	
		Year 2010	Year 2012
Q2.1	Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of time in your school.		
	b. Teachers have available time to collaborate with colleagues.	82.8	70.8
	f. Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.	89.0	80.6
Q3.1	Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school facilities and resources.		
	a. Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional methods.	77.3	75.7
	f. The school environment is clean and well maintained.	92.9	92.4
	h. The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning.	89.7	85.9
Q4.1	Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about community support and involvement in your school.		
	b. This school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community.	93.3	86.5
	c. This school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement.	92.1	90.0
	g. Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.	85.7	72.4
	h. The community we serve is supportive of this school.	88.2	79.7
Q5.1	Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school.		
	a. Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	90.8	67.5
	c. Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.	84.7	63.3
	d. School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	75.6	43.0
	e. School administrators support teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.	87.4	66.2
	g. The faculty work in a school environment that is safe.	92.0	84.6

Table 4.13 Continued

Item	Question	% Agree	
		Year 2010	Year 2012
Q6.1	Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about teacher leadership in your school.		
	a. Teachers are recognized as educational experts.	90.7	80.0
	b. Teachers are trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction.	90.5	81.8
	d. Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.	91.8	86.8
	g. Teachers are effective leaders in this school	91.9	78.2
Q8.1	Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about professional development in your school.		
	c. Professional development offerings are data driven.	85.9	86.4
	d. Professional learning opportunities are aligned with the school's improvement plan.	93.3	87.3
	f. Professional development deepens teachers' content knowledge.	77.8	70.7
	j. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to work with colleagues to refine teaching practices.	89.0	80.8
	l. Professional development enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student learning needs.	92.9	86.1
	m. Professional development enhances teachers' ability to improve student learning.	91.7	87.8

(New Teacher Center, n.d.)

Item Q3.1 of the NC TWC Survey addressed the area of facilities and resources. The analysis of this data indicated teachers highly agreed that there were appropriate and effective facilities located within the school. More than three-fourths of the teachers surveyed in 2010 and 2012 agreed that they have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials. Also, more than 90% of the teachers in both survey administrations believed that the school environment was clean and well maintained. The physical environment of classrooms in the school, as reported by 85% or more of teachers in both 2010 and 2012, was believed to aptly support teaching and learning. Overall, the data in this arena suggest that teachers at Wilkins High had instructional spaces which were maintained, safe, and

appropriate for student engagement and pedagogy, and that resources and instructional materials supported the individual and collective work of teachers.

Item Q4.1 of the NC TWC Survey consists of questions pertaining to community support and involvement in school programming. The data gleaned support strong communication between the school and community and parent/guardian involvement. The data also suggest that the community supports teachers, contributing to teachers' success with students, and the school overall. Parent and community engagement, as suggested by this data, emphasizes the rich support provided by the surrounding milieu in building and sustaining opportunities to connect and partner with this school during the turnaround period.

Managing student conduct is the focus for Item Q5.1 of the NC TWC Survey. There is a marked difference in how teachers perceived the principal's management of student behavior and expectations of conduct. For Mr. Williams, the data highly suggest that students understood expectations for their conduct, and that policies and procedures about student conduct were clearly understood by the faculty. In addition, school administrators supported teachers' efforts to maintain discipline and consistently enforce rules for student conduct in their classrooms. Overwhelmingly, 92% of teachers under Mr. Williams agreed that the school environment was safe. Yet teacher perceptions did not rank as high with those who worked under the leadership of Ms. Anderson—only about two-thirds of the teachers agreed that students in the school understood expectations for their conduct and that school administrators supported teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in their classrooms. Compared to Mr. Williams, this shows an almost 20% decline in a two-year span including Ms. Anderson's transition to school leader. The most drastic change was noted in the area of

administrators consistently enforcing rules for student conduct. In 2010, 75.6% of teachers agreed with this statement, compared to less than half (43%) in 2012 under Ms. Anderson's leadership. This statistic can be paired with the question pertaining to the faculty being unclear about policies and procedures for student conduct, as 63.3% under Mr. Williams agreed that procedures were understood by faculty members. During the first year of transition between the leadership of Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson, it was important that teachers received a clear, consistent message regarding Ms. Anderson's vision for student conduct, misbehavior, and discipline.

As presented through Item Q6.1 of the NC TWC survey shows relatively strong indicators of teacher satisfaction with the regards to professional leadership and autonomy within the school. Teachers under both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson agreed that they were recognized as educational experts and trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction. Teachers also valued principals who encourage participation and a teacher's ability to step into school leadership roles when needed. Furthermore, the instructional team believed that teachers were effective leaders within the school. As a result, teachers were empowered to make appropriate and informed decisions on classroom instruction and student performance, while principals worked to build the capacity of teacher leadership.

Item Q8.1 speaks to the level and quality of professional development and learning opportunities afforded to teachers within the school. Results within this section reveal moderately high levels of agreement and satisfaction with professional development offerings under both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson. Teachers agreed that professional

learning was data-driven and aligned with the school's improvement plan, and they also believed that the professional development deepens teachers' knowledge and provides opportunities for them to fully engage with content standards. Additionally, there was agreement that professional development provides ongoing, authentic opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively with their colleagues and refine their teaching practices. In both administrations of the survey, more than 86% of teachers reported that professional development enhances teachers' ability to implement instructional strategies that meet diverse student learning needs, and more than 87% stated that professional development enhances teachers' ability to improve student learning. Professional development and learning, by design of the principal in place, offers teachers dynamic opportunities to fully engage in content standards, with data-specific goals, while deepening and enhancing teacher's ability to implement instructional support models to improve student learning outcomes for all.

Observations

Observations for the current study were conducted on the current principal (Ms. Anderson) of the school, the school building and structure, and a student artifact (agenda book). Each of these observations are described in the discussion below, providing the reader insight as to the learning culture and environment of the building, and the principals' practices as sustainers of organizational turnaround.

Observation of the Case

In observing the school building and structure, interactions among stakeholders, and the learning atmosphere, certain topics began to emerge as categories consistent with

sustained turnaround efforts and the research questions of this study. The areas that emerged from the observations include symbolic representations (design and structure, motivational messages, and artifacts) and personal connection (interactions, people, and tradition).

Under the auspices of symbolic representations, the design and structure of the school building symbolically represented a high level of school pride and an emphasis on student growth and learning. Throughout the building, from the main office to the gymnasium, school colors were painted on the walls to visibly remind students of school pride, and these colors extended into the classroom, learning spaces, cafeteria, and hallways. Due to the rich history and legacy of Wilkins High, this visual reminder of school colors being displayed throughout the entire campus worked to create a sense of unity among students and staff. In addition to the evident signs of school pride, it was apparent that the school administration, faculty, staff, and students took great pride in keeping a clean and inviting campus. Maintaining such a safe, clean, and inviting campus speaks to the respect in which the educational stakeholders had for the institution of learning, as it enabled students to focus in on their learning, growth, and development without distractions.

In addition to the visible pride seen in the school design and environment, within the building structure there were symbolic connections to technology as evidence of its usage in most classrooms. Many students and teachers readily employed devices to research various topics, collaborate on real-world applications, or use as an additional resource to coincide with lesson objectives and potential learning outcomes. The administration at Wilkins High supported technology use, and had an infrastructure to enable the usage of multiple devices within the school setting. In tandem with this technology support was an intentional emphasis

in the usage of collaborative spaces within the classroom setting. Many of the classrooms that the observer visited were not of a traditional setting with desks in rows while the teacher stands in the front of the room lecturing. Instead, many of the classrooms at Wilkins High were designed for student collaboration; in these spaces, the teacher facilitated learning and was not the “owner” of all understanding, but rather required students to think deeply and critically as they engaged with content.

Also included in the symbolic representations within the school building were motivational messages that speak to collective and individual student success. Throughout the entire campus, motivational messages were painted on the walls, as well as bulletin boards in the hallways and in classrooms. Posted banners celebrated student achievement, and signs of clear messages of encouragement were strategically placed to inspire students to perform their very best. Examples of signs posted throughout the building to motivate students included, “No Excuses, Just Results,” “Rising to the Challenge,” and “Excellence is Standard.” Other banners that were hung in various department areas acknowledged the success of students, one of which was located on the Career Technical Education (CTE) hallway and stated, “Most Improved CTE Post Assessment Scores.” As students move through the CTE hallway, this banner served as a constant reminder of the previous level of performance and the expectation for current students to rise to the level of excellence. Character education signs were also posted throughout the building with the message, “School builds character” and character traits listed beneath. In addition to these apparent ways to increase student motivation, announcements were made on the intercom right before

each transition to remind students of expectations while also inspiring them to perform at their best.

Symbolic representations were also noted in the physical, tangible artifacts displayed within the school setting. Within the main entrance and commons area, for example, there was a trophy case that displayed awards, medals, and honorariums for placements at competitive step-shows, policy debates, forensic tournaments, drama productions, and athletic events. Throughout the building, there were also large, framed photos showcasing students who had earned awards, performed well and engaged in the learning environment, modeled positive behavior, and prepared for graduation and high-stakes testing. Additional photos of previous graduates of the school were strategically placed in the commons area. Student work samples with positive feedback written by the classroom teachers were posted on bulletin boards and outside the classroom. Likewise, student-created presentation boards were on display in the atrium of the school, informing other students of AP course offerings as a method for getting peers to encourage their classmates to seek higher-level classes throughout their matriculation in high school. This peer accountability system within the school was indicative of symbolic representations and messages being a school-wide focus and emphasis, as opposed to merely a top-down approach. All of these strategies, practices, and messages served as additional visual reminders of student motivation and success.

In addition to the aforementioned symbolic representations through messages, some of the artifacts within the Wilkins High building emphasized teamwork, student support, and student commitment. With a message centered on teamwork, the current staff and administrative team photograph was displayed in the main office and commons area, pictures

of athletic teams were lined up along the inner perimeter of the gymnasium, and banners of support for Principal Anderson encouraged her and wished her the best of luck in vying for the distinction of North Carolina Principal of the Year; there were also congratulatory banners acknowledging her as both the district and regional Principal of the Year. Teacher Identification Cards were posted outside each classroom, informing students of the institution of higher education that each teacher attended, their major course of study, degree obtained, and any special information regarding their alma mater. The cards served to celebrate, motivate, and encourage students to seek higher education or learning after high school. An emphasis on student support was also seen in posters and banners that addressed Anti-Bullying campaigns and steps to take should a student witness or experience bullying within the confines of school and the community.

Celebrating students, Wilkins High was committed to recognizing student effort and success. A “Golden Royals” News Wall near the cafeteria informed and acknowledged students with “newsworthy” performances. At the time of this researcher’s observation, the wall included students who performed well in the realm of athletics, and those who were accepted into major public and private institutions of higher learning. This initiative was further extended by “commitments to graduate” by the end of the academic year, signed by students of each senior class (since the start of Ms. Anderson’s tenure at the school) and listed on larger posters in the main commons area. These signs served as another verbal and visual reminder of student motivation and their commitment to achieving at high levels to meet the milestone of graduation.

The second element that emerged from the observations within the Wilkins High school building is associated with personal connection. This personal connection translates to interactions and the people within the building and the tradition, oftentimes referred to as the “legacy” of the school. At Wilkins High, the personal connections within the building illustrated a very supportive, caring, and nurturing environment for all students. When one entered the main office of the school, they were greeted by personnel with warm, infectious smiles and salutations. This friendly, inviting atmosphere is also noted in the care given to visitors and students. While the researcher was observing in the main office, waiting to speak with the principal for the interview, a student was directed to the office to call home for a change of clothes related to a possible violation of the dress code policy. The front office personnel and a leader who appeared to be an Assistant Principal explained the dress code policy to the student, provided support and alternatives to clothing options, and handled the matter in the most professional and charismatic way. This was done in an efficient and caring manner that allowed the student to feel good about themselves while not missing much instructional time. This is just one instance of many positive interactions with students that the researcher observed at Wilkins High.

Structures had been put into place at the school to ensure that students were safe and supervised throughout the instructional day. Teachers were tasked to stand outside of their classrooms and greet students as they enter, thus maintaining a safe transition for students from class to class, and the administrative team also walked the hallways during this time. Students appeared to be safe and orderly while moving from one class to the next. During lunch, teachers and administrators supervised the cafeteria area to ensure safety; in fact, all

administrators reported to the cafeteria to monitor student behavior and interact with students. Many administrators asked students during this time about their class performance, while others engaged in a more personal connection with individual students and asked more pointed questions to determine the student's emotional and social well-being.

In addition to the personal connection with students, teachers at Wilkins High seemed to also have a connection and bond with the principal. While the principal spent time in the office meeting with individual teachers about allotments and positions for the next school year, many teachers came by to speak to the principal, ask questions, or simply touch base about previous conversations. Teachers seemed to feel comfortable approaching and speaking with Principal Anderson in her office, and she made it clear that she welcomes such interaction by maintaining an open-door policy. She provided all teachers with a great deal of professional respect, and allowed them time to voice their concerns or stop by and converse.

The third leg of this observational analysis related to the notion of tradition within the school. On the wall in the main commons areas were photographs of previous, retired principals, and underneath each picture was an engraved plaque highlighting their contributions, successes, and efforts at the school. Many of these former principals worked tirelessly to improve the conditions within the school and move students' academic and social progress forward. Each principal served the school for many years prior to their retirement, one of which earned the state Principal of the Year Award (Ms. Dennis), and another serving as the district's Superintendent. A legacy of these individuals shows the true spirit and heritage behind the work of leadership within the building, obstacles overcome with student performance, and their efforts to push the school forward to greater success.

Adding to the pivotal role of the ideology of tradition in the design of the school, the school seal was painted throughout the building; it states, “Born of Need, Destined to Serve, and Striving for Excellence,” a motto that students at Wilkins High can readily recite. The school seal helps to remind students of the rich heritage and legacy of the school. To extend that further, following morning announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance, the school song was sung by all students as a way of promoting unity, pride, and spirit within the school. The singing of the school song began as a function of Mr. Williams’ leadership, and had been extended through Ms. Anderson’s tenure.

Artifact Observation – Student Agenda

One function and expectation of all students is that they consistently utilize their student agendas to list homework assignments, aid content expansion with tools such as a periodic table and mathematical formulas, and review school-based policies. On the cover of the agenda was the full name of the school, named after a historical leader and figure in the realm of education and within the surrounding community, along with the school seal and motto. After the cover page in the agenda were the results of the North Carolina Accountability Model stating the designations of student performance for each year of the turnaround period. Students can use this to quickly identify the designation of a School of Distinction meeting high growth during this period. Immediately behind this section, a page was dedicated to scholar selection and requirements for students. Such information included the process of induction into the National Honor Society and North Carolina Academic Scholars Program, as well as Honor Graduates criteria, and standards for selection of Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Junior Graduation Marshals. This appeared to be an

intentional effort of the school's leadership to first market high standards and excellence in the student agendas, while also providing students with resources, guidelines, and supports to help them realize such honors.

Graduation requirements and the number of credits needed to participate in commencement exercises were also noted in the student agenda book. The minimum and average college entry requirements for all North Carolina public and private institutions of higher learning were strategically placed next to the graduation expectations, including Grade Point Averages (GPA) and SAT and ACT scores. Every Wilkins High student was issued a student agenda at the beginning of the year, with no cost to the student. This agenda was a valuable resource to all students, but particularly to students of earlier grades who had college admissions requirements and other significant information readily available at the front-end of their high school matriculation so they could better set goals and aspirations for life after graduation. Embedded in the agenda were also requirements for promotion to each grade level, a discipline chart for violating school expectations, and district policy.

What was most unique about the Wilkins High student agenda were the wealth of resources it provided, including manipulatives, tools, and strategies that can aid student academic success. The agenda included encouraging messages, quotes, and goal-setting tips. It also gave students the chance to engage in reflective exercises, learn words of the week and the definitions of such terms (which ultimately develops Tier II and III academic vocabulary), and review test-taking tips. Additional tools for curricular and personal enhancement were provided in material that addressed study skills, cyberbullying, mechanics of the writing process, literary elements, reference citation, general mathematics facts,

geometric and trigonometric properties, problem-solving support, and graphic organizers; these included information on the periodic table, forms of government, world geography, career and graduation planning, and a record of student achievement.

Current Principal Observation – Ms. Anderson

The third tier of observation within the case of the current study was the observation of Ms. Anderson in action throughout the instructional day. Three main themes emerged with regard to the principal leadership and related observations, all falling within the defining characteristics synonymous with the human resource frame: Teacher Celebration and Nurturing, Teacher Support, and Principal as a Resource.

Teacher celebration and nurturing. This theme coincides with the principal's practice of motivating the instructional team, celebrating their accomplishments, and increasing staff morale. Throughout the observations of Ms. Anderson, several teachers approached the principal's office to inform her of individual and collective student performance with regard to academic and behavioral accomplishments. Ms. Anderson shared in the celebration, offering praise to the teachers and providing an encouraging message that was nurturing by nature. In celebrating the work of the mathematics teachers, Principal Anderson purchased pies and placed them in the main office to recognize "Pi Day" on March 14. This gesture was symbolic of not only recognizing the teachers, but also showing appreciation for their collective work and acknowledging the connection between "pi" and its significance to the realm of mathematics instruction. Ms. Anderson was likewise observed creating opportunities in building staff morale outside of the scope of instruction. For the ensuing "March Madness" basketball competition, Ms. Anderson worked with members of

the administrative team to design staff's participation in the tournament bracket competition. Staff members were encouraged to complete the tournament bracket for a chance to win a trophy, school apparel, and bragging rights. In the past, this has increased staff motivation and excitement, especially during the period heading into the Spring Break season.

Teacher support. Ms. Anderson's teacher support consisted of informal and formal interactions, meetings, and opportunities in which professional dialogue takes place between the principal and members of faculty and staff. Throughout most of this study's initial observation, Ms. Anderson worked on the personnel allotment for the 2016-2017 school year, correlating the Annual Daily Membership (ADM) with the Months of Employment (MOE) provided by the district. Consequently, she was tasked with meeting with teachers to discuss professional options for the next school year and have them sign letters of intent. Each meeting began with Ms. Anderson informing the teacher of their role at the school, and displaying her appreciation of their commitment in an enthusiastic and energetic, "We want you back next year!" to indicate her excitement about offering teaching contracts to individual teachers for the next school year. The teachers' disposition and response made evident to the researcher that the message that they are appreciated and valued by the principal was received; many exclaimed with a quick squeal, repeated "thank you," or engaged in laughter. For a few teachers for whom Ms. Anderson had made "tougher decisions," she mentioned to them that she had to pull some strings to keep them, but wanted the teachers to know that she valued their professionalism, work ethic, and commitment, and as a result, wanted to find possible ways to keep them on her team. Teachers seemed to be motivated by such encouragement. In addition to this motivation, encouraging and

inspiration messages on the walls, banners, posters, and plaques throughout Ms. Anderson's office, as well as on her desk and conference table. Overall, the teacher support facilitated by Ms. Anderson in Wilkins High was evident, apparent, and consistent.

Principal as a resource. The last theme that emerged from the observations of the principal fell within the category of the principal serving as resource. Ms. Anderson had an open-door policy that made teachers feel very comfortable coming to the principal's office to discuss concerns and issues of both professional and personal natures. In one of the allotment meetings with a new teacher, for example, it was discovered that the teacher has been unable to get into a file cabinet that contained valuable resources left by the preceding teacher. While meeting with the teacher, Ms. Anderson called immediately for the maintenance supervisor in an attempt to resolve this matter. Collectively, Ms. Anderson, the new teacher and the maintenance supervisor discussed solutions to the problem and how to proceed forward. Other teachers approached Principal Anderson with questions regarding performance pay, which was the new application process for "hard-to-staff" positions in district high schools. They also approached the office for data analysis of first semester EOC examinations, as well as to discuss the district initiative of Student Government Associations creating Sexting Awareness videos. During the course of this researcher's observation, members of the administrative team informally began to assemble to discuss topics including allotments, the NC TWC Survey, and issues in the school with the principal. Multiple stakeholders approached the principal's office, indicating that they valued her as a resource of building professional capacity and receiving appropriate feedback to propel their individual roles within the school. Even more, Principal Anderson as a resource extended

from her office, as teachers were observed approaching the principal during her school walkthroughs in the same way they would approach her in her office. This notion of the principal as a resource speaks to the approachableness of the principal, one who has created a culture of support, collegiality, and partnership while at the same time providing an inclusive, flexible, and nurturing environment in which teachers are free to share, voice concerns, and give and receive professional feedback.

Certified Personnel Interviews

The next section of the current study's qualitative data collection design gives way to the interview methodology. The discourse below commences with the interviews of the seven certified personnel. A discussion of the interviews with the three principals who led the school during the turnaround period follows.

Descriptors of Turnaround Principals

The first section of the principal analysis, as supported by the certified personnel within the building, provides descriptors of each principal's leadership style. The discussion then continues with regard to the principals' practices of organizational turnaround, strategies utilized specific to Historically Black High Schools, and their vision for an academically successful school. A discussion of other factors and areas of improvement follows the analysis of the principal practice.

Ms. Dennis, the first principal of the turnaround period following Judge Manning's mandate, served as leader prior to 2004 and retired in 2007. Ms. Dennis' leadership style is one that was classified as authoritative, aggressive, and strict, in which teachers who described her as a disciplinarian felt they had to follow her rules. She was thorough, detailed,

and linear in her thinking, and was direct with teachers, students, and parents. Teachers did not feel as though Ms. Dennis was approachable, and were instead scared and afraid of her; Ms. Dennis thus created a culture of fear between herself and the teaching team. Within this culture of fear, for not adhering to the professional standards she set, Ms. Dennis was not afraid to publicly call teachers out in front of other teachers, students, or even on the intercom system during classroom instructional time. For example, teachers who did not sign in by 8:00 a.m. received a letter of reprimand in their mailbox by noon of the same day. In practically every interview, teachers indicated that one knew where they stood with Ms. Dennis. Mr. Smalls stated, “Either you were on her team or you were not, and if she disliked you, she would make teaching at the school very hard for you.” Teachers thus feared Ms. Dennis’ authority, and as a result conformed to her system in order to keep their job. There was no real autonomy since teachers did as they were told, nor was there a sense of teamwork, collaboration, or unity under Ms. Dennis’ leadership. Teachers oftentimes worked in silos and in isolation, so the professional environment under Ms. Dennis did not include the sharing of best practices or efforts to form collegiality.

The next principal at Wilkins High was Mr. Williams, joining the team two years after the turnaround period had begun. Mr. Williams was described by Ms. Henderson, a Language Arts teacher, as “a breath of fresh air.” Under Mr. Williams’ leadership, teachers became more excited about working at Wilkins High; he was growth-minded, nurturing, and a team player, all attributes which were opposite of his predecessor. Mr. Williams had an “outside-of-the-box” leadership philosophy. He was a risk-taker who did not think in a linear fashion and had new, innovative ideas and approaches to solving problems. Some of those

approaches were directed at building a collaborative environment for teachers. Teachers under Mr. Williams readily worked together to share ideas and strategies, while partnering with him to purposefully identify learning opportunities that focused on student success and achievement. Overall, Mr. Williams created a culture of inclusiveness that focused on the “we” and the “our”—he believed that the “we” working together, for all of “our” students would yield high expectations and results. Teachers, consequently, were tasked with coming to him with solutions instead of problems about students.

Mr. Williams was described by Mr. Smalls and others as the “significant change agent” of the school’s turnaround. Mr. Smalls, a CTE Teacher and current Assistant Principal, worked under each principal of the turnaround period, but declared that the turnaround was synonymous with Mr. Williams’ leadership. This is credited to Mr. Williams’ keen focus on students; he created opportunities and spaces for students to have a voice while motivating them to work harder and achieve greater. He built relationships with teachers, and encouraged teachers to do the same with students. Generally speaking, Mr. Williams had a way of inspiring and valuing the teachers within the building, and teachers would work much harder to please him as a result. He developed mutual trust between the professional team and the administrative team, and provided opportunities for teachers to give honest, open feedback.

Mr. Williams was also described as a “strategic leader” by Ms. McNeill, who served as his Assistant Principal during the last two years of his tenure at Wilkins High. When in previous years the school was underperforming, Mr. Williams was able to strategically take it, with the same teachers and students, to a School of Distinction. He was very strategic in

planning for success, building relationships with all educational stakeholders, and motivating students. Mr. Williams had a vision of collective success and ways by which to achieve a high level of such success. He was at the cutting-edge with regard to making school-wide changes and growth. Moreover, Mr. Williams built capacity in his teachers and leadership teams by providing true professional growth opportunities for them. For instance, Mr. Parks, a current Assistant Principal and former English Teacher under Mr. Williams, stated that Mr. Williams was the sole reason that he pursued and became an Assistant Principal. Mr. Parks believed so much in Mr. Williams' leadership, his development as a leader, and the turnaround of the school, that he pursued the principal certification in hopes to one day make the impact that Mr. Williams had made at Wilkins High.

Ms. Anderson was the third principal of the turnaround period, who rejoined the faculty and staff of Wilkins High in 2011, after Mr. Williams had served as principal for four years. Coming behind the impact in which Mr. Williams made on the school was no easy feat for Ms. Anderson. Ms. Anderson, however, knew a great deal about the school, as she attended Wilkins High as a student, worked there as an English teacher, and had served as an Assistant Principal—the only example of a principal who matriculated through the profession in multiple capacities. Ms. Anderson's parents and siblings had even attended Wilkins High, and currently resided in the community of the school. As a result, Ms. Anderson is very passionate about the school and serving its community. Many teachers described her as a principal who loves the school, one who is fearless and compassionate. Ms. Anderson's leadership style was unanimously described as that of a nurturing leader who makes both students and teachers feel good about their work and demonstrates an ethic of care with

students. Ms. Anderson was often found talking with students in the hallway about schoolwork or life choices, with the goal of saving all kids by giving them a solid foundation of education that they can then use to become successful beyond high school. Her belief, as expressed by Mr. Smalls and others, is that there is always “something left” in students, even when they do not live up to the expectations of the school, community, or societal standards. Ms. Anderson worked to ensure that students had the highest quality of education and applicable practice to make them competitive, productive citizens.

Ms. Anderson was also described as an instructional leader with a keen eye for instruction and continuous improvement. Well versed in data, she used data analysis to make appropriate decisions regarding programming, professional learning, and teacher development. She provided opportunities for teachers to partner together and help solve problems at the school, and overall empowered teachers with autonomy in their methodologies, so long as their practices remained aligned to the goals of continuous improvement and the collective goal of student success, achievement, and growth.

Perspectives of Leadership Practices

The teachers interviewed for this study articulated their belief on the role each principal played in the turnaround process, identifying many attributes, processes, and practices. The following section provides context on the leadership of the principals of the turnaround period at Wilkins High. It contains an analysis of seven certified personnel amalgamated with the perspective of each principal. The areas which emerged from the data collection coincide with the categorical references described in Bolman and Deal’s (2003)

organizational frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. As a result, the analysis of the data was expounded within the four frames.

Teacher perspective on Ms. Dennis. Consistent with the descriptors in the preceding section, teachers of Wilkins High defined Ms. Dennis' leadership practice as one that was authoritative and created a culture of fear between her and the students and teachers of the building. This culture of fear prevented a great deal of innovation and ingenuity from occurring in the building, as teachers were afraid to take instructional risks. The environment became one of ritual compliance instead of authentic engagement. Teachers did not plan collaboratively, nor was there a focus on building professional, collective efficacy for the benefit of student growth and success. Ms. Dennis' practice correlated with the traditional perception of the principal role associated with managerial leadership rather than that of instructional or cultural implications. It was confirmed by all interviews in the current study that Ms. Dennis had little to no impact on the turnaround up through her retirement in the spring of 2007. It should be noted that, to obtain her feedback with regard to the information presented about her principal practice, several requests were made to interview Ms. Dennis for this study, but each effort was unsuccessful.

Teacher perspective on Mr. Williams. The second principal of the turnaround period at Wilkins High was Mr. Williams. Within the structural frame, Mr. Williams created schedules appropriate for high student engagement and learning. In his tenure as principal, Mr. Williams implemented a seminar period to which students were assigned based on their performance of the mastery of content standards and grouped according to academic ability. The purpose of this structure was to increase students' growth and proficiency in tested

subject areas. Students needing intervention or enrichment were placed in seminars as a daily structure to deliver immediate academic support. In addition, Mr. Williams ensured that all students were placed in the appropriate classes at the right academic level, and hand-scheduled all students' and teachers' classes. He also provided common planning time for teachers in subject areas that had EOC tests to allow for more teacher collaboration. In tandem with the seminar period and the scheduling structure, Mr. Williams provided opportunities within the instructional day to target student motivation and excitement in learning. He structured Academic Pep Rallies promoting student success and achievement, as well as an EOC Field Day to celebrate students' diligence in working towards collective performances leading up to high-stakes testing. All teachers reported that the EOC Field Day was a huge success in motivating students to strive for individual and collective success, and serving as an opportunity which propelled and prepared students for increased performance on the assessments.

Within the human resource frame, Mr. Williams built relationships and rapport to mobilize teachers and students towards holistic school turnaround. Everything Mr. Williams practiced hinged on maintaining relationships with students and teachers while creating an environment of high expectations and standards. He valued teachers' professionalism and efforts, and as a result teachers felt like important, integral aspects of the school's progress. Moreover, Mr. Williams emphasized and increased teachers' capacity in utilizing data to make instructional decisions for students, creating an atmosphere of sharing instructional resources between colleagues. Mr. Williams also celebrated and acknowledged the work of teachers through recognition, awards, and praise, and was readily available to listen to

teachers through his open-door policy. He provided teachers with authentic feedback, and allowed them space to voice their concerns. Thus, staff morale was high during Mr. Williams' tenure, because he was intentional to increase the conditions of an effective, high-quality, and accountable work environment.

The leadership practices of Mr. Williams that were aligned with the political frame involved his ability to partner, ally, and navigate through the surrounding community, educational stakeholders, and the district office. Within the surrounding community, he welcomed community members to come in, visit the school, and observe the turnaround and opportunity to see Wilkins High as a strong learning institution. When visitors entered into the building, he was sure to highlight students engaging with teachers and the high level of learning taking place throughout the building. Mr. Williams also connected with local businesses and corporations to secure alliances to provide students with incentives and sponsorships. He attended local church services and community events to rally support of the organizations as continued support for the school. Through the profession, Mr. Williams lobbied with the district office to create an improvement plan specific to turnaround and reform efforts of the school. He realized that the America's Choice reform efforts, as selected by Ms. Dennis prior to her retirement, did not provide the cultural needs of school turnaround. As a result, he designed an appropriate plan to advance the work of improving student performance, with the help of the school improvement team which was made up of teachers, instructional support, parents and stakeholders. Additionally, Mr. Williams engaged the local community, the Alumni Association, and academic support personnel from the district office to extend the school-based efforts of turnaround.

Symbolically, Mr. Williams created a learning environment that was student-centered and focused on providing students with lifelong skills that would enable them to be successful within the learning environment as well as beyond. He instilled a strong sense of pride within students, and worked directly with students to build school pride through his messages of high expectations, tradition, self-worth, and an open-door policy for students. He even had students rewrite the school song, which is now sung every day by all students after the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Williams was also visible throughout the school day, which translated to an ethic of care he provided his students since he would spend this time to engage students, talk with them about their academics and personal lives, and reinforce school expectations and the overall vision. Mr. Williams attended all games, performances, and events in support of his students. He maintained that “excellence will be standard,” a phrase he would use with student; signs of the same message were posted throughout the building. To improve the physical environment of the building, Mr. Williams had an outside structure/scaffold created to give a new look to the school; the beautification changed the cosmetics of the school to provide a neoteric approach and feature that students could be proud of compared to the old, dilapidated structures. His work, however, did not end there, as Mr. Williams provided spaces on campus for teachers to use to analyze student performance, such as the Data Room. This space symbolically was an environment in which teachers celebrated or acknowledged failures with benchmarking collective performance throughout the year. Most notably, Mr. Williams did not conduct any meetings nor spend time in his office during the day. Instead, to support the work of teachers and the vision of

the school, he interacted with the people within the building, symbolically showing his commitment to bolster the work of the professionals (teachers) and the customers (students).

Mr. Williams' perspective. There was a nationwide search for the successor of Wilkins High once Ms. Dennis retired in 2007. The district flew potential candidates from all over the United States in order to find the right fit for the school. When asked if this interview process was standard practice, Mr. Williams responded, "No, that's not standard. That's not standard at all." The school was threatened to be shut down due to its history of underperformance if the student performance composite did not reach 60% as mandated by Judge Manning and Former Governor Hunt. Consequently, the district was tasked to find the right leadership; one who would move the school to a level of higher performance.

One night, Mr. Williams received a call from the Superintendent of Schools inviting him to meet in his office the next morning at 7:30 a.m.. Confused and anxious, Mr. Williams believed he was being summoned to the Superintendent's office because he did something wrong in his role as Assistant Principal in the district at the time. The next morning, Mr. Williams arrived in the Superintendent's office, only to begin discussing the vacant principalship of Wilkins High. He met with the Superintendent for about an hour, then met with the Superintendent's Cabinet for about an hour and a half. He was then interviewed during lunch with the Superintendent and Cabinet, after which he was interviewed by the leadership team of Wilkins High. He was subsequently also interviewed by the alumni of Wilkins High and the business community of the town. Mr. Williams went into the Superintendent's office that morning not knowing what he was headed into, but after eight long and exciting hours, he was offered the position of Principal of Wilkins High.

Mr. Williams had never served as a principal before accepting the position at Wilkins High. Prior to this appointment, he served as an Assistant Principal of another school in the same district for two years. Mr. Williams discussed what prepared him to take on such a high-demanding role:

I don't think it's my particular role as Assistant Principal that prepared me for that position. I think it was my life experiences. Being raised in an inner city, being a student in an all-black school, struggling in that school academically and behaviorally, then going into the military and participating in the Gulf War. Then getting out, and going to play football in college, and getting the college experience. Then from the college experience, going to teach for the Department of the Defense, in the schools overseas. I taught in the Japanese school and in the German school. I think it's the experiences that really prepare you for the role. As a leader, you bring your experiences with you. You can learn all the pedagogy you want, but if you don't have a true heart and passion for children, then you're not going to be as successful as you can be.

It was this notion of caring for children that led Mr. Williams to accepting the position as what was labeled a low-performing school. He describes this sentiment in accepting this challenge as an opportunity that all students, with the right support, can be successful:

Anytime someone tells me that African-American children can't learn, I dispute that, and this was an opportunity for me to prove that. I truly believe, regardless of race, color, or creed, we all have the right to a free and equitable education. Nobody can tell me it can't be done. I don't believe in anything as low-performing schools. I don't care what anybody says. There's no such thing. We make, people make, low-performing

schools, and we say it's because of the children are low-performing. I don't believe it's the children's fault.

Due to Mr. Williams' strong conviction with low-performing schools being constructed by personal belief, it was imperative to understand his role as principal in a such as school. In identifying practices specific to his role as principal of a Historically Black High School, Mr. Williams laments:

Everything that I've done at Wilkins is transferable to any school. The key thing is, and I know everybody says it all the time, setting high expectations, high standards, and building relationships with children. Everybody wants to build relationships with adults, and everybody goes through the adults to change the culture of a school. I did it just the opposite. I went to the kids to change the culture of the school, because those are our customers. If you want to move a school forward, stop talking to teachers. Go talk to the kids. Give your expectations directly to the students, challenge students, support students, and allow students to have an open door with you to come express anything that they want to talk about. It was also important that students heard motivational messages and teaching them the importance of such messages. In my tenure, we taught, "Respect self, respect others, and respect tradition" and "Excellence will be standard." These messages were powerful for students; we pushed them towards a vision of becoming a school of distinction.

For Mr. Williams, academics came first and foremost. When he first arrived at Wilkins High, the focus of accomplishments was directly related to athletics. While Mr. Williams, a former collegiate athlete himself, believes in the power of extra-curricular

activities, teamwork and perseverance, he also wanted to ensure that students competed academically as well:

We're going to compete academically against every other school in the county. I would put up a chart, and I showed students where we as a school ranked. We were at the bottom. When I got to Wilkins, we were ranked last. When I left, we were ranked fourth. Every year, we had a goal of knocking off schools in raising our academic performance. Because of this, we made it about collective performance rather than individual performance. Students knew that they were performing for our school, the reputation of our school and more importantly, the notion that children of poverty and low socioeconomics can be just as successful as the kids from across the tracks, with more resources and support. This was powerful. Before every pep rally that we had for academics, I recognized everybody academically first.

In addition to expectations with academics, Mr. Williams made apparent to students the standards for conducting themselves throughout the day. Students were provided with clear expectations regarding discipline. Students could not sag their pants, nor walk on the grass of the main lawn or courtyard areas; they were to walk on the right hand side of the hallways. Mr. Williams wanted to institute a discipline plan without being punitive to students, so he provided structure and taught students the importance of such practices. To solve the issue of sagging pants, for example, rather than suspend students for violating school and district policy, he went and purchased 200 belts for students. He gave belts to students who were habitual offenders of the sagging pants rule, to keep their pants from falling. Soon, there was less of an issue with sagging pants, and more of the students holding

each other accountable for dress code. In addition to these expectations, Mr. Williams turned off the bell system that was used to signify the changing of classes. He stated, “We are not Pavlov’s dogs. We are not going to respond to a bell. We are going to move around like young adults and learn how to govern ourselves accordingly.” All of these things changed the culture of the school, and continue to drive pride and achievement within its students and staff.

Mr. Williams displayed and demonstrated his “lead by example” philosophy throughout the school building. One particular instance of this was his “getting down in the trenches” and teaching students who were identified as challenging or behavior problems by their classroom instructors. Mr. Williams had those teachers make a list of their most demanding students, saying, “Tell me all the bad kids that you feel are negatively impacting your class, that if you could take them out, you [your class] would be successful.” From this, Mr. Williams received a roster of about 26 students, who he then put into a specially created classroom section of Algebra I and taught during an instructional block for a whole semester. Out of the 26 students, 19 of them passed (approximately 73%). But according to teachers, all 26 should have failed. This shows that Mr. Williams was a principal who did not mind working in difficult situations, beyond the normal scope of the principalship, to ensure that he modeled leadership and worked increase student success.

In addition to leading by example, Mr. Williams was strategic in ensuring that students were properly placed in their courses for each academic year. He felt as though all 1,500 students were his responsibility. He would spend the summer hand-scheduling all of his students, and using appropriate data to make placement decisions. It was he who

constructed and organized student schedules, and not the counselor. In scheduling students, Mr. Williams analyzed students' past performance and matched them with the appropriate teachers. If he found a student who he believed was on the cusp of a regular and AP course, he would pull the student in and challenge them to take an upper-level course. Most agreed that Mr. Williams was able to encourage and motivate his students. In his scheduling practices, Mr. Williams took away all bridge courses and year-long (remedial to regular) courses. His philosophy was that life would not provide students with an easy way out, and so academic struggle was necessary to find solutions and work together to achieve goals.

Mr. Williams created a strong sense of belonging for students, which aligned to an ethic and culture of care. Additionally, Mr. Williams interacted highly with students, and worked to understand them as partners and educational stakeholders in the building. In addressing various activities which correlate to his rapport with students, Mr. Williams stated:

I had a desk put in the hallway. Every day, my desk would be in a different place. My desk was never in my office. The reason why they were in the hallways was because I wanted to feel the pulse of the building. That's how I built relationships with kids. I always stopped kids and talked to them. I would go to their activities and their games. Other days, I got dressed and went into the PE classroom and played basketball with the kids. Other days, I would go into a math class and just sit down and work with kids. I always showed mercy when they deserved it the least. It's about doing the work that needs to be done and helping kids be successful.

Mr. Williams also developed a culture of comradery and collegiality with his teachers. Prior to coming to Wilkins High, the culture of the school was described as one of “mediocrity and compliance” by Mr. Williams. He extends this description with:

The culture was that kids could do whatever they wanted to do. Once the teachers got into their classroom, they closed their doors and were in their world, detached from the school. It was less of a school and more of a sterile environment where kids had to just sit there and be still. There was a culture of fear between the teachers and administration. The culture of fear lied in, “If you don’t do as I say, go look for another job.” I didn’t fire anybody. Not one person did I fire out of the building. A lot of people that are in the building now, when I was there are the people that have changed the school. I dismantled the culture of fear concept. Even with teachers who did not work up to standard, I would play on the emotional chord. When people know you care about them, they are willing to work harder. I used to help people pay their light bills, water bills or provide groceries for their household, because teachers don’t make a lot of money. I went above and beyond for them, and they went above and beyond for me. We were a family.

In building a culture of collegiality, every year, Mr. Williams provided teachers with an off-campus Christmas party that included a full-course meal and entertainment—all furnished by him, and everyone that came to the party received a holiday gift. This type of thing had never been done in the past. The first year he did it, approximately 60% of the team attended. Each year thereafter, however, all teachers attended the event. The same type of functions were provided to teachers in celebration for increased performances on the EOC examinations and

other benchmarks throughout the year. These celebrations were notably collective in nature, too, as teachers within a team or professional unit had to all attain a certain level of mastery to be rewarded, acknowledged, and celebrated. Mr. Williams' philosophy was that "we" all must perform—it is not about individual excellence, but rather the collective performance.

Mr. Williams engaged the Alumni Association of the school to support the work of increased student performance. As Wilkins High's heritage and tradition would have it, a National Alumni Association was formed which meets every year during the Memorial Day Holiday weekend. Mr. Williams partnered with the local Parks & Recreation Department to create a Festival Event, during which current students and alumni would network together. The alumni band members, cheerleaders, and other organizations performed school and class songs. Mr. Williams also reunited all former classes to meet on the campus of the school and to have their alumni meetings, scholarship reception, and banquet on school grounds. This heightened the awareness of the need for alumni partnership through mentoring, tutoring, and service learning opportunities such as internship experiences. Each year, the Alumni Association returns to the school for the purpose of reuniting to support the academic efforts of the school.

In managing instructional practices within the building, Mr. Williams contested that instructional leaders must be visible. With regard to visibility and his leadership practices, Mr. Williams commented:

Here's my motto. My office is for after-duty hours. That's when I'm in my office. If I'm checking emails, I'm in the classroom checking emails with a laptop. If I'm checking emails, I'm in the hallway sitting at a desk checking emails. Everything I do

in my office I could do outside in the building, so why would I hide in my office and not have the pulse of the building?

Mr. Williams provided spaces for students to grow and learn, as well as creating conditions which focused on the processes for success. He contended throughout the interview that it is imperative to “focus on the process and the results will come,” stating:

Focus on the process and not the end result. Focus on the process and excellence will be standard. Exhaust every opportunity. There are priorities in this process: discipline, culture and instruction. Without discipline, there is no learning. Discipline must be first. After discipline? I attacked the culture. After the culture, then I could look at instruction.

Surprisingly, Mr. Williams was not too concerned about engaging parents in the turnaround process with their kids; he was more concerned about the students. He would not turn a parent away if they wanted to be active agents and partners in their child’s education, and kept an open-door policy with all stakeholders. But it was not his goal to recruit parents to do the work that he felt he was tasked to do as principal. He knew that he could not change what occurred outside of the building and in the homes of the students, but he could make the experience and time students had within the confines of the building, meaningful, and impactful.

Student input, feedback, and leadership were important tenets for Mr. Williams of establishing and creating student voice within the school setting. During his tenure, he created a Student Government Association (SGA) with a Senate and a Congress which helped to pass policy within the school building. Everything related to policy that students

wanted to voice had to go through their SGA. Each homeroom had a representative who would take concerns to the Senate.

At the time of the dramatic turnaround, Mr. Williams was being recruited by several schools across the nation. He resigned from Wilkins High in 2011 to take on a principalship in another district, feeling a personal need for professional growth outside of the demands associated with a low-performing, Historically Black High School. Mr. Williams admitted that the role was time-consuming and never-ending, and acknowledged that there is no substitute for the hard work needed to run such a school. His reason for leaving was that he wanted to do more and be in a different environment than that of Wilkins High.

Teacher perspective on Ms. Anderson. According to the interviews administered to the teachers, and by affirmation of Ms. Anderson, many of the practices Mr. Williams created and utilized during his tenure were sustained and currently are still employed under the leadership of Ms. Anderson. Both individuals had a keen focus on student development and connection, mentoring, and mobilizing teachers, as well as instilling school pride in all stakeholders associated with the school. The fact that Ms. Anderson worked under Mr. Williams as an Assistant Principal, and matriculated through Wilkins High as a student, teacher, and administrator, is clearly connected to her passion, devotion, commitment, and drive for continued success and improvement.

Structurally, Ms. Anderson created opportunities for teachers to collaborate and assess instructional practice throughout the building. She advanced and continued the work of Mr. Williams by developing a master schedule which allowed teachers assigned to EOC tested areas common planning periods where they could collaborate and reflect on

professional work. In addition, Ms. Anderson created PLCs that met weekly to review student performance data and develop professionally through learning series orchestrated by teacher leaders based off of feedback provided to Ms. Anderson by the teaching team. As a way to open up classroom environments and for teachers to provide feedback to each other, Ms. Anderson implemented instructional learning rounds as a requirement for all teachers. She developed a focus and a rubric based on evidence-based practices to be demonstrated in each classroom; this rubric was shared with teachers and used as an instrument for collecting data. Teachers were tasked with observing each other and collecting data, and the data are then compiled and shared with administration and teachers regarding holistic practices within the building. Ms. Anderson uses this information to chart her course in professional development and learning opportunities for the staff. Essentially, the data from these instructional rounds yields instructional support.

In addition to other ways Ms. Anderson supports teachers, the instructional support provides a nurturing atmosphere conducive to teachers' empowerment and professionalism. Because teachers are nurtured, they are willing to go the "extra mile" to do what is necessary in pushing students to the highest levels of success. Ms. Anderson consistently sought feedback from her teachers, and welcomed honesty from her staff. In return, Ms. Anderson's feedback to teachers is focused, sustained, and immediate, and it is provided on a routine basis—during walkthrough observations, formal and informal observations, on instructional lesson plans, in conversations, and at meetings. Ms. Anderson also attends Professional Learning Community Meetings to provide support to teachers and challenge them to raise the

bar with pedagogical practices. She wants teachers to be better, and thus provides opportunities for them to grow professionally.

On the political level, Ms. Anderson engaged community stakeholders in the work of the school turnaround efforts as did Mr. Williams, and attended community-based events to partner with the families and stakeholders of the school. As stated previously, Ms. Anderson has a clear connection with the community since she has had family members graduate from Wilkins High, along with herself, and because she served as a student, teacher, Assistant Principal, and now Principal of the school. Ms. Anderson furthered Mr. Williams' work of engaging teachers and parents in the work of developing and carrying out the comprehensive School Improvement Planning process. This team met monthly during the school day to evaluate the progress of meeting goals, action steps, and key processes of continuous improvement. Ms. Anderson provided substitute teachers for the professional team assigned to this committee, to enable them to work on improvement strategies for an entire day. She worked to build cultural capital with these teachers, with the belief that if teachers are not paid a great deal, then administrators can support them by making their days shorter. Many of her teachers have second jobs or little children in which they cannot afford afterschool care, so Ms. Anderson built clout with teachers by allowing what is typically done after the instructional hours to be done during normal operating schedules. This cultural capital is also extended to the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Under the leadership of Ms. Anderson, the PTA membership drastically increased, and members of the board became active in the operations of the school. The members support school-based initiatives and activities that coincide with the school improvement strategic plan and the vision of the principal.

Ms. Anderson wanted only the best for her students, and symbolically demonstrated this belief by connecting with her students—hundreds of them, on an average day, knowing most of them by name. She readily spoke with students about life choices and decisions. She looked way beyond what is on the surface and attempted to capture the heart of the students. Ms. Anderson was passionate about the students, and was willing to do whatever she could to help them be successful. She had a “let’s fix it” mentality when dealing with students. Moreover, students could visibly see signs of motivation and encouragement throughout the building, and they heard positive messages from Ms. Anderson and teachers on a consistent basis. Students were able to come to Ms. Anderson’s office if faced with problems and challenges. For students commonly identified as “repeat offenders” in violating discipline standards, Ms. Anderson worked tirelessly to find appropriate solutions including counseling, partnering with parents and community organizations, assigning mentors, or connecting with business alliances in order to promote positive role models or opportunities to think about the implications on their future lives. Sustained from Mr. Williams’ era, Wilkins High students recited the vision and sang the school song every day under Ms. Anderson’s leadership. Overall, students had great respect for Ms. Anderson, and pride for their school. Meaningful relationships were built and maintained throughout the building, and Ms. Anderson’s practice, commitment, and leadership to the school and students symbolically served as a pivotal force for continued excellence in the building.

Unlike Mr. Williams, Ms. Anderson had principalship experience at a nearby Early College affiliated with a Historically Black College and University (HBCU); as a result, moving into the role of principal at Wilkins High would be a challenge, but one in which she

could utilize previous experiences. When discussing the preparation associated with accepting the top position at Wilkins High, Ms. Anderson referred to her collective professional experiences and how these experiences have propelled her work:

I think the experiences that I've had here have helped me to know and understand the students, the community, the faculty, understanding the journey that they have all taken and understanding the dynamics of families. During the extended period of time that I have been at Wilkins, I'm seeing my students, I'm starting to see the family members of some of my students, and starting to see their children coming in.

These experiences, as confessed by Ms. Anderson, provided her with an understanding of the students and surrounding community. It is her understanding and belief in students which has grounded her in student success.

Of the many areas about which Ms. Anderson speaks candidly regarding her role as the principal of Wilkins High, her connection to students seems to be her strongest suit. This connection commences with a vision for students and an unequivocal belief in the potential and power of student success, as she noted:

Our vision for students is to provide a professional, collegial culture that builds high expectations and high standards -- professionalism, collegiality, high expectations, high standards are all tenets that we believe students need to possess to be successful in the growing dynamics of school and society. I think that, a lot of times, when you work in a school that's in a low socioeconomic neighborhood with a high population of minority students, and then people sometimes -- I shouldn't say sometimes -- often times, make assumptions of what your students are like, what your teachers are like; it's important

for students to know about high standards and expectations. We set the tone. We set the tone as soon as we walk in the office, professionalism and handling things in a certain manner. Some of our sayings here are, "Respect self, respect others, respect tradition" and "No excuses, just results." We say that regularly. We believe in students and hard work.

Her belief in students was further extended by how students were integrated and engaged within the learning spaces of Wilkins High, and how this environment was adjusted to meet the instructional and emotional needs of students:

I believe in two things, student leadership, and I believe in a family environment. I'm always talking to the kids about what's going wrong, what's going right. I believe you have to talk to them and find out how they're feeling and what can we do better? Based on that information, we're able to, just like when we teach, monitor and adjust in order to make adjustments.

Students, as a result, gave Ms. Anderson feedback that she could reflect upon to make necessary changes consistent with her entire program and instructional design. Aligned with such practices was the need to engage students and families and to consider alternate ways of supporting students. Consequently, Ms. Anderson created a Professional Learning Team with a team of professional staff specifically for student support, which worked to identify a wealth of resources and to address the behavioral, emotional, physical, and educational needs of students. She spoke of this team's purpose:

We have four counselors, our social worker, our data manager, our discipline clerk, our in-school suspension teacher, EC case manager, administrators and all of us meet once

a month. What we talk about in those meetings are student concerns, students that have attendance issues, students with personal things that counselors and social workers handle, the students that they might interact with, will know – things which aren't confidential. We talk about those students in that particular PLC. It happens in there, but it's around that particular group of at-risk students. From there, we're able to identify students that are having attendance issues or social issues and what's needed to support them.

Through a belief in and vision of success with students, opportunities to engage the students in leadership and the environment of the school, and ways by which to assist students with varying needs, Ms. Anderson demonstrated a leadership style which is pro-student and indicative of her desire to encourage and increase student growth, development, and achievement.

Similar to the connections and support afforded to the students of Wilkins High, Ms. Anderson also rationed her attention to the building of instructional capacity in teachers. One of the strategies that Ms. Anderson has transferred from her days of leading an early college to that of a comprehensive high school is the implementation of conducting instructional learning rounds. She pointed to this as an innovative approach to get all teachers to observe their colleagues and teaching methodologies:

At the Early College, one of the best practices that I saw is how the classrooms are really opened up as a learning laboratory for other teachers to come in and observe each other. They call it instructional rounds, kind of similar to medical rounds, when people are in medical school. That's something we hadn't done here. That was one of the

initiatives that I brought. When we did the learning walks, we went and visited everybody, good or bad. Everybody saw somebody, good or bad. The feedback that I got in the fall was that teachers really wanted to see effective teaching. For example, if they went into a classroom, and let's say, of a teacher that was struggling, it didn't help them. Now in my mind, I was strategic whenever I would assign people. Whenever I sent certain people in to see somebody that was struggling, really, subconsciously, I really wanted to give that person some feedback so it's not necessarily always coming from me.

Based on the teacher feedback Ms. Anderson always sought from teachers, the structure of the learning rounds was modified to provide teachers with a deeper context and connection to the purpose and design of the process:

This semester, what I did is I looked at the EVAAS data, and I looked at the teachers that had exceeded growth from the previous year. Beginning this semester, we did a learning walk a month ago. The only classes that my teachers went into were those teachers that exceeded growth. I got the best feedback I've ever gotten. It made sense, because they actually saw, I mean everybody got to see exceptional teaching.

The use of feedback from teachers demonstrates Ms. Anderson's willingness to accept and value teacher input, while repurposing the work of the learning round to meet the diverse needs of teachers.

In addition to the utilizations of instructional learning rounds to build instructional capacity, Ms. Anderson also structured PLCs for the purpose of focused teacher collaboration, an authentic merger of professionals to reflect upon practice and develop

collective traction with student performance and success. She described that the Professional Learning Community at Wilkins High was established in two distinct realms:

Our master schedule was set up so that our English 2, Math 1, and Biology teachers have collaborative planning. Those are our three EOC areas. There is an expectation that they are meeting at least once a week to analyze their data, to plan lessons together, to develop the assessments for the coming week. That's one form of a PLC that we have. The second form of our PLC is that we take every teacher and, during their planning period once a month, they meet together, regardless of what they teach for professional learning. Teachers leader facilitate professional development. The topics are derived from data in which teacher provide me through surveys, informal conversations, instructional learning rounds and teacher observations.

The PLCs in Wilkins High, although not explicitly stated by Ms. Anderson, tended to be content-based and cross-curricular (horizontal) with emphasis on the professional development offered within the school day by teacher leaders. Teachers were afforded collaborative meetings, both within their content areas (for tested areas) and across curricular standards.

Besides implementing instructional learning rounds and collaboration through PLCs, Ms. Anderson also extended opportunities to build and heighten staff morale. She had an open-door policy that teachers readily utilized to express solutions to concerns, provide feedback, or have informal conversations. A nurturing principal, Ms. Anderson provided all of her teachers with a listening ear and appropriate feedback. She celebrated teacher successes such as perfect attendance, teacher of the month, or a simple commendation for

trying new and innovative approaches in their classroom—all done in faculty meetings, on electronic bulletins to staff, or over the intercom. She was sure to circulate about the building regularly to greet teachers and thank them for their commitment to Wilkins High. As a whole, Ms. Anderson was always seeking new ways to improve the conditions and positive working relations within the school building.

Ms. Anderson had been extremely successful in securing partnerships, local business alliances, and support from sponsors within the community base of the school. She worked with the local university to obtain tutorial services for students during the instructional day. Ambassadors from the university traveled to Wilkins High to provide academic services for students who were not meeting standards in core classes. Ms. Anderson was also instrumental in getting the national organization called 100 Black Men to support a mentoring program for male students. The Dreamville Book Club was also established with the support of a national recording artist, with the emphasis on getting African-American males to read more, become passionate about reading and literature, and broaden their horizons and experiences through the practice of reading. Similarly, students are sponsored by the 16th MP Brigade, which offers strict and rigorous levels of discipline and development. Furthermore, the Alumni Association continues to bolster the work of turnaround in the school by serving as tutors, mentors, and role models for students.

Ms. Anderson mentioned that working at a Historically Black High School is very demanding, more so than that of a school with less challenges. Teachers and administrators spend a great deal a time at the school, and she cited that turnaround is accomplished by instilling a “team effort” concept that teachers continue to embrace and display. Ms.

Anderson, however, articulated strategies and practices she has come to realize are specific to leading a Historically Black High School. She expounded on the need to continue marketing the school in ways other schools do not have to do. Due to the history of underperformance, Ms. Anderson noted having to sell, promote, and publicize the positive things happening in the school on a regular basis. She used social media and the local newspaper publication to invite people to observe the work of her students and staff. Other than marketing the school, Ms. Anderson stated that it is imperative that a principal understands the students within the building—understanding where they are from as well as the multitude of issues associated with home environments, social structures, and their emotional well-being. As a result, maintaining positive relationships with students was highly important to Ms. Anderson’s practice of staying connected with the student body.

Leadership Practices Specific to Historically Black High Schools

In leading a Historically Black High School with a history of underperformance, it is appropriate to determine whether there are practices specific to turnaround efforts in such an environment. Ms. Henderson contended that certain characteristics, skills, and practices are necessary for the principal to exhibit and build capacity in others within the Historically Black High School setting:

The principal of a Historically Black High School should be able to change the mindsets of teachers and students. It is important that black students know that they are just as smart as any other students. They need to know that they can achieve and that success is attainable. Mr. Williams instilled this message to the students and faculty.

We were tired of having our backs against the wall, to include the surrounding

community, school district, and within society. Mr. Williams created a school community of teachers who cared for students. Students needed folks who are genuine all the time, for good and for bad. We found that students weren't motivated by grades and other extrinsic factors, but do care about people and emotions. We worked on developing real relationships with students, in getting to know them as individuals. If teachers show that they care for students, then students fear disappointing the teachers. Because of the relationships that were fostered with students, they, in turn, gave their best.

In alignment with changing the mindsets of students and teachers to more of an “I can” belief, it was just as important to change the perception of Wilkins High in the surrounding milieu of the school and within the district. During Mr. Williams' tenure, he fought to rid the stigma and negative stereotype that was attached to the name of the school; thus, it was necessary for Mr. Williams to change the “McMillan Road Complex,” a road that has been known for its high volume of sheer criminal activity and violence. There is a sense of street credibility that some students respected due to the demands associated with this area. Mr. Williams provided a wide array of alternatives to this type of mentality by offering programs and support for students and parents. He also partnered with the local community and organizations to help rid the area of such criminal activity.

It was widely accepted that Wilkins High was a “low-performing, Black” school, one that was less rigorous and substandard compared to the other racially balanced schools in the district. The researcher confirmed from multiple interviewees that a principal leading such an environment, particularly a Historically Black High School, must constantly sell and market

the school as an institution of learning. The leader has to be strategic in building partnerships and allies within the community, in addition to inviting community members into the school to observe teaching and learning. While some of the practices discussed here may be transferable to other school settings, teachers contended that a Historically Black School needs an intentional approach and a larger dosage of evidence-based practices to guide the work of turnaround. One of those practices is setting high expectations for all students. Ms. Wilson, when discussing setting high expectations and high standards, purported that certain characteristics must be made priorities:

Our focus was high expectations, high standards, for all students. In order to achieve this as a central mission, it was important for the educational team to look at students individually. We knew multiple data points for each student and, as a result, we were able to place them appropriately for the level of class that matched students' ability levels. It was then our task, as teachers, to make the learning meaningful and relevant to their experiences. We provided great consistency and structure throughout the school day which aligned to our expectations and standards. Teachers were active agents in encouraging the students, pushing them to do their very best.

In changing the mindsets of students and teachers while promoting a positive image of the school within the community, a principal of a Historically Black High School is also charged with understanding students' backgrounds and creating a positive, emotional climate within the building. Mr. Williams worked to ensure that he along with his educational team understood the backgrounds of students. Many of the students enrolled at Wilkins High had lack of resources (such as computers at home, parents with college education, etcetera),

opportunity gaps, and lack of exposure to experiences outside of their lived communities. Additionally, Wilkins High served a great proportion of transient students, student in poverty and those from non-traditional families, such as where grandparents were the prime caregivers. It is imperative that the principals of such a school accept this reality but apply strategies, structures, and support to engage students with cultural capital. Principals of Historically Black High Schools must understand this complexity and provide meaningful, authentic learning experiences for students, including the building and developing of resiliency in students to overcome the adversity in which they face.

An important factor in leading a Historically Black High School that is almost 90 years old is to know and understand the history, heritage, and legacy of the school. Named after a member of the community, the school's namesake speaks to the tireless work of an educator and activist in times of racial segregation. As a result, this school has a great deal of history and pride. Mr. Smalls, current Assistant Principal and former teacher of Wilkins High contended:

A principal of a Historically Black High School must preserve the legacy that has been created. They must have high regard for the school and keep its legacy at the core. Very few Historically Black High Schools remain. These schools have a rich tradition as stated in Wilkins High's motto. Many of the faculty members are former students of the school. Graduates adore and love Wilkins High; they provide strong alumni support and have a National Alumni Association in which they give an Alumni Scholarship to a student in each graduating class. This Historically Black High School is a true neighborhood school with a great sense of community and pride.

Other Significant Factors

It was important to consider other factors outside of the principal's leadership that may have contributed to or impacted the turnaround of Wilkins High. In the interviews of teachers, it was made evident that the leadership sparked the turnaround, but the relationships built between and among administration and teachers maintained the turnaround. It took a core group of dedicated teachers who truly believed in the school and turnaround for the efforts of school-wide transformation to be effective. It requires a unique staff to work at Wilkins High, one that is willing to put in the extra time needed to support students and meet with parents outside of the scope of the instructional day. Many of these core educators were graduates of Wilkins High who were highly invested in the school and community; some even lived in the community adjacent to the school, which propelled their work even further. This group of core teachers provided informal orientations to newcomer teachers to give them background on the culture, climate, and history of the school. The faculty rallied together for the sake of the students and the turnaround process; each teacher felt connected to the changes and all had ownership of the high performance goals. As established by Mr. Williams, teachers took "care to confront" other teachers who were not upholding their professional obligations by holding them accountable, especially those teachers who did not buy into the mission and the vision of the school.

Teachers in the current study also cited the impact of students and the alumni as other factors influential in the turnaround process. Teachers developed meaningful relationships with students, and as a result the student body worked diligently and earnestly in taking responsibility for their own learning. Students truly felt connected to the building and took

ownership of their own performance and data. As a result, the turnaround happened in part due to the commitment of the student body and the support of the alumni base. Alumni provided academic resources like tutorials, mentoring of students, and financial support through their annual alumni scholarship banquet. With their assistance, students were afforded opportunities to link with former graduates of Wilkins High who served as role models and positive examples of Wilkins success.

What More Could the Principals Do?

Principals who demonstrate the ability to turn around a struggling school seem to attract attention and job offers from other districts and organization who desires these skills (Thompson et al, 2011). After four years of turnaround efforts, Mr. Williams accepted a principal appointment in another educational agency. Due to his impact at the school, his relationships with the educational stakeholders, and the turnaround in school performance, teachers did not feel as though the work of the school was done. Despite his great success, teachers and students felt as if Mr. Williams abandoned them after things were going really well. Teachers felt as though Mr. Williams should have stayed longer to continue raising the bar at Wilkins High, and his departure was unexpected and viewed as untimely. This affected the school climate as teachers and students tried to adjust to a new principal and their transition.

Fortunately for teachers and students of Wilkins High, Ms. Anderson continued many of the practices that Mr. Williams started during his tenure when she became principal. Over time, however, teachers have noted areas for improvement. Initially, for instance, accountability within PLCs was not sustained during the transition. Teachers did not feel as

though this structure was reinforced by the school-based administration. At the time of transition, professional collaboration was at its highest, but then tapered off during Ms. Anderson's first year. In addition to support of PLCs, teacher feedback suggested that Ms. Anderson, in utilizing the structure of learning rounds and walkthroughs, should provide specific feedback to the staff regarding findings and action steps. The teachers found the process valuable, but preferred to know the overall trends in instructional practice and identifying key steps to push the collective work of teachers forward. It was also suggested that such a high-yield strategy should be done with specific purpose and frequency in order to have a true depiction of instruction throughout the building. Furthermore, for all three principals of the turnaround, it was highly suggested that additional cultural training would have benefitted all educators within the building. Ms. McNeill is one proponent of developing cultural competency and understanding in teachers:

What was needed from all three principals was additional training and learning which focuses more on the intersectionality of race, socioeconomics, and students' lived experiences. Teachers needed more than studies on White/Black issues. It's important that teachers also understand other cultures as our school served Hispanic, Asian, and other demographics, albeit smaller proportions than our Black population. Teachers also need to understand [generational] poverty and students living in such poverty. It was more than understanding implications of race and race relations. Teachers need to know more about mindfulness of all students.

It is clear that a significant turnaround took place at Wilkins High School. When asked whether the turnaround could have taken place in the absence of the principal,

unanimously, each teacher stated no. In the interviews, teachers made mention that Mr. Williams was the reason for the turnaround which took place, and noted that Ms. Anderson sustained the improvement in the school. Each principal understood the culture of the building and was in position at the right time. Ms. Dennis no longer had the fight in her to create the conditions for the turnaround, and the torch was passed on to Mr. Williams. Then, Mr. Williams created the conditions in which Ms. Anderson is still working in her current practice. Teachers in this study cited needing to have a visionary with a plan in moving the school from underperforming to one of top results—that visionary was found in Mr. Williams, and continues through Ms. Anderson’s work.

Visioning

The vision that Mr. Williams had for the turnaround for Wilkins High included gaining input from teachers and students. Mr. Smalls called Mr. Williams’ vision “our vision,” referring to the collective vision of the entire host of educational stakeholders connected to the school. Mr. Smalls extended this response by stating:

Mr. Williams created the vision of the school with the help of research, student performance, and teacher data, and the belief that “we” could make the change. The vision was also developed to be a common goal towards achieving standards of excellence. The vision unfolded throughout Mr. Williams’ tenure; Mr. Williams would often inform the team that we focus on one thing at a time, and once we achieve our goal, we will add to it. Students were connected to the visioning of the turnaround. Students felt like stakeholders which instilled a sense of pride and the momentum behind increased performance. The student body bought into the vision. Everybody, as

a result took responsibility in realizing the vision of Mr. Williams. His vision inspired teachers to work collectively, grow together, celebrate together, and yet hold each other accountable.

Ms. Anderson's process for developing a vision for the school was very similar to that of Mr. Williams, but differed in that Ms. Anderson also received feedback from the parent groups within the school. Through engaging parents, students and teachers, Ms. Anderson articulated a vision connected with continuous improvement. As Mr. Williams' lead Assistant Principal, Ms. Anderson had an integral part of building the foundation of the vision that spurred the turnaround. She believed in taking and leveraging the resources, skills, and expertise in order to get great results, a belief which translates to growing students, utilizing high-yield and evidence-based teaching practices, and graduating students on time.

Both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson were stated to have had commonality with developing their respective vision with the instructional team of Wilkins High. The two principals each provided continuous staff development to unpack the vision, and the visioning was embedded in professional learning opportunities throughout the academic year. Both shared the belief of "be committed, be compliant," a statement that speaks to be professional landscape created in the learning environment. Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson each exhibited and activated the growth mindset, and believed in the potential of students to achieve at high levels of success no matter what their background. As a result, the two principals capitalized on this ideology and pushed the notion of high standards and expectations in all aspects of student development, growth, and achievement at Wilkins High.

Chapter Summary

Through the unfolding of this chapter, an analysis of all three principals has been set and interpreted. This analysis was provided by responses obtained through research-generated documents, observations (school, principal, and artifact), and interviews. The next chapter provides a further analysis and discussion of the findings and their overall implications.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a discussion based on the analysis of data presented in Chapter 4, which will further extend answers to the research questions and the implications of the current study. The research questions associated with this study were:

1. Are there organizational practices of principals in Historically Black High Schools that have significantly increased student achievement?
2. Are there leadership practices specific to Historically Black High Schools in building and sustaining high student achievement?
3. What other major factors contributed to significant turnaround and improvement of student performance?

The chapter begins with a review of each research question and the responses to each question through review of data methodology and subsequent data analyses. Following the extension of research questions, challenges associated with the findings are explored. This study concludes with implications for further research and its potential to advance the work of analyzing low-performing, Historically Black High Schools.

As evidenced by the findings articulated in Chapter 4, during the turnaround period of 2004-2012, Mr. Williams served as the significant turnaround leader, dramatically raising student achievement and providing several positive experiences and opportunities for both teachers and students. He inherited a low-performing school with teachers who worked in a culture of fear under the leadership of his predecessor, Ms. Dennis. The third principal of the turnaround period, Ms. Anderson, who previously had worked under Mr. Williams as an Assistant Principal, was appointed Principal in the last year of the turnaround era. Due to her

work alongside of Mr. Williams, she sustained and extended a great deal of his work. As a result, the subsequent discussion of findings focuses on the impact Mr. Williams had on changing the dynamics associated with the turnaround of Wilkins High and its extended sustainment through the leadership of Ms. Anderson.

Discussion of Findings

In answering the research question pertaining to organizational practices within Historically Black High Schools and their trajectory of significantly increasing student achievement, the researcher examined and extracted from the four organizational frames as theorized through the work of Bolman and Deal (2003). The organizational practices used by the case of this study were deeply embedded and entrenched in the work of turnaround in moving Wilkins High from a persistently low-performing school to a School of Distinction within a six-year period. The collective work of the turnaround period coincides with the research associated with the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames of organizations. The following discourse highlights the significant organizational practices applied in the overall turnaround of Wilkins High.

Organizational Practices of Turnaround

To categorize the work of turnaround efforts at Wilkins High under the auspices of the structural frame, one would evaluate the overall progress within the nomenclature of successful strategic planning. The intentional, strategic planning of Mr. Williams resulted in creating a master schedule that teachers were assigned to facilitate better learning of EOC-tested course material. His schedule also provided common time for instruction, review, and analysis of data so that appropriate modifications to the design of pedagogy could be made to

support greater student achievement. Parallel to creating the master schedule, Mr. Williams hand-scheduled every student for their academic classes throughout his tenure. It was his mindset that as the top leader of the school, he needed to make strategic, instructional decisions which would benefit both teachers and students. He therefore placed students in certain classes based on his analysis of student performance data and the information he synthesized from personal relationships built with students and teachers. Students, as a result, were placed into classes germane to the decision of the instructional leader within the school, with the options of reconciling such placements should the need occur during the school year. Changes were only made to move students to more rigorous, advanced-level classes and not the other way around; to do so would be in contradiction to Mr. Williams' belief system of maintaining high expectations of all students. When students met academic challenges in a classroom setting, they met it with triumph, as Mr. Williams also strategically provided structure for appropriate interventions and supports throughout the instructional day.

Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson were both strategic in embedding intervention and enrichment opportunities for all students. They did this by providing students with resources within the school day as a deliberate way to maximize their learning opportunities without extending such structures after the end of the day. Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson were intentional in providing Seminar/Academic Jump Start sessions within the school day, based on student performance data, and assigned students with this academic resource as a means of increasing the mastery of content standards and unpacking student understanding of course material. Teachers were empowered to analyze data and create intervention classes based on

their individual, professional strengths. As a Professional Learning Team that examined student data, teachers determined which content focus areas were of pedagogical strength. As a result, teachers' strengths were paired with student weaknesses in pursuit of working to increase students' capacity towards proficiency in content material. This strategic practice of structuring resources and repurposing the instructional day to identify student support, while monitoring their performance, provided a methodical focus on educational opportunities to advance student achievement and success at Wilkins High.

Yet another approach to strategic leadership and planning, Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson (who was Assistant Principal at the time) created a Professional Learning and Development Series that focused on the cultural needs and implications associated with Wilkins High. Prior to Ms. Dennis' retirement, she worked with the state Department of Education to identify the turnaround strategy for improvement at Wilkins High as America's Choice. Its initial implementation coincided with the first year of Mr. Williams' appointment as principal, and the instructional team at Wilkins High attempted the America's Choice improvement plan for the first year. Unsatisfied with the results and its disconnect to students' application and motivation, the leadership team of the school decided to dismantle the plan; Mr. Williams engaged the instructional team in the construction of their own strategic improvement plan. Entitled "Our Choice, Our Students, Our Content," the new improvement plan focused on building academic vocabulary, increasing academic rigor, and expanding questions stems that would be found on high-stakes testing—across all curricular areas. As the title of this professional series suggests, all teachers took ownership in creating this structure for their content areas and departments for the benefit of Wilkins High students.

Teachers were responsible for developing the framework and monitoring the progress of its implementation. The strategic focus of this professional learning was evidenced in the each classroom, and led to marked improvement with students' performance on the EOC assessment. In the year of the implementation of the "Our Choice, Our Students, Our Content" school improvement plan, students made significant gains in 8 of the 10 tested areas, an accolade which had not been achieved previously, even considering the many improvement plans written prior to Mr. Williams' appointment. This professional learning series was created by Mr. Williams, maintained and carried out by teachers, and sustained through Ms. Anderson's current leadership of the school.

Under the realm of the human resource frame, the organizational practices associated with turnaround are evidenced through collective efficacy and human capital. Collective efficacy, as demonstrated by the instructional team of Wilkins High, was most arguably associated with the belief that teachers, students, and administration could collaboratively and collectively transform the teaching and learning practices in the school and subsequently raise performance on EOC tests. Mr. Williams, during his time as principal of Wilkins High, continued to impress upon his instructional team the cultural belief and mindset that the students of the school were "our" teachers, that there was a compelling purpose and drive to ensure the collective gravitational force pulled the synergy towards a unified approach to turnaround. This uniformity was developed and necessitated out of the creation of collaborative, professional teams and communities solely designed for reflecting on teaching practice and creating resources to reconcile content areas students did not master. Teachers, under the guise of meeting collaboratively, were afforded authentic opportunities to unpack

content standards and use data to inform teaching methodologies. It was within this practice that teachers and administrators began to hold each other accountable as to increase their level of work, commitment, and effort for the sake of the collective “we.” Working to eliminate the labeling of “low-performing school” made the work of the team become an imperative sense of urgency. Due to the fact that teachers, students, and administrators had a high level of pride associated with being stakeholders within the school, everyone had the sense to work in partnership to advance the work of the school and be recognized for their collective work.

This ideology of true, collective efficacy may not have received as much traction if it were not for the leadership of the school, particularly the leadership of Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson. Both principals knew that moving the collective work forward was arduous in nature and could not be done without the element of human capital, to include emotions, morale, and motivation. As a result, both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson mobilized teachers through the building of meaningful and purposeful relationships. Both individuals created a culture of collaboration, collegiality, and empowerment. Teachers and students readily provided feedback to the administrators, giving these stakeholders active voices with regard to improving the conditions within the school. The leadership also provided immediate, sustained, and appropriate feedback to teachers on their professional work, and gave the same to students with regard to improvement efforts and achieving at high levels. The constant messages from leader to teacher and teacher to student, along with the collective message from the school to the community, continued to center on progress, achievement, and success. As a result, the school worked towards the collective success, the belief that if

“we” work diligently and earnestly with the label of underperforming as an obstacle, then given the right vision and skills, everyone in the school grows and learns—success, as a result, is a desideratum and a realization of such collective work.

The political frame and its connection to the organizational turnaround of Wilkins High consisted of leveraging the skills, dispositions, and the expertise of the teaching team and surrounding community in achieving high levels of academic success. Through the use of community partnerships like educational and business alliances, mentoring groups, tutorial services, connections with local institutions of higher education, the engagement of parents, and the union of the National Alumni Association, Wilkins High was able to maximize on community involvement that rallied a plethora of support programs to ignite additional services for the turnaround. Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson continued to invest in community partnerships in an effort to support the whole child and build connections outside of the school building. These partnerships created avenues to help extend culturally-relevant practices and experiences, influenced the school’s collective identity, recultured norms and expectations within the school, and provided systems which integrated the human capital within the building. Additionally, through the soliciting of ongoing, consistent feedback from teachers, both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson created ample opportunities for teachers and students to be interwoven, integral pieces within the educational tapestry of decision-making processes for continued school improvement. Teachers, students, parents, and community members each maintained their “educational shares” with investments of creating, fulfilling, and modifying the school improvement plan of the school, whether it be directly and actively or done in informal formats.

Germane to the symbolic frame, several representations were displayed within the school building to create a culture of academic success. A multitude of motivational messages were posted and painted on the walls of the school. These motivational messages translated into verbal reminders on the intercom during daily announcements, bulletin board displays by administrators and teachers, feedback provided to students, and many other presentation boards and posters throughout the building. Motivation was also evidenced by the banners promoting commitment to graduation that all seniors signed to make the promise to complete the requirements to graduate by the end of the year with their class. This motivation also serves and confirms the literature in Chapter 2 regarding rituals and ceremonies aligned with school-based practices, with graduation being one of those ceremonies. The symbolic frame at Wilkins High is extended by several displays and pictures of previous students and their academic and athletic accomplishments. Symbolism is furthermore maintained in the legacy and history of the school. The school seal is displayed throughout the entire building, with the original motto located on it. Students are tasked to sing the school song and recite the mission of the school each day, in an effort to maintain the legacy, tradition, and rich history in the building while providing students with a great sense of pride for being a Wilkins High Golden Royal. These motivational messages, combined with the rituals, ceremonies, and school legacy, all contribute to symbolic representations that maintain high academic excellence and student success and achievement.

Leadership Practices Specific to Historically Black High Schools

In examining leadership practices for building and sustaining high student achievement in Historically Black High Schools, two themes from the data analysis emerged:

1) the process of reculturing of the learning institution, and 2) student empowerment as utility to increased performance. Both of these themes have components associated with the organizational frames of the preceding discussion; however, they differ in some ways. Reculturing an organization is more than just the expansion of one frame. The work of reculturing a low-performing school to meet high academic and performance standards draws on the many elements associated with all four frames, and explores additional pragmatic underpinnings outside the scope of organizational changes. As a result, to effectively reculture an institution like a Historically Black High School, the combination of the frames and educational practice must be interconnected, entwined, and embedded within leadership practices in raising student achievement. Moreover, student voice as utility for student empowerment and engagement unravels a combination of the organizational practices to the application of culturally relevant practices. That is, taking explicit knowledge about culture diversity in order to meet the educational needs of students (Gay, 2002). The following discourse expounds on the leaders' need to both reculture the organization and empower students within a Historically Black High School to increase student performance.

Reculturing a school must be regarded by school leaders as ongoing work (Duke, 2010). Dysfunctional school cultures are characterized by isolation, privacy, resistance to new ideas, devotion to routines, and low expectations (Deal & Peterson, 1999). These characteristics were found in the way Wilkins High was described during the leadership of Ms. Dennis, the first principal at the onset of the turnaround period. Teachers worked in a culture of fear and consequently under her; they conformed to the structure of working in isolation, were afraid to take academic risks, and maintained low expectations of students.

Oftentimes this resulted in ossified practices that focused on routines which were not connected to student learning or mastery of content objectives. Adding to this complexity is the historical perspective of the educational experiences of Black students and their schooling, in addition to the many disparities that exist due to years of systemic oppression, lowered expectations, and lack of opportunities. In a Historically Black High School where these factors were perpetuated, it was necessary that Ms. Dennis' successor have a leadership philosophy that interrupted this belief, challenging students and teachers to grow, develop, and learn in order to push high expectations and standards throughout the building. It was imperative that the new principal must have the capacity to reculture such an institution. The two succeeding principals, Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson, both worked to reculture the school and achieved the reculturing design by shifting mindsets of stakeholders, promoting positive racial and personal identities in students (primarily Black students), fostering resiliency in students and teachers, and marketing the school as a top-tier learning institution for student achievement.

In reculturing the school, evidence exists that the leaders of the school, Mr. Williams primarily, worked diligently in shifting mindsets of the stakeholders within the building. This shift in mindset, from low to high expectations of students, was essential in developing a holistic belief of success in a Historically Black High School that had been plagued with underperformance for several years. The new mindset was a belief that all students have the capacity and potential to be successful: academically, socially, and developmentally. After the transition from Ms. Dennis to Mr. Williams, teachers needed to hear a central theme to motivate them in redesigning their instructional practice, one which would move the school

from being labeled as low-performing to a competitive learning environment. Consistent with the mantra of “High Expectations, High Standards,” Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson continued to drive this as a pivotal message which was extended through all of their leadership practices. The mindset of shifting to growth-mindedness and raising the level of student performances was then applied, employed, and harnessed by the instructional team and student body. Reculturing a Historically Black High School through the shifting of mindsets was the foundation for providing the cultural exchange needed to increase and sustain high student performance.

This cultural exchange developed adherence with the integration of providing students with positive racial and personal identities. Providing opportunities for producing positive racial and personal identities of students, especially students in a Historically Black High School, is more than imperative—it is critical. A student receives a racial identity from his or her culture, and their racial identity can connect them to a wider project of racial uplift. This project is reminiscent of schooling prior to *Brown v. Board of Education*, where students’ learning was connected to an “educational mission” (Hanley & Noblit, 2009). Due to the current position of Black people within the hierarchy of social institutions, the long history of systemic oppression and the educational experiences of Blacks through segregation, Jim Crow, and the Civil Right era, and its impact on this “mission,” it is crucial that Black students are provided with as many instances of developing positive identities of themselves and of their race. As a result, Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson increased the importance of students’ self-worth through the motivational messages provided to students and by way of capitalizing on every chance to teach students the power of education to a means of

opportunity. Mr. Williams' message to students was that Black students are just as good as any other student. In this, he instilled the sentiment that although society may have a myriad of expectations for racial groups, the expectation for students at Wilkins High will remain high, because all students, especially Black students, can defy the odds and grow into their best selves. This ability to positively influence the racial and personal identities of students was embedded into the ethic of care as demonstrated by administrators and teachers. The staff at Wilkins High took personal interest in their students; students were greeted by teachers prior to the start of each class, and teachers took time to get to know students personally and to develop educational plans for those who needed additional mentoring and support within the school day—all of which was enacted and created through the vision of the principal. Students' social-emotional needs were met on a regular basis, with a culturally responsive pedagogy across the instructional team that focused on the social-emotional needs of students to include instructional planning and processes, assessment design, and the management of classroom behavior. This allowed Wilkins High students to feel accepted in the educational environment so they could work at their very best level.

Resiliency is process, a trajectory that allows students to overcome challenges and stresses (Hanley & Noblit, 2009). Educational programs can help in developing resiliency by encouraging strong commitment and connections to school, setting and communicating high expectations, providing meaningful learning opportunities, and developing opportunities for participation in the programs and in the school (Meece & Daniels, 2008). Through engaging students in the development of the reculturing of the school; providing strong messages of perseverance, tenacity, and grit; and connecting students with teachers and administrators,

students were afforded experiences which increased their connection and commitment to the school. High expectations and standards continued to be a central theme throughout students' matriculation at Wilkins High, a message that Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson felt strongly students from a Historically Black High School needed to hear as they traverse the educational terrain and beat the odds of removing the "low-performing" title which seemed to be etched on the walls of the school. Through the leadership of Mr. Williams, teachers provided growth opportunities for students to fight through failure, emphasizing how to fail while also learning from the failure students experienced academically. It was with these types of practices that students learned how to overcome adversity in their academic and personal life in order to propel their performance within the classroom setting and beyond. Mr. Williams, undoubtedly, stood by his stance of removing all bridge and foundational courses within the school, for this sole purpose of building academic resiliency. In an effort to maintain resiliency and provide students with a real-life images and perspectives of such traits, the leadership of the school also utilized community leaders and partners to serve as exemplars and role models for students.

The final component to the leadership practices in reculturing a low-performing, Historically Black High School is the constant need in having to market and advertise the school as an institution of learning, comparable to schools made up of different demographics. There is a predisposition of community members, especially those who are not engaged in changes occurring in the turnaround of a low-performing school, to believe that the school is doomed for eternal failure, that there is no chance of ever achieving to a high standard. As a result, the turnaround leader, as exhibited by Mr. Williams and Ms.

Anderson, must spend a considerable amount of time advertising their schools and capitalizing on the many educational opportunities afforded to students. The principals of turnaround have had to partner with community organizations, local publications, and even social media to celebrate and recognize the collective work of students and teachers. Both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson invited community members into the school to observe students and teachers at work and acknowledge the dedication, discipline, and diligence of the instructional team. They partnered with local community groups to have community members, leaders, and activists within the school setting serve as ambassadors to the larger milieu. These opportunities were intentional and appropriate; they served the purpose of rallying and mobilizing community support, especially the support of local institutions and families who advanced the work in their organizations and in the homes of students.

The second theme that emerged regarding leadership practices specific to the Historically Black High School is the utility of student voice as a vehicle to empower, engage, and mobilize the stakeholders to realize high student achievement. Throughout the analysis in Chapter 4, significant, empirical evidence indicated the role of the principal in obtaining student feedback to help make instructional decisions for the school. Both Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson created an open-door policy for students to come and voice concerns, with Mr. Williams even circulating about the building each day to engage with students. Students were empowered to create school-based policy through the participation in the SGA created under Mr. Williams, and provided the leaders with their needs assessment and suggested action steps to improve the culture, climate, and overall atmosphere of the school. Under Mr. Williams' leadership, students were empowered to keep administration

informed when teachers did not meet instructional expectations. Students, accordingly, provided input on their educational experiences, and due to the relationships which were being built across the campus, their input was taken with great attention and consideration. Students felt connected to the vision of the school and compelled to do their best, as they had a voice and stake in the educational practices throughout the building. A by-product of this vehicle is that students became co-facilitators for learning. As opposed to teachers instructing pupils in traditional formats, students and teachers worked together to unpack content objectives, which ultimately pushed students to take responsibility for their own learning. To obtain such buy-in is pivotal in times where the school is identified as low-performing, but prior to Mr. Williams' appointment as principal, students' voices were silenced, they were less engaged and empowered, and their actions were that of ritual compliance. Such a notion of student choice and empowerment extends the literature presented in Chapter 2, beyond the emotional and nonacademic needs of students. It furthers our consciousness of the value of student feedback to their achievement, engagement, and inclusiveness to the full portrait of school turnaround.

Other Significant Factors

The other major and significant factors associated with the turnaround of the Historically Black High School in the current study were connected to areas in which the certified personnel identified as vital for the improvement of Wilkins High from 2004-2012. All participants cited that the turnaround would not have happened without Mr. Williams as the original change agent and Ms. Anderson as the sustainer of the change. It was the leadership of these two individuals that impelled the turnaround efforts and the teachers who

kept the turnaround momentum ignited. The other factors supporting the leadership and organizational practices of the turnaround included a highly invested and motivated, core team of teachers, strong rapport and relationships which bonded the principal to teachers, and vehement and fervent support from community partners and alumni.

In turning around a low-performing, Historically Black High School, it was necessary for there to be a core group of teachers with enough cultural and human capital to model and serve as allies to the principals of the school in order to help move the school forward. This core group of teachers served in the instructional capacity for many years, and were held as leaders by their professional peers. Mr. Williams was intentional with quickly getting these teachers on board with his vision and subsequent work and, as a result, these teachers served as ambassadors to the work of the turnaround. They were ready for a metamorphosis within the learning environment, and rallied behind and supported each other. Prior to the turnaround, these teachers grew tired of putting in great effort, only to be collectively classified as a low-performing school. As a result, they had the energy, excitement, passion, and drive to work in partnership with Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson to move the school to new heights.

The relationship between principal and teacher also shaped the maintaining of turnaround efforts. It was the belief of the teachers interviewed for this study that, due to the powerful rapport and meaningful relationships Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson developed with teachers, the teachers were willing to go the extra mile to impress their leaders. Even if these teachers felt as though the new methods and approaches modeled by Mr. Williams were “outside-the-box,” they were willing to take the risk because his vision and the constant

relationships he built with them created the motivation teachers needed to implement such skills in the classroom setting. Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson were classified as two principals who rarely stayed in their office and walked about the campus throughout the instructional day. In their walkthroughs, both principals were sure to connect with teachers and students, and in doing so made it a daily objective to relate to the emotional chord of teachers, providing them with a sense of belonging, professionalism, and support.

The other significant factor which aided in the turnaround process was the community partnership and support from the Alumni Association. Community partnerships and the alumni provided academic tutorial services, mentors, and service learning opportunities for student such as internships and apprenticeships. Additionally, the community alliances supported the school by serving as local and corporate sponsors for school-based activities and events, promoting the unity between the community and the education of its students. These partnerships were paramount in the time of turnaround, as many of these associations did not exist prior to the turnaround era, and if they did exist, the focus was not always centered on raising academic achievement within the school. The community support provided a union within the school-base, in which many of the leaders began to take ownership and responsibility in bolstering academic opportunities to advance the work of the school.

Challenges and Implications for Practice

The turnaround for Wilkins High began under the leadership of Mr. Williams and was sustained with Ms. Anderson's appointment as principal in 2011 through the current academic school year. In looking for sustainability in the long term, it is important to note

current challenges the school and students are facing. Many institutions of education are beginning to emerge, reform, and reorganize in the current state and design of education. Moreover, with the cap recently being lifted on legislation allowing more charter schools and related programs in addition to the rise and increase of school choice, early college programs, accelerated learning environments, and digitally-based and virtual formats, students who were typically assigned to Wilkins High as their base school now have a myriad of options from which to select and choose. As a result, many of the students identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted are opting to take advantage of these specialized schools in hopes that the smaller learning environments will provide individualized attention and propel them for admissions into the most competitive colleges and universities. In recent years, for example, Ms. Anderson has seen a drastic decrease of students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. During the start of her tenure there were several course options associated with upper-level, AP courses, and now that number is down to three: AP Math, AP Science, and an AP Social Studies class. There are not enough students to populate the class, and not enough instructional personnel to justify small class sizes to allow such a class on the master schedule. If this trend of “school shopping” continues, then Wilkins High may be in jeopardy of losing a population of students that has helped the school transform and turnaround in year’s past.

Aligned with the challenge of school choice and the decrease in student enrollment is the complexity of also losing the personnel which was once afforded during the time of turnaround. When Wilkins High was originally deemed as low-performing, the district provided the school with the support of hiring additional personnel to help the leadership.

Such additions include a Graduation Coach, Intervention Specialists, and Academic Support and Coordinating Teachers. These people worked in concert as an extension of classroom teachers, providing a wealth of support for low-performing and struggling students. Once Wilkins High was no longer listed as a low-performing school, however, these supports were stripped away from the school, with no sign of return. A school that once served as an exemplar within the state for marked turnaround is now finding itself losing a great deal of what served as significant in the turnaround process, the instructional personnel. Teachers who may have once depended on such personnel for the support of students now have to create the additional instructional strategies and interventions on their own, while class sizes are becoming increasingly larger and harder for a single teacher to manage. The school is tasked to sustain the turnaround with less—less advanced students, less instructional personnel, and less fiscal and monetary assistance. In order to sustain the turnaround, then, it will be pivotal for the leadership of the school to lobby with district officers and local leaders for additional support. If such changes are not taken into full consideration, the implications and the severity of such decisions may have an enormous price tag for the district and lasting imprint on long-term effects for this school.

The implications of these challenges suggests the need for additional district support of schools identified as Historically Black High Schools. While we current live in a “school of choice” era, there must be an intentional focus by the district to attract a diverse group of students to all schools and attempt to break the barrier of racially homogenous institutions. Students in diverse group settings perform better than their counterparts in racially homogenous learning environments. If, and only if, a school should exist to serve a majority

of Black students, as in this case, then work needs to be done to ensure balance and equity of resources. Many schools have partnered with Magnet Schools of America to attract students of all backgrounds and cultures, while other school districts have detailed bussing options to ensure that each school is representative of as diverse a population as possible. The district and local government officials should survey the impact of these aforementioned options, or provide as much support if the sentiments within the community indicate a need to keep things the way they are.

Consistent with the need for additional support through changing the dynamics in a Historically Black High School is the need for the district to provide ongoing fiscal support and equitable structures for resources. Once Wilkins High moved from the labeling of low-performing to a School of Distinction, fiscal and personnel resources were taken away from the school. The additional personnel who supported the turnaround process were unplugged from the school's allotment, reducing the instructional team for intervention and remediation and making class sizes larger. Add to this issue a decrease in student population as students began to opt into early colleges and classical high schools, and soon personnel and allotments were cut further. Class sizes are becoming larger, with less opportunities for the expansion of intervention, and additional cuts on support personnel are beginning to hit the school pretty hard. If the district truly wants the turnaround to be sustainable, then it should be in their interest to provide as many supports as possible in an effort to keep the school from returning to the low-performing status.

The current study has clear implications for practice. It points to a need for principals, specifically those leading Historically Black High Schools, should expand their capacity of

culturally relevant leadership and embed such practices within the classroom setting. The expansion of such practices includes working directly with teachers to develop a cultural diversity knowledge base, designing culturally relevant curricula, demonstrating cultural caring, communicating cross-culturally and creating cultural congruity in classroom instruction (Gay, 2002). The data presented in this study from the academic years 2004-2012 was pre-Common Core era with regard to testing and accountability. Although the school has sustained high performance, the metrics by which schools are monitored has changed, and now includes implications related to the Common Core curriculum. With a new, rigorous curriculum, it there should be a shift in instructional practices that includes the translation of pedagogy to integrate culturally relevant strategies. While much of the data collection and analyses of this study focused on the “how” of the school turnaround, providing culturally relevant pedagogy speaks more succinctly to the “what” and the “why” of the process and its sustainability—an area for further study. Mr. Williams and Ms. Anderson have done a tremendous job in developing the culture of the school and taking into account the many dynamics associated with leading a Historically Black High School. But the work now should continue to hinge on taking a deeper dive with the intentionality connected with culturally relevant pedagogy.

Future Research

Future research of turnaround efforts at a Historically Black High School should be considered on the basis of evaluating other student subgroups with the building, such as Hispanic and White students, and how they perform in relation to Black students. While this study provides a framework as to the organizational and leadership practices of Historically

Black High Schools, it does not delve deeply in the subgroup analysis of student performance data and the implications thereof. Besides the consideration of additional subgroups, there is also a need for a comparative analysis of school turnaround of Historically Black High Schools throughout the state to determine if there are factors which are consistent across these types of schools making marked improvement, as there were at Wilkins High. It is important that this study extends the work of school turnaround and focuses on the racial and personal identities of students, their intellectual power, and other characteristics such as racism and systems of oppression as barriers in follow-up research. Moreover, there is little literature on successful organizational turnaround at a Historically Black High School; thus, any additional work and examination of these environments would add a great contribution to the world of literature for such a small sample of existing schools within the nation. Additional information could shed some light on best practices in racially homogenous environments like Historically Black High Schools. This research would advance the work, scope, understanding, complexity, and reculturing of such institutions. Furthermore, additional research on this topic should include the students' perspectives of the turnaround process and their observations of significant factors which led to improvement.

Conclusion

This study identified found that organizational practices were evident in achieving high student success in the turnaround efforts at Wilkins High. Those organizational practices are directly related to the frames developed in Bolman and Deal's (2003) theoretical findings: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Within the structural frame, the leadership of Wilkins High implemented a strategic plan appropriate for the school

that addressed low achievement. Increasing collective efficacy was the process of promoting the human resource frame within the school, while at the same time building a common belief set around the team approach whereby everyone desires student growth, development, and achievement. Politically, the leaders of the school were intentional in creating partnerships, alliances, and unions of community members while engaging parents and alumni to support the principals' mission and vision. With symbolic representations displayed and demonstrated in the school building, the culture was shaped to enhance standards and expectations of a framework focused on hard work, perseverance, and tenacity. Together, each of these frames provide strong, empirical evidence as to the significant turnaround which took place at Wilkins High.

Outside of the organizational frames, the leadership practices specific to Historically Black High Schools were organized into two themes: reculturing of the organization, and the utility of student voice and empowerment to shape the turnaround process. Within the reculturing configuration, leaders of this Historically Black High School developed their capacity in shifting mindsets of stakeholders, promoting positive racial and personal identities in students, fostering resiliency in students and teachers, and marketing the school as a top-tier learning institution for student achievement. These attributes were found to build on each other, rather than be cyclical in nature. The utility of student agency of voice and empowerment provided support for the turnaround process predicated on student feedback to instructional programming, learning opportunities, and school-based experiences.

Other factors were identified as having led to marked improvement with the school turnaround. Those factors included a core, group of invested teachers, the relationships built

and maintained with teachers and principals of the turnaround, and community support and partnerships. Each of these were factors which provided an additional gravitational force on keeping the work of the turnaround grounded and central to the success of all stakeholders.

This study provided insight to the turnaround efforts of EV Wilkins High, a Historically Black High School. It took into account the impact that the three principals made during their tenure as principal. Mr. Williams was the most significant in the turnaround, providing several approaches and practices that coincide with the organizational frames and experiences specific to working in a Historically Black High School. His successor Ms. Anderson sustained the turnaround efforts he began, and the school cleared itself of the low-performing label and became a School of Distinction. This was no easy feat, and took a great deal of resilience, effort, and determination. In moving the school from a low-performing, low-achieving school to one that has become an exemplar for local, district, and state departments of education and organizations, we look to Wilkins High to sustain their efforts and continue providing high-quality education to its stakeholders. Great things are taking place within this “no excuses, just results” institution. With the deliberate attention provided by the leaders of the school, in addition to the continued support of the community and potential assistance from the district, there’s no turning back for a school focused on “High Standards, High Expectations.” The hope now is that other low-performing, struggling schools can learn from their example and achieve equal growth and success.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide and Protocol for Principals

1. Describe your road to the principalship of (study) school.
2. What led you to accept the position?
3. Describe your turnaround strategy for (study) school.
 - a. Was any part of the strategy specific to the Historically Black High School context?
 - b. What steps did you take to implement your strategy?
4. What was your vision for the school?
 - a. How did you obtain buy-in and support?
5. Did you engage students in the creation of your vision for the (study) school?
6. Do you engage students in helping to determine school culture? How so?
7. What obstacles have you encountered in your leadership of (study) school?
8. How do you manage instructional practices in (study) school?
9. How do you plan instructional support and professional development?
10. How do you enforce accountability at (study) school?
11. What changes did you implement during your tenure at (study) school?
12. How did you prioritize your proposed changes?
13. Did your changes support successful school turnaround? How do you know?

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Guide and Protocol for Certified Staff

(To be used in the interviews of other certified personnel of the case)

Note: Clarifying questions are included for probing or expansion of responses.

1. Describe the principal as a leader.
2. What role do you believe the school principals play in the school turnaround?
 - a. What practices, if any, are specific to the Historically Black High school context?
3. What more could the principal have done to improve the school?
4. Cite the strengths and weaknesses of the principal(s), as you perceive them.
5. How could the principal(s) improve?
6. What other factors led to the turnaround?
7. Could the turnaround have happened in the absence of the principal(s)?
8. What was the principal's vision?
 - a. To your knowledge, how was the vision developed?
 - b. How did the principal establish culture?
9. Do you believe that the principal's vision spurred the school to a successful turnaround?
10. Are there other significant factors that led to the turnaround?

Appendix C: Pilot Interview Guide for Principals

(To be used by former/current Principals of the case)

Notes: Clarifying questions are included for the use of probing or expansion of responses.

1. How did you become the principal of this school? What were the circumstances?
What led you to accept the position?
2. What did you do to turnaround the school? What was the first thing you did? What are some other concrete steps you took?
3. How did you get the staff to support and buy into your vision? How did you engage students with the creation of your vision and development of the school culture? How did you utilize external supports in realizing your vision?
4. What obstacles did you encounter and how did you overcome them?
5. How did you monitor the instructional practices within the school? What steps did you take in providing professional development, instructional support and accountability measures?
6. What were the changes that you implemented in the school during your tenure? Why were the changes necessary? How do you know whether they supported successful turnaround?

Appendix D: Pilot Interview Guide for Certified Staff

(To be used in the interviews of other certified personnel of the case)

Note: Clarifying questions are included for probing or expansion of responses.

1. What did the principals do during the period of turnaround? Cite actions, behaviors, practices, etc.
2. How responsible were the principals for the school turnaround? What did each principal do?
3. What mistakes did they make or could have done better?
4. Who was primarily responsible for the school turnaround? Would the turnaround have happened regardless of the principal?
5. What vision was created by the principal that ignited school turnaround? How was the vision created and culture developed?
6. Are there other significant factors which also led to the turnaround?

Appendix E: Informed Consent Forms

North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board For The Use of Human Subjects in Research

Guidelines for Preparation of Informed Consent

PLEASE READ ALL OF THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY PRIOR TO COMPLETING THE CONSENT FORM

An **Informed Consent Statement** has two purposes: (1) to provide adequate information to potential research subjects to make an informed choice as to their participation in a study, and (2) to document their decision to participate. In order to make an informed choice, potential subjects must understand the study, how they are involved in the study, what sort of risks it poses to them and who they can contact if a problem arises (see the informed consent checklist for a full listing of required elements of consent). Please note that **the language used to describe these factors must be understandable to all potential subjects, which typically means an eighth-grade reading level.** The informed consent form is to be read and signed by each subject who participates in the study **before** they begin participation in the study. A duplicate copy is to be provided to each subject.

If subjects are **minors (i.e. any subject under the age of 18)** use the following guidelines for obtaining consent:

0-5 years old – requires signature of parent(s)/guardian/legal representative

6–10 years old - requires signature of parent(s)/guardian/legal representative and verbal assent from the minor. In this case a minor assent script should be prepared and submitted along with a parental consent form.

11-17 years old - requires signature of both minor and parent/guardian/legal representative

If the subject or legal representative is *unable to read and/or understand the written consent form*, it must be verbally presented in an understandable manner and witnessed (with signature of witness). If there is a good chance that your intended subjects will not be able to read and/or understand a written consent form, please contact the IRB office 919-515-4514 for further instructions.

*For your convenience, attached find a sample consent form template that contains necessary information. In generating a form for a specific project, the principal investigator should complete the underlined areas of the form and replicate all of the text that is not underlined, except for the compensation section where you should select the appropriate text to be used out of several different scenarios.

*This consent form template can also be adapted and used as an information sheet for subjects when signed informed consent is waived by the IRB. An information sheet is usually required even when signed informed consent is waived. The information sheet should typically include all of the elements included below minus the subject signature line; however, it may be modified in consultation with the IRB.

Appendix F: Recruitment Letter to Participants

March 11, 2016

Dear Participant,

My name is William Chavis and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Administration and Supervision program at North Carolina State University. I am conducting a qualitative research study regarding efforts of school turnaround within educational institutions. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in at least one (1) interview. Participation is completely voluntary and your answers will be anonymous.

If you are willing to serve as a participant, you will be provided an Informed Consent form that outlines the scope of the study, your rights and all procedural safeguards. We will meet at a mutually-agreed upon site for the review and signing of the consent form. At this meeting, I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. Your input is valuable as it will help to add to the literature on school turnaround efforts within our state.

Please respond no later than March 15 as to your participation with this study. You may correspond electronically at wmchavis@ncsu.edu or by phone at 919.358.3156. Should you prefer, you may receive this information through United States Postal Mail. Should you prefer to send your response through the postal system, then please use the stamped envelope located in your package.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

William Chavis
Doctoral Student
North Carolina State University

Appendix G: Approval Request To An NC Local Education Agency

February 15, 2016

Dear Administrator,

Please accept this correspondence as a request for participation in school research, as outlined by the School Systems' Board of Education Policy. I am conducting research at one of your schools within the district, as a requirement to fulfill the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Administration and Supervision of North Carolina State University. As a proud product of the education agency, receiving my full K-12 educational experience, I pride myself of the collective work of the district and will uphold all ethical behavior within my research practice and subsequent methodologies of data collection. Below, you will find the elements associated with a request to your department to conduct research within your institution:

1. Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine and evaluate the practices of leaders and teachers in a successful organizational turnaround, Historically Black High School. This study is intended to be a framework for struggling schools within the state serving the same demographics – low-performing schools. This framework will coincide with effective organizational restructuring practices for school building principals facilitating best practices in order to achieve student success of a holistic scale. This study will then attempt to extend the framework to provide the basis of effective leadership beyond the contextual nature of schooling in North Carolina, but serve as a broad-level framework for schools with the same characteristics of Historically Black High School in other states, specifically in the southern parts of the United States. The attempt is also to commence and continue dialogue among educational leaders, policy makers, and researchers to critically examine these schools in the current context and analyze what must be done on a larger scale to ensure Historically Black High Schools are successful (with respect to student achievement, the achievement gap, and accountability measures), appropriately funded and provides the development of all professional staff to effectively transform and turnaround schools.
2. Methodology: Two groups of participants are identified for this study: principal participants (those who led the school during the turnaround process) and certified staff (those who served in certified positions during turnaround). For this study, only one current principal and 5 – 7 certified staff members (of the same school as the principal) will be used for data collection.

Principal participants: Participants will be provided the informed consent form (see attached). Participants will be interviewed (at least once) using a semi-structured interview protocol. Follow up interviews may be utilized for expansion or clarity of responses. For the current principal of the school, observations will take place. The researcher will ask for specific times to conduct interviews through the course of the study and data collection (no more than five observations). Each observation will last at least one hour, and at most, one instructional day (This equates, minimally to 5 hours and at most, 35 hours of observation - all dependent upon principal confirmation). In a general sense, the researcher will observe the principal leading meetings and interacting with faculty, staff, students, parents and other stakeholders.

Additionally, the researcher hopes to observe the principal in other aspects of carrying out their duties and responsibilities, to include: School Improvement Planning, Professional Development, Department Meetings, Professional Learning Teams, Collaborative Community Meetings, Administrative Conferences, Opportunities for Teacher Feedback, Instructional Monitoring, and Supervisory Duties. The researcher will collect observation data by taking field notes throughout the observation period. Note: For this study, only one principal (the principal of the case), that currently works in the district will be interviewed and observed.

Certified Staff participation: Participants will be provided the informed consent form. Participants will be interviewed (at least once) using a semi-structured interview protocol. Follow up interviews may be utilized for expansion or clarity of responses.

Data Collection: Data will be collected by audio recording in a face-to-face meeting, and follow up responses will be obtained through electronic mail, phone or subsequent face-to-face meetings. The meeting place will either be located with the workplace of the respondent or a mutually-agreed upon (between researcher and respondent) public venue or institution. The data will be collected at times appropriate to the researcher and respondent, after primary job responsibilities have concluded. The researcher will be the only one responsible for the collection of data. In addition, research-generated, public documents will be used for data analysis (to include North Carolina School Report Card, End-of-Course performance data, Annual Measurable Objectives, Graduation Data, Teaching Working Condition Survey). All are public documents and can be accessed through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

All data will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of participants. This data collected will be stored in a confidential, safe location. This data will be reported through the findings in the final report, dissertation, and published by North Carolina State University. The data may be utilized to offer additional support, literature, and findings to support other schools, school districts, central office administrators, and policy makers to advance the work of turnaround schools, under the auspices of Historically Black High Schools.

3. Cost: There are no costs associated with this research study.
4. Assistance Requested from district: The only assistance needed from the school system is the granting of approval to carry out this study using existing and former employees of CCSS as participants.
5. Point of Contact: I am the only person leading this research study. I may be reached at the address located above, or through electronic mail at wmchavis@ncsu.edu or by phone at 919.358.3156.
6. Agency Approval: Please see attached for the Institutional Review Board of North Carolina State University.
7. Signed Agreement: Please see attached memorandum for the Signed Agreement.

If you should have any questions or concerns regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me by electronic mail or by phone with the appropriate contact information listed above. It is my sincere hope that I will receive your feedback within seven days of receipt of this correspondence.

Sincerely,

William Chavis
Doctoral Candidate, North Carolina State University
Principal, Wake County Public Schools

Appendix H: Observation Protocol (Field Notes)

In this protocol, the investigator observed the current principal of the case in the following manners:

Principal's Interaction with Students

Principal's Interaction with Teachers

Principal's Interaction with Parents

Principal's Interaction with other Stakeholders

Principal Facilitating Meetings (to include Faculty Meeting, Grade Level, Professional Learning Team, Department, Administrative, Planning, School Improvement, Leadership, etcetera).

Principal Facilitating Instructional Leadership/Professional Learning

Other Principal Observations:

Additionally, the investigator will observe the school building, its structure, academic programs, expectations, culture, climate, and other important factors.