

Rowan University

## Rowan Digital Works

---

Theses and Dissertations

---

6-15-2011

### Good to great: a framework for improving instruction In a ninth grade academy

Donna Marable

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Marable, Donna, "Good to great: a framework for improving instruction In a ninth grade academy" (2011). *Theses and Dissertations*. 35.  
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/35>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact [graduateresearch@rowan.edu](mailto:graduateresearch@rowan.edu).

*Good to Great:*  
A Framework for Improving Instruction  
In a  
Ninth Grade Academy  
by  
Donna L. Marable  
Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Rowan University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
in  
Educational Leadership  
May 2008  
Glassboro, New Jersey

<u>Dr. James Coaxum, III</u> Chair	_____	_____
	Chair's Signature	Date
<u>Dr. Robert Campbell</u> Member's Name	_____	_____
	Member's Signature	Date
<u>Dr. David C. Hespe</u> Member's Name	_____	_____
	Member's Signature	Date

Copyright © 2008 by Donna L. Marable  
**All Rights Reserved**

## Dedication

To my devoted parents, Benjamin O. Marable and Shirley C. Marable, you set me on the right path and taught me to value family, humility, integrity and the life God has given me. You taught me to remember where I came from and never forget those that helped me along the way.

To my beautiful daughter, Ashley Nicole Taylor, I am proud of you and the woman you have become. Thank you for understanding all the sacrifices.

To my dedicated sisters, Carol D. Chin, Hope K. Marable, and Robin C. Marable, thank you for your guidance, love, support and the many hours, weeks, nights and summers you spent babysitting so that I could pursue my dreams.

To the memories of my grandparents, Benjamin "Daddy Bennie" Marable, Erma "MaErma" Julia Cheatham Marable (an angel gone too soon), John Henry "Granddaddy" Bushrod Robinson, Sr., Helen "Grandmother" Beatrice Marshall Robinson, thank you for the love and legacies you left behind.

To my great-aunt, Isabel "Auntie" Cheatham Bullock, you filled MaErma's void and allowed the dreams she had for me to live through you.

## **Abstract**

*Good to Great: A Framework for Improving Instruction in a Ninth Grade Academy*

by

Donna L. Marable

Rowan University: 2008

This participatory action research project explores the leadership of a female African American high school principal in an urban district who applies the principles in Jim Collins' *Good to Great* (2001, 2005) to improve academic performance in a ninth grade academy. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating each cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles. The data was captured through qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies. The study is written as an autoethnographic self-narrative and is a self-reflective study of my leadership.

The findings of this study suggest that applying the principles in Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* as a second-order change initiative can increase academic performance in an urban school district by improving classroom instruction. This study although not statistically significant, allows for the preponderance of inferences and is significant and germane to female urban school administrators.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the Mount Vernon, NY local community, the Unity Baptist Tabernacle and Church School, the Greater Centennial A. M. E. Zion Church, and Pastor W. Darin Moore. Thank you to the faculty and staff at my alma maters, Mount Vernon High School and Edward Williams Elementary School as well as the Traphagen Elementary School. You laid the groundwork for my leadership. Thank you to my New Jersey family for shepherding me the rest of the way, the members of the North Stelton A. M. E. Church, Pastor Kenneth L. Saunders, Sr., and First Lady Shirley Saunders. Thank you to the faculty and staff of the Newark Public Schools. I would like to offer a special thank you to Dr. Marion A. Bolden, Mrs. Anzella K. Nelms, and Dr. Gayle W. Griffin, for their mentorship.

I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the members of my dissertation committee, Rev., Dr. James Coaxum, III, chairperson; your brilliance illuminated my pathway and inspired me to complete this journey. You allowed God to use you as the wind beneath my wings when I soared over the mountains, as my shepherd when I walked through the valleys, and as my bridge over troubled waters. Dr. Robert L. Campbell, your advice and desire for excellence guided me through this endeavor. Dr. David C. Hesse, former New Jersey Commissioner of Education, you always had words of encouragement and faith in me; it was an honor to work with you. Dr. Ellie Forster and the staff at NJPSA, this would not have been possible without your vision and fortitude. Lynn, I want to thank you for opening up your home and pushing me to the finish line. Alyson and Cassy, thank you for the sisterhood that will endure over time.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	ii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	vi
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b><u>1.</u> ESPOUSED LEADERSHIP THEORY</b> .....	1
Introduction.....	1
Social Justice Leadership.....	2
Cultural Proficiency.....	3
Transactional Leadership.....	7
Transformational Leadership.....	9
Spiritual Leadership.....	13
Impetus for the Study.....	16
Problem Statement.....	17
Purpose of the Study.....	19
Significance of the Study.....	20
<b><u>2.</u> LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	21
Introduction.....	21
Historical Context of Secondary Schools .....	22
Comprehensive High Schools.....	24
Transition to High School.....	27
Correlation between Academic Success and Graduation .....	29
Considerations for Effective Transition Programs .....	32
Small Learning Communities (SLCs).....	33
Significance of Proper Implementation of SLCs.....	35
<b><u>3.</u> METHODOLOGY AND CHANGE FRAMEWORK</b> .....	38
Introduction.....	38
Research Design.....	40
Data Collection .....	41
Data Collection Strategies.....	42

Role of the Researcher .....	44
Sample.....	46
Setting .....	47
Overview of Action Research Project.....	51
Change Framework: Good to Great.....	52
Cycle I: Stage I: Disciplined People .....	56
Purpose.....	56
Data Collection .....	57
Action.....	58
Cycle II: Stage II: Disciplined Thought.....	65
Purpose.....	65
Data Collection .....	67
Action.....	68
Cycle III: Stage III: Disciplined Action.....	71
Purpose .....	71
Data Collection .....	72
Action.....	73
Cycle IV: Stage IV: Building Greatness to Last—Sustainability.....	74
Purpose.....	74
Data Collection .....	75
Action.....	76
Cycle V: Espoused Leadership Theory vs. Theory in Use .....	77
Purpose.....	77
Data Collection .....	78
Action.....	80
Data Analysis and Validity .....	81
<b>4. CYCLE I: DISCIPLINED PEOPLE .....</b>	<b>83</b>
Introduction.....	83
Data Collection .....	84
Action.....	85
The First Meeting.....	86
Help is on the Way.....	89
Main Campus Visit .....	90
Organization of Freshmen Orientation .....	92
Getting Ready for Opening Day: Level 4 and Level 5 Leadership .....	93
Right Person on the Bus.....	97
Ms. Moses and Ms. Karon .....	99
Classroom Visit.....	104
Conclusion .....	108



<b><u>5.</u> CYCLE II: DISCIPLINED THOUGHT .....</b>	<b>109</b>
Baseline for Discussion.....	110
Data Collection .....	110
Action.....	111
School Culture .....	113
Summary of LAFS Pilot Study .....	118
Attendance Variable.....	121
Grade Point Average (GPA) Variable .....	123
Local District Assessment Grade 9 (LDA 9) Variable .....	125
Out of School Suspensions (OSS) Variable.....	127
The Red Flag That Could Not Be Ignored.....	130
Conclusion .....	132
<b><u>6.</u> CYCLE III: DISCIPLINED ACTION .....</b>	<b>134</b>
Introduction.....	134
Data Collection .....	136
Action.....	137
Measuring Stick for Teacher Effectiveness .....	137
Creating a Safe and Nurturing Learning Environment-Classroom Management....	142
Professional Learning Communities.....	146
NUA.....	146
Conclusion .....	151
<b><u>7.</u> CYCLE IV: BUILDING GREATNESS TO LAST...SUSTAINABILITY .....</b>	<b>154</b>
Introduction.....	154
Data Collection .....	154
Action.....	155
Stage IV .....	156
Disciplined People .....	157
Disciplined Thought.....	159
Disciplined Action .....	161
Worth the trip-A glimpse of sustainability .....	163
Building Greatness to Last.....	164
Freedom Writers-A Lesson in Cultural Proficiency .....	165
Conclusion .....	168
<b><u>8.</u> CYCLE V: ESPOUSED LEADERSHIP VS. THEORY-IN-USE.....</b>	<b>173</b>
Introduction.....	173
Data Collection .....	174
Action.....	176
Theory-In-Use.....	177

Transactional Leadership Theory-In-Use .....	178
Transformational Leadership Theory-In-Use .....	180
Social Justice Context Theory-In-Use .....	182
MLQ Results .....	183
Conclusion .....	184
Summary .....	187
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>191</b>

## List of Figures

Figure		Page
1	<i>Good to Great Framework</i> .....	53
2	<i>Good to Great Framework at Work</i> .....	56
3	Hierarchy of Level 5 Leadership .....	59
4	Hedgehog Concept.....	67
5	Donna's Leadership Theory.....	190

## Appendices

A. Teachers Who Care About Students .....	201
B. HPS Formative Observation Rubric Domain 1 .....	202
C. HPS Formative Observation Rubric Domain 2.....	203
D. HPS Formative Observation Rubric Domain 3.....	204
E. HPS Formative Observation Rubric Domain 4 .....	205
F. HPS Summative Assessment Rubrics Page 1.....	206
G. HPS Summative Assessment Rubrics Page 2.....	207

## **Chapter 1**

### **Espoused Leadership Theory**

#### **Introduction**

Educational leadership is complex in this time of change, accountability, diversity, and divergent theories. School leaders today, define their leadership within the context of their work environments. Two questions I encountered in my educational leadership doctoral program were, “What is leadership?” and, “How do you define your leadership?” I could not answer these questions without considerable contemplation and self-reflection. These probing questions invited me to embark on an introspective journey into my past, present, and future experiences. I dissected each experience in an effort to construct a compilation of my espoused leadership theory. A number of educational leadership programs, through reflective practice, provide leaders with an opportunity to understand their organization and help them to define who they are as leaders. My doctoral program in educational leadership provided me with an environment that allowed me to reflect on the events that shaped the person and leader I have become. Through reflective practice (Osterman & Kottcamp, 2004), I have recognized that my experiences framed my leadership, and was the impetus I needed to develop my espoused leadership theory.

The two reflexive questions raised in my first course intrigued me. I had never thought about leadership beyond the position I held within an organization. I defined my leadership by my experiences in business and industry. I characterized my leadership by my position and managerial responsibilities. After reviewing voluminous materials on leadership, I began to understand that leadership was about how I responded or reacted to another person, as well as, how they responded and reacted to me. The more I continued my research and self-reflection,

the essential question I considered in the development of my leadership theory was, 'how do my personal and professional experiences shape my leadership?' I began to meditate on the answer to this question. The answer became more evident. Consequently, I presupposed my espoused leadership theory as a compilation of leadership characteristics including, social justice, transactional, transformational, and spiritual leadership theories.

### **Social Justice Leadership**

Social justice leaders stand on ideals that emancipate the disenfranchised on issues of race, class, sexuality and differing abilities (Marshall, 2004; Murtadha & Watts, 2005). Succinctly, social justice leaders are motivated by equity (Marshall, 2004). They are purposeful when seeking to challenge and change institutional practices and use critical reflection to identify how unjust practices and inequality contribute to specific examples of oppression (Jacobs, 2006). Critical reflection, the process of analyzing, reconsidering, and questioning experiences within a broader context, allows social justice leaders to explore issues related to social justice, curriculum development, and politics (Jacobs, 2006; Marshall, 2004; Mezirow & Associates, 1990; Murtadha & Watts, 2005).

As an educational leader, I am determined to level the playing field. I will not support a school culture that subscribes to limitations based on race, class, culture, gender, or language. I believe it is important to address inequities that impinge on educational outcomes and threaten social justice (Marshall, 2004). Power when misused is paradoxical and is an underlying motive in literature on social justice leadership (Marshall, 2004; Wartenberg, 1990).

Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions, making the power facilitative in nature (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). The predominant feature of facilitative power is not the

desire to exercise control over other, but to provide others with support (Wartenberg, 1990). Therefore, I empower my students and teachers to combat social injustice by providing opportunities for them to succeed. I ensure there is a broad range of academic and extracurricular choices for students and professional development opportunities for staff. Along with these choices and opportunities, I provide the necessary supplies and support systems required to ensure their success thereby giving them the power to grow and change. This process allows each one to have control of their destiny, fairly and equitably.

**Cultural Proficiency.** A viable combatant against social injustice is cultural proficiency. It is easy to group the term culturally proficient into a category that represents old theories encompassing, desegregation, integration, race relations, human relations, antiracism, teaching tolerance, cultural competence, and multicultural transformation (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003). Inherently, this list merely represents the struggle that society continues to grapple with in an effort to cope with injustice, an ever-present mark against America. We need school leaders that are able to see the difference between cultural proficiency and the mixed-labels of the past generation of school leaders and respond with sensitivity and affirmation (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2005). With all the diversity found within today's students, educators must be trained to ensure success among all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status (Kelly, 1999). Professional development needs to be differentiated for educators just as classroom instruction needs to be differentiated for students. Educators need to address their own belief systems through courageous conversations that safely address their assumptions and practices within the classroom (Kelly, 1999; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005).

These professional development opportunities operate in tandem with teachers' personal expectations and support a school culture where every student's individual success is valued (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2005). Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2003) mark the distance of the road educational leaders have traveled and our impending journey. They have paved the way for a resurgence and commitment to identifying the real issues of cultural competency. This resurgence and commitment are necessary, if we are to build the bridge towards healing and prescribe an anecdote for the pain inflicted on students by educational professionals who refuse to admit the problem persists (Lindsey, Robins, et al, 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005).

Embedded in our nation's history, cultural issues have their roots in class, sex, ethnicity, and geographical regions. I am a first generation New Yorker. My father was born and raised in North Carolina and my mother in Virginia. My family moved to North Carolina when I was three months old. We remained there for two years. Those were the formative years of my linguistic development. I believe there was a direct correlation between the linguistic patterns I developed while living in North Carolina, raised in a household where my parents and other most family members spoke with a southern dialectic and my phonetic and phonemic awareness skills. Dialects, by definition, are varieties of a language that contrast in pronunciation, grammatical patterns, and vocabulary, which are associated with geographical area and social class (Delpit, 1995). Despite my 122 IQ score on the mandatory administered test upon school enrollment, I encountered challenges in oral communication and reading during my primary grades (Delpit, 1995; Gooden, 2002). Consequently, I received speech services regularly with Ms. Greenberg. I can still remember the skill and drill sessions on "Sammy the snake" and "Freddy the frog." I also entered the first grade as a non-reader. Subsequently, I was placed in the lowest-level reading group and was assigned remedial



reading after school. After reading Lisa Delpit's (1995) book, *Other People's Children*, I realized there was a valid explanation for the experience I had in those primary grades. It was a universal practice to place students in a speech class to correct their English. According to Delpit (1995), references that some dialects are more proper and others are broken-English, reflect societal attitudes and not facts related to linguistic formations. Regardless, I now view that experience as an opportunity. I improved my reading, writing, and language development, aligning them to acceptable societal standards and norms. Participation in Mrs. Greenburg's speech class and the efforts of my first grade teacher, Ms. Etta Lee Jones, helped me to access the opportunities and care afforded what society deemed, smart children. Soon, I began reading to the rest of the class. I became so proficient that I quickly rose to the top of my elementary school class. The combined efforts of my will and determination, family support, and encouragement from caring teachers, granted me the distinct honor of delivering the sixth grade promotional exercise address.

Although, the culminating experience of my elementary school years were positive, my formative elementary school years were socially challenging. I grew up in the 1960's and 1970's. This was a time when lighter-complexioned Blacks received more privileges than darker-complexioned Blacks (Gitlin, 1987). Unfortunately, this pervasive school of thought continues to permeate my race and causes dissension among minority groups. Mount Vernon, like many towns in the 1960's and 1970's, was divided by railroad tracks. When I grew up and for many years afterwards, the railroad tracks represented the racial divide and socio-economic status of the people living on either side (Gitlin, 1987). The north side of town had larger houses, newer schools, and better maintained streets. De facto segregated, the north side was reserved for European-Americans or fair-skinned Blacks with higher socio-economic status

and professional occupations. On the other hand, the south side of town the houses were smaller, the schools visibly deteriorated, and the repair of public streets were neglected. The south side was relegated to Blacks with lower paying jobs (Gitlin, 1987).

I grew up on the south side of town. My father's occupation as a shipping clerk, did not grant our family the socio-economic status to live on the north side. Blacks said I looked too White or mixed. My complexion disqualified me from social acceptance on the south side. Members of my own race victimized me. My fair skin, hazel eyes, hair texture, and narrow features were not widely accepted by my peers (Gitlin, 1987). Excelling in school made matters decidedly worse. Every day, a classmate chased me home or called derogatory names. Sometimes the attacks were physical. Today, the official terms for these demeaning practices are bullying, harassment, and intimidation. I jumped over fences, dodged through neighboring yards, and ran from dogs resolved to arrive home unscathed. I began to hate school and my grades reflected inconsistencies in my academic performance. I literally begged my parents to put me in the local Catholic school for protection. However, I was one of four girls and my parents did not have the financial resources to enroll me in private school. I suffered through these ordeals for a few years. Eventually, a tough boy in the neighborhood, by the name of David Webb, followed me home from school and started pushing me. As I turned around to defend myself, I flung my arms and accidentally hit him in the nose. David's nose started to bleed. After that, no one ever bothered me again. These experiences cause me to speak out against practices, policies or people that take advantage of others through power and intimidation. I believe the experiences I described and endured drive the theoretical framework for my social justice leadership (Marshall, 2004).

## **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional Leadership is defined as contingent reward and management by exception (active and passive), MBE-A and MBE-P, that moves an organization from one level to the next (Bass, 1985). Espoused through James McGregor Burns (1978), transactional leadership is a mandatory requirement for negotiating the daily operations of an organization and materializes in everyday exchanges between a leader and a follower. Similarly, management is a set of responsibilities based on organized and systematic instructions. Successful completion of our managerial responsibilities should produce a desirable outcome, established by an external force (Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Weiss, 1978). The desire for that outcome causes me to act responsibly in an organization, understanding and relating my actions to the law of physics; for every action, there is a reaction.

Management is deeply embedded in the tenets of transactional leadership (Burns, 1978; Glanz, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Weiss, 1978). I have always been a good manager, making the tenets of transactional leadership second nature to me. Although I have held numerous leadership positions, I did not always deliberately seek out these leadership positions. Recognizing my leadership abilities, often school advisors solicited me to run for the office of president in school organizations. During high school, I served as freshman, sophomore, and junior class president. Senior year, I was elected student government president. My college years were an extension of high school. I was invited to serve as president of my sorority, earning the 1984 Advisors Delta of the year award. I applied for and served as a dorm resident assistant. This was another prestigious honor reserved for a select few. I have held offices in my church as choir president, financial secretary, a member of the search committee to select a pastor, and coordinator for the church's summer camp. My secular

environment also recognized me as a person that gets the job done. Within a year of serving in every entry-level position, I received a promotion to supervisor. I have coordinated district-wide events on a moment's notice and with a limited budget. At times, I have orchestrated events that drew audiences of two to three thousand spectators. Despite these experiences, I never associated these roles with leadership. I saw these roles as merely accepting a responsibility, responding to a need, and seeing it through until the end. I believe I was blessed with the gifts of organization and administration. I used these gifts to bless others. I used my gifts to help bring other people's missions to fruition. When I reflect on the various roles I served over many years and the energy and skills that I drew on to successfully accomplish the goals, I realize my management skills are evidentiary of leadership.

I have high expectations in my personal and professional life and I expect my staff, students, and school I serve to excel at high rates. Consequently, there are times when I find it necessary to default to transactional leadership (Bass, 1995; Glanz, 2006). I am the administrator who complies with local and state mandates. There are periods in which I find myself under extreme time constraints. I find transactional leadership to be the most effective during these times (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Although I do believe there are creative ways to approach mandates, I adhere to guidelines because I know my response and action impacts the next person's goal or responsibility. I rely on management to organize, implement, and facilitate the process (Glanz, 2006). Success is my mission. The greater good has to take priority over my own feelings. The myriad of responsibilities charged to educational leaders today, bring increased value to transactional leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978, 2003; Glanz, 2006). Educational leaders are expected to act as both managers and leaders (Glanz, 2006). While management consists of planning, coordinating, supervising, and controlling routine

activities, leadership creates an ability of a group of people to do something different or better (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978, 2003; Glanz, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Weiss, 1978).

Educational leaders are challenged with the task of transforming schools and improving student achievement. Educational reform efforts or transformation will not take place without the inherent qualities of management, i.e., planning and coordinating. An educational reform to transform schools and improve student performance requires management at the very core (Glanz, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Weiss, 1978).

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transactional leadership is not oppositional to transformational leadership or any other leadership theory (Burns, 1978). Rather, transactional leaders help subordinates identify what must be done motivating the follower to achieve the goal. Although the exchange process of transactional leadership may sometimes appear simplistic, theories of transactional leadership can be complex (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978, 2003). The motivation used by transactional leaders is more tangible than that used by transformational leaders. According to Burns (2003), transformational leadership rests on the groundwork of transactional leadership, and transformational leadership represents the essential quality for successful management of transformational organizational changes (Burns, 1978). James McGregor Burns (1978) was credited for the inception of transformational leadership, discussed in his book *Leadership*. Bernard M. Bass (1985) expanded the theory when he presented a formal transformational leadership theory that also included models and factors of behavior. Transformational leaders motivate their followers to do more than they really expect they can do. Accomplished by motivational paradigms described as the four I's, 1) individual consideration, 2) intellectual stimulation, 3) inspirational motivation, and 4) idealized influence (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978;

2003). These tenets increase the sense of importance and value of the tasks by the followers. As a result, followers are stimulated to surpass their own interests, directing their interests to the team or organization, and change is realized at a higher level.

Transformational leaders are employed in various positions throughout an organization. Emerging during crises and social change, the aim of a transformational leader is to align the goals of the follower with those goals of the organization or leader (Bass, 1985; Burns, 2003). When this is accomplished, the leader can surpass all expectations and transform the performance of the follower and the organization (Bass, 1985). A caveat to transformational leadership is that followers will not align their values or goals with a leader they do not trust, or do not perceive to be competent or successful (Bass, 1985; Burns, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Weiss, 1978). I encourage my staff to continue their education and I take responsibility for my own professional development. I believe it is important to remain current in curriculum, instruction, research, and best practices. It is also important to me that my staff succeed professionally and personally. I communicate with my staff one on one, in order to get to know who they are. I want to know my staff's likes and dislikes, their strengths and challenges. I believe this is necessary in order to create an opportunity for them to grow personally and professionally. Consequently, I provide staff development opportunities for my staff regularly. I send novice teachers to visit other schools in and outside the district so they can observe best practices or novel instructional strategies. I also encourage my staff to participate on committees exploring new district initiatives so that they can be a part of the decision-making process. It is my desire to develop independent thinkers and leaders. When there is an issue or a concern, I encourage staff members to offer a possible solution or to view the situation from a different lens. This inspires staff members to become problem-solvers and provides

confidence in their abilities. The staff member is always made aware that everything is a learning process and the greater good must be the end goal. After we have fleshed out an idea or solution, there may be instances when the proposed resolution by the staff member did not yield their desired response. This is because I still have a responsibility to consider the ramifications of the proposal and the good of the order. A trusting relationship is built when we establish this open line of communication.

I remember returning to the first school where I held my first principalship. I listened to the students and teachers discuss the legacy I had left them; character education. The character education program was recognized as a model program throughout the district. The program consisted of student performers highlighting a featured character trait during a monthly assembly program. The acclaimed performances led to numerous invitations in and outside the district. Most recently, they received an invitation to perform at the United Nations National Women's Conference. Notable invited guests for the occasion included Oprah Winfrey and Maya Angelou. After the school received several of these invitations to perform outside the district, the music teacher expressed to me, "I have been stretched beyond my imagination." This caused Mrs. Carmela to look at her job and responsibilities in a new light. Ironically, during our first encounter, she had emphatically told me, "I only work two nights during the year per my contract. I am not required to attend conference nights in lieu of night performances, and I only volunteer for the district-wide spring concert." Notwithstanding, by the end of the school year she was orchestrating the evening talent show, serving as chairperson of the Sunshine Committee, and preparing for an assembly program every month. She explained how my vision, optimism, and fortitude inspired others to stretch themselves in an effort initially to please me, thereby transforming the school and creating a pleasant work

environment. Her comments were a testimonial to my ability to influence her to follow. I have always had a passion to teach and affect the lives of young people. My influence over others allowed me to make a difference in their lives and leave a legacy of love, dedication and commitment.

There are similar events that capture evidence of my transformational leadership. When I began my tenure at Edward Williams School, the staff was not cohesive, morale was low, and the students were not achieving academically at satisfactory levels. Our test scores were among the lowest in the district and the state. One of the first programs I reviewed was the after-school tutoring program. The desired outcome was to improve student performance on the fourth grade state assessment. During the review period, I noted the teachers providing the instruction for the program were not familiar with the skills of the participating students, the structure of the state assessment, or the fourth grade curriculum. I approached the staff members responsible for direct instruction of the identified fourth grade students and the administration of the state assessment and asked them about working in the after-school tutoring program. They shared their concerns. The concern with high priority was leaving the school late. I understood their cause for concern. The school was located in a neighborhood susceptible to public use of illegal substances. Upon our daily arrival, residual evidence of other deviant behaviors was also present. Recognizing the safety concerns, I offered the staff an opportunity to provide the tutorial services during their lunch hour. The staff members accepted the proposal and they enjoyed making it a working lunch for staff and students. A simple solution to a seemingly complex problem was reached through communication and collaboration.



After we resolved staff concerns, we realized improved academic performance and a 40% increase in our state standardized test scores over a two-year period. We received state recognition from the commissioner of education, state assembly members, and local government officials. Our award-winning students were celebrated with a special assembly program. We expanded our community school environment by including wrap-around family assistance programs, a comprehensive after-school program, a state-of-the-art computer lab, and a return of school pride. Staff, parents, and students wanted to attribute me with this regeneration effort, recognition of academic achievement, and improvement in their quality of life. However, I believe I was merely the instrument God used to motivate the staff, students, and parents to maximize their unrealized potential. I received great joy knowing I helped the staff, parents, and students at Edward Williams School fulfill a need. I thank God for the part I played in their success story.

### **Spiritual Leadership**

My spiritual beliefs cause me to see life as transactional. Spiritually, I believe in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and confession of my sins will allow me to experience physical death, but not spiritual death. These spiritual beliefs translate into moral obligations for me as a Christian, woman, daughter, mother, and educational leader. The concept that increased spirituality or values would increase one's level of commitment to the organizational purpose or vision is an idea that emerged during the 1990s from the work on servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). Many African-American female educational leaders embody spiritual connection, spiritual awareness, and a strong work ethic (Alston, 2005; Dantley, 2003, 2005; Greenleaf, 2003). I rely on biblical principles to guide my decisions in life. I have come under scrutiny by nonbelievers. Nonbelievers appear to have trouble

understanding how I continue in the face of adversity and why I have such a high standard for excellence in all I do. Success is my mission and I have an unyielding faith that drives me to accept nothing less than excellence. Dantley (2003) referred to this spirituality as an intrinsic power switch that creates a yearning to make meaning and purpose for our lives. Spirituality is the foundation that grounds me as I contend with everyday struggles (Dantley, 2005). I believe the greater good has to take priority over my own feelings, to manifest the ultimate goal of success. While nonbelievers may seek revenge on their perceived oppressors, I take the approach of forgiveness and kindness. I seek to find the best in people despite their overt and covert adverse actions. My personal and professional principles guide how I handle situations and people, universally (Greenleaf, 1977, 2003; Fairholm, 1997, 2000).

According to Greenleaf (1977, 2003) and Fairholm (1997, 2000), the approach to leadership must have a desired outcome. The leader must create work characterized by a deeper sense of life-purpose, work that lets people feel that they are making a difference. In order to influence people to follow me, I must first believe there is somewhere to go. I must also be able to paint a picture so vivid that others will be inspired to go and grow with me. The spiritual leader is fully aware, living with integrity, developing sacredness in his or her relationships, and turning the organization into a community where everyone can learn and grow. When I look at how my own values have taken shape, I refer to my spiritual upbringing. I can identify the models that I had around me. I was raised in the church, regularly attending Sunday school, worship services, choir practice, and church conferences. My extended family and my nuclear family kept the principles laid by the chief cornerstone, Jesus the Christ, through the Holy Scriptures. All the other components in my leadership are colored by my spiritual principles and value system. Stephen Covey (1990) indicates that highly effective,

people consciously monitor their imagination. I find myself weaving through social justice, transactional, transformational, and spiritual leadership, to ensure that change occurs in my work environment and among the individuals that I encounter. My leadership is fueled by hope and possibility (Marshall, 2004). These elements spark passion and excitement in me. Hope and possibility inspire me with the motivation and determination I need to move the agenda forward.

In summary, I will continue to reflect on the convictions, tensions, and contradictions of my leadership theory that surface upon my reflection. I pray I will continue to improve the quality of life and education for every individual I touch. I pray they will continue to feel that their lives improved because I was a part of their life. The emergence of a leader requires commitment to the cause for which the leader is called. My approach to leadership is commitment, coupled with loyalty, tempered by flexibility. I believe in the quality and equality of education for all students. Therefore, in order to move the agenda forward I forge ahead with a 'whatever it takes' attitude, even if some items must be held in abeyance.

I perceive my espoused leadership as, using the tools of transactional leadership to transform organizations and lives through social justice, guided by spirituality (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978, 2003; Greenleaf, 1977, 2003; Marshall, 2004). However, a staff member who is always looking for new and improved ways to enhance instructional practices may view my leadership as transformational. Another staff member, stuck in the past and afraid to accept the fact that strategies need to change, much like the character Hem in the Johnson's (2001) *Who Moved My Cheese*, may view my leadership as transactional. The leader who remains fluid and firm will be the most successful (Collins, 2001). This leader will be able to move an organization from good to great.

## **Impetus for the Study**

Traditional methods of leadership are not always applicable in urban school settings (Dantley, 2003, 2005; Gooden, 2002). Urban schools require leadership that stresses social change and citizenship in addition to academic achievement. Low income, minority students, and dissatisfied teachers with tougher teaching loads proliferate urban districts (Hunter & Donahoo, 2003, 2005). These problems manifest themselves in the areas of academic performance, curriculum alignment, budgets that do not reflect the need of the population served, less experienced teachers, lack of teacher acumen, negative public image, and inconsistent community relations (Alston, 2005; Brown, 2005; Gooden, 2002, Hunter & Donahoo, 2003, 2005).

As an educational leader in an urban district, I continue to self-assess, examine my experiences, and adjust my leadership to meet the needs of the population I serve (Brown, 2005, Hunter & Donahoo, 2005). Principals have the burden of proving themselves day after day, and I am no exception. Research on educational leadership and school reform places the responsibility for improving academic performance on the shoulders of the principal (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). This increase in accountability has created a demand for accelerated results in improved academic performance and organizational changes in our schools (Boykin, 2000; McPartland, Balfanz, Jordan, & Letgers, 1998). Acknowledging that change cannot occur without effective leadership, the organizational structure of most high schools does not provide the principal with an opportunity to be directly involved in every aspect of the school's functioning on a daily basis (Oxley, 2001). Although everyone affects the culture of his or her environment, the culture is ultimately created and

sustained by the principal. When schools are functioning well, the principal receives the credit. The converse is also true.

When I decided to take the role of principalship, my naiveté led me to believe that right would always win. Initially, my expectations in the role of principal included providing a clear vision, being a community relations specialist, facilities manager, accountant, negotiator, crisis manager, human resource specialist, budget analyst, keeper of the records, staff developer, social worker, parent, confidant, and implementer of effective instructional programs (Brunner, 2000; Skrla, 2000). I quickly realized that in addition to these managerial tasks, politics really drove the 'economic resources' and many of the decisions affecting most school districts. Despite demands by local school districts to improve low achieving schools, espoused theories are inherently different from theories in use. District practice of little support for policies that do not conform to the status quo, created a major challenge for me as a change agent.

### **Problem Statement**

I was the principal of Henderson High School Ninth Grade Success Academy (HHS9), a pseudonym, located in a large urban district. I had to face the harsh reality that nationally, ninth graders are retained at an average rate of 25% (Chute, 1999; Roderick & Camburn, 1999) and the numbers were even more staggering for districts mirroring mine. These statistics suggested our large comprehensive high schools were not providing an optimal learning environment for ninth graders (Fine, 1994; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Reents, 2002; Robinson, 1912). Generally, there is a decline in students' grades and attendance following any school transition (Alspaugh & Harting, 1995; Blyth, Simmons, & Carlton-Ford, 1993; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Roby, 2004). The problems are compounded at the ninth grade level. Many ninth graders have even greater difficulty adjusting to the demands of high

school. The results are lower grades, increased disciplinary problems, and higher retention rates (Chute, 1999; Elias, 2001; Hertzog & Morgan, 1998; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Studies show that over 40% of ninth graders fail a major subject in the first semester and nearly one fourth of ninth graders fail to accumulate enough credits to earn sophomore status (Chute, 1999; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Evidence of this data presents a challenge for me as a high school principal. I am now accountable for reversing low academic performance inherited from elementary and middle schools. This reality prompted Henderson Public Schools (HPS), a pseudonym, to consider other organizational structures, instructional strategies, and curriculum designs directed at ninth graders (Letgers & Kerr, 2001).

Henderson High School (HHS), a pseudonym, underwent a first-order change. The change was based on the smaller learning community model. The Freshmen Academy was established under this first-order change. Freshmen academies are a system-wide change aimed at meeting the needs of challenging curriculum and providing a successful transition from the middle school to high school (Boykin, 2000; Felner, Ginter, & Primavera, 1982; Letgers & Kerr, 2001). These academies operate under the philosophy that smaller groups of students will achieve higher levels of performance than in other traditional settings. Despite this educational reform effort and the implementation of small learning communities, my students have not met NCLB (2001) or district standards. The SLC design did not yield the necessary results to move HHS out of NCLBs (2001) School In Need of Improvement (SINI) status, as evidenced by New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) school report card data. Second-order changes were necessary to move student academic performance. However, before I could move academic performance, I needed to assess the quality of instruction. After assessing student performance records, teacher evaluation instruments, and managing by walking around

(MBWA), it became apparent to me, that the strategies outlined in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* would be the most appropriate and effective design to improve instruction in order to accelerate academic performance at HHS9. Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* was the accepted practice introduced by the sitting district superintendent. The support of the superintendent made access to materials, information, and staff training readily available. The superintendent's support also minimized the politically charged dynamics normally associated with change (Fullan, 2001).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this participatory action research ( PAR) study, using qualitative and quantitative inquiry methods, was to explore who I was as a leader while I sought to improve classroom instruction at HHS9 (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Ideally, the improvement in classroom instruction would have a direct impact on accelerating academic performance. I discussed my espoused leadership theory and examined what leadership theory emerged during the implementation of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework* to effect change in my organization. The following research questions drove this study:

#### *Research Questions:*

1. *How does my leadership influence the academic environment at HHS9?*
2. *How can the application of Collins' Good to Great Framework impact the organizational culture of HHS9?*
3. *What applied strategies introduced in Collins' Good to Great Framework can sustain change at HHS9?*
4. *How does my espoused leadership theory parallel my leadership theory-in-use while applying Collins' Good to Great Change Framework?*

## **Significance of the Study**

There was limited research on the job of the school principal as it related to educational leadership at the secondary level. This study attempted to contribute to the literature on information relating to strategies and frameworks that principals may employ to change the organizational culture of a school by improving classroom instruction. This participatory action research project explored the leadership of a female African American high school principal in an urban district who applied the principles in Jim Collins' *Good to Great* (2001, 2005) to improve classroom instruction in a ninth grade academy. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating each cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). The data was captured through autoethnographic, qualitative, and quantitative data collection strategies. Written in a self-narrative format, the study was a self-reflective study of my leadership (Ellis & Bouchner, 2000; Glesne, 2006).

The findings of this study suggested that applying the principles in Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* as a second-order change initiative could improve classroom instruction in an urban school district. This study, although not statistically significant, is significant and germane to female urban school administrators. The study should be of particular interest to urban school principals who are looking to improving classroom instruction in their school in order to accelerate academic performance.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of the literature on ninth grade students as they transition to high school. The literature review also provides an overview of large comprehensive high schools and the affect on the ninth grade student's transition to high school. An overview of the structure of large comprehensive high schools and the correlation to the successful completion of high school is also provided. Indicators of success and considerations for improvement are discussed including, structural designs, and instructional delivery models. Understanding the concern for transitioning ninth graders, a concern compounded for urban districts, will help to identify areas for change in the structure of large comprehensive high schools and the instructional delivery. The literature review focuses on the following areas: 1) historical context of secondary schools, 2) comprehensive high schools, 3) transition to ninth grade, and 4) small learning communities (SLC) as the learning communities relate to academic performance of students in the ninth grade.

When we review the history of the educational system in the United States, it is apparent that secondary schools and the entire education system of the United States will continue to expand (Judd, 1935). Expansion and reform must occur to overcome the obstacles that confront education today. Keeping alive the spirit which led to the organization of American high schools in the period following the war between the states and following the depression of 1873 (Judd, 1935).

## **Historical Context of Secondary Schools**

Education has long been an American ideal for the privileged class (Judd, 1935). The education movement in the New England colonies began on April 13, 1635 when they first voted for a schoolmaster in Boston. Although the opening date of the first school building is unknown, it is clear that education had a solid foundation in the early stages of America's development. As America grew, so did the problems with the education system. It became evident during the eighteenth century that not everyone would benefit from or have access to the same traditional liberal education (Atkinson, 1900; Judd, 1935; Robinson, 1912). Therefore, academies were established to provide continuing and appropriate education for the upper class while common schools were designed for the individuals who wanted to focus on industrial courses. In 1749, Benjamin Franklin was instrumental in planning and developing the new education system. His plan specific courses that would enhance the educational goals of the elite and implement necessary courses for individuals who wanted to pursue the industrial courses (Judd, 1935). Consequently, English and Mathematics Courses were considered crucial for all regardless of the course program they decided to follow or future aspirations. Courses in different languages were required and dependent upon a student's major. For example, if a student were pursuing a career as a clergy, Latin and Greek were mandatory. However, if a student intended to follow the merchandising business, key languages of study were those that were used for travel during this period such as, French, German, and Spanish (Judd, 1935).

The first academy under Benjamin Franklin's plan was established in 1751. It is known today as the University of Pennsylvania (Judd, 1935). Based on tuition and support by local and private agencies, this was the beginning of the higher education system, as we know it

today. Access and benefit to the wealthy were frequent criticisms of the early academies. The majority of New Englanders were relegated to common schools. The common schools were upgraded and attended by children of all ages. The younger children usually attended school in the summer while the older children attended after farming season, usually the winter months. Teachers struggled with control in the common schools, forced to solve social concerns as well as teach the prescribed curriculum (Atkinson, 1900; Judd, 1935). These problems were much like the problems we face in our urban schools today. These problems raised great concern and resulted in a transformation of the common schools. This was the beginning of our current K-8 school structure, which still exists in many school districts across the United States. These new common schools were limited to children under the age of fourteen. Unfortunately, children fourteen years and older (Atkinson, 1900) were not required to attend school initially. Determined to follow in the spirit that the American colonies were built, an educational program was designed to meet the needs of these children. This was the birth of the high school in America that has now been established for more than 350 years (Atkinson, 1900; Judd, 1935). Despite numerous efforts to limit education to the K-8 elementary schools from 1873 to 1885 and direct opposition to high school, the supreme courts of several states upheld the decision to establish American high schools (Judd, 1935). This was a direct response to the demand of the nation to educate every person fourteen years and older regardless of social class. By the turn of the century, the pressure for more skilled workers for industry and the need for increasing vocational education in secondary education had become high priorities for schools (Judd, 1935; Tanner & Tanner, 1980). Between 1890 and 1900, the student enrollment in high schools doubled along with increases in the immigrant population. More students were

attending school to learn skills. By 1907, the dominant educational issue was vocational education (Tanner & Tanner, 1980).

Colleges have been major forces in setting the agendas for secondary schools (Atkinson, 1900; Judd, 1935; Tanner & Tanner, 1980). There has been strong pressure to address the demands for entry requirements along with the need to address the developmental learning needs of the student enrolled in secondary schools. In 1930, the Commission on Relation of School and College was established to study the issues of innovation in high school and students' ability to be accepted into college (Aiken, 1942). Thirty schools were part of the study and became known as experimental schools. Changes in each school and the curriculum differed, including the content of traditional subjects, inclusion of new content, and newly developed core curriculum. There were changes in teaching styles as well as new materials, problem solving, and reflective thinking (Aiken, 1942; Krug, 1964). Coined the Eight-Year Study and chaired by Ralph W. Tyler, it was considered the most salient and comprehensive curriculum experiment in the United States (Aiken, 1942). The study showed that the students who participated in these experimental schools were more successful after high school (Aiken, 1942). The Eight-Year Study called for relinquishing the existing relationship between colleges and high schools. It was noted that colleges could obtain information on potential students without prescribing the curriculum of high schools (Aiken, 1942; Boyer, 1983).

**Comprehensive High Schools.** Secondary schools evolved into large, comprehensive systems that served a wide, diverse population of students (Atkinson, 1900). The philosophy that bigger is better dominated the school of thought. In 1943, James B. Conant, then president of Harvard University, appointed the famous Harvard Committee, to study the problem of general education in a free society (Conant, 1959). He published a significant report,

commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation, titled *The American High School Today* (Conant, 1959). Arguably, this document earns him credit for the current traditional comprehensive high school. In this landmark report, Conant (1959) advocated for large bureaucratic structures designed to classify students according to ability while dismissing students' individual academic and developmental needs. He argued for grouping of students by ability in all subject-matter courses, broad grouping in elective classes, heterogeneously grouped homerooms that were kept intact during four years of high school, and a focus on both vocational education courses and courses for the top 15% of students with high intellectual ability (Conant, 1959; Tanner & Tanner, 1980). While his recommendations were not based on field research, they were widely adopted (Tanner & Tanner, 1980). Conant (1959) continued to be a strong advocate for the comprehensive high school. He advocated for schools with not less than 100 students in a graduating class and pushed for consolidation of small schools into large comprehensive schools (Boyer, 1983; Conant, 1959). Large classes, standardized courses of study, a focus on scope and sequence, and vocational education for students not targeted for higher education is evidence that Conant's vision and mission for secondary education is still very much alive. Support for large schools were strong from 1900 to 1960 (Conant, 1959). Public opinion also supported the theory that large schools were the most efficient use of resources based on economies of scale (Conant, 1959; Lee & Smith, 1995). During the 1960's, high schools that housed fewer than 400 students were closed or consolidated in order to meet the requirement to qualify for the minimum number of students for a comprehensive high school (Conant, 1959; Sizer, 1984, 1992).

Conant's work did not address the realities of urban life, social ills, race, class, or gender (Tanner & Tanner, 1980). The debate about the future of American education

continued. Following Conant's work, academic standards and test scores in high schools declined (Muijs, et al., 2004). Ironically, when looking at the consumers of public education today, it is children of color from low socio-economic standing and urban centers who are often subjected to the Conant (1959) school model (Boyer, 1983). In 1981, 52% of White families had school-age children whereas Black and Hispanic households had 70%. Between 1960 and 1983, divorces doubled, and two-thirds of family households were working mothers outside the home. The change in family structure and new challenges adolescents faced gave pause to the large comprehensive high schools. Reformists began to question their effectiveness, concluding that the size, structure, and traditional orientations of these schools contributed to student alienation and academic failure (Boykin, 2000; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Dewey, 1910/2008; Fullan, 2001; Lee & Smith, 1995; McPartland, et al., 1998). The research indicated that too many were characterized by large, departmentalized, and impersonal school settings; low expectations for student performance; and standardized curriculum guided by dated, autonomous bureaucracies. The student's role in the educational process was passive and subordinate. There was an over-emphasis on teacher directed instruction, and less on student-directed instruction, resulting in a curriculum that prevented students from seeing the connections between the content learned in school and real life (Boykin, 2000; Danielson, 1996; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollack, 2001; Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, & Russ, 2004). Further review indicated that the current high school model might not be the most advantageous environment for allowing all students to reach their optimal maximum learning potential (Letgers & Kerr, 2001).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the secondary school system in our country has undergone major efforts in restructuring and reform in order to meet the needs of students (Letgers &

Kerr, 2001). In spite of the reform efforts focused on the secondary school, the high school today remains very traditional, departmentalized, and similar to comprehensive high schools established in the 1900's (Atkinson, 1900; Robinson, 1912). Designed in response to demographic and economic conditions, far too many high school structures are nonresponsive to student needs and lack the capacities necessary for meeting the multiple demands for accountability (Letgers & Kerr, 2001). A majority of high schools find ways to divide students along some measure of ability, which limits opportunities to learn and contributes to increasing the inequalities among students over a period of time (Felner, et al., 1982; Fine, 1994; Lee & Smith, 1995). This practice offers little support for incoming ninth graders. Recent research on secondary schools suggests that the environment typically found in today's comprehensive high school may be detrimental to ninth grade students (Fine, 1994; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Reents, 2002; Robinson, 1912). More ninth grade students tend to fail today in large comprehensive high schools, resulting in little to no student motivation, a cycle of academic failure, and ultimately, students leaving high school before completion (Alspaugh, 1998; Alspaugh & Harting, 1995; Chute, 1999; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Roderick & Camburn, 1999).

### **Transition to High School**

Students go through many critical transitions during their school careers. Students who are transitioning can experience a multitude of emotions and feelings, from mild to severe, and can feel frustrations and anxiety over their new environment (Arowosafe & Irvin, 1992; NASSP, 1996; Newman, Myers, Newman, Lohman, & Smith, 2000). A primary cause of anxiety for the transitioning student is the fear of personal safety and disruptive interaction from other students (Arowosafe & Irvin, 1992; DeWolfe & Saunders, 1994). In general, there is a decline in students' grades and attendance following a school transition (Blyth, et al., 1993;

Chute, 1999; Hertzog & Morgan, 1999; Letgers, & Kerr, 2001; Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Roby, 2004). Consequently, ninth grade is a pivotal point for student adjustment and academic achievement (Alspaugh, 1998; Barone, Aquirre-Deandreis, & Trickett, 1991; Chute, 1999; Schiller, 1999). Upon entering high school, ninth graders are faced with a new environment and a more diverse student population than their eighth-grade experience. This leads to specific challenges for this age group (Letgers & Kerr, 2001). Ninth graders go from having been the oldest, most experienced students in middle school, to being the least senior member of a large high school. This change can have confounding effects on transitioning students, which include threats to self-esteem, perception of self, relationships, academic achievement, alienation, and ultimately disengagement for many students (Alspaugh & Harting, 1995; Arowosafe & Irvin, 1992; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Raywid, 1997/1998).

Entering the ninth grade can be one of the most emotionally difficult and academically challenging times in a child's life (Eccles, et al., 1993; Reents, 2002). At the average age of transition to high schools, 14 to 15, students allow perceived consequences for behavior to gauge their desire for immediate gratification, and consider exceptions to the rules (Arowosafe & Irvin, 1992; DeWolfe & Saunders, 1994). Children between the ages of 11 and 15 years old, young people go from being sure of everything to being sure of nothing. Much of this is due to the impact social and emotional changes have on their self-awareness (Alspaugh & Harting, 1995; Barone, et al., 1991; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Moreover, students may recognize for the first time that core courses carry credits for graduation and they must work for passing grades in order to gain sophomore status. They are confronted with demands for more independent work in this time. Additionally, they are taxed with an increased academic



workload for each subject (Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Suddenly, students realize that grades, graduation, and responsibility are crucial.

Many ninth graders have a difficult time adjusting to the demands of high school, which result in lower grades, frequent disciplinary problems, and higher retention rates. Studies showed, over 40% of ninth graders failed a major subject in the first semester (Chute, 1999; Elias, 2001; Hertzog & Morgan, 1998, 1999; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Reports further indicated that nearly one fourth of ninth graders failed to accumulate enough credits to earn sophomore status (Chute, 1999; Hertzog & Morgan, 1999; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). The average retention rate of ninth graders ranges nationwide hovers in the mid twenties. The highest rates were found in urban areas and in districts with large percentages of students of minority and low socioeconomic status (Chute, 1999; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Rates were even higher for students who experienced prior attendance and academic problems (Roby, 2004). In fact, the threat of failure for all ninth-grade students, regardless of socio-economic status and class is escalating (Elias, 2001; Hertzog & Morgan, 1998; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Some students may have succeeded in earlier grades through individual attention and monitoring that may not be available in large comprehensive high schools (Arowosafe & Irvin, 1992; Eccles, et al., 1993). Unfortunately, even students who come to high school with a desire to succeed, tend to fail. This happens when expectations and academic demands of students increase without acquiring the necessary study skills and support that previously provided in the middle grades (Arowosafe & Irvin, 1992; Eccles, et al., 1993; Letgers & Kerr, 2001). These skills are necessary to succeed in high school.

**Correlation between Academic Success and Graduation.** The alarmingly high rates of failing grades, absences, and retention of ninth graders reveal that there is a direct

correlation between student success in the ninth grade and their graduation rates (Alspaugh, 1998; Blyth, et al., 1993; Chute, 1999). Studies of first-time freshmen indicated that first semester absences were a great predictor of course failure in the first semester of high school (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). More studies show that 60% of the students who graduated from high school failed one course in ninth grade, (Barone, et al., 1991; Baker & Sansone, 1990; Hertzog & Morgan, 1998, Roderick & Camburn, 1999). Further, these studies reveal that students that dropped out of high school usually made the decision during the ninth or tenth grade. The dropout rate causes a more serious concern for the local community. Adults who do not hold a high school diploma or skill in one of the trade professions are more likely to experience unemployment, government assistance, homelessness and possible feelings of alienation and inferiority (Battin-Pearson, et al., 2000; Muijs, et al., 2004). Although the consequences of dropping out of school are high for the dropout, they are just as high for society, which must carry the financial burden of the dropout's inability to hold a job. Considering the unforeseeable, insurmountable circumstances of dropping out, effective prevention programs within high schools are essential.

Primarily, educators need to recognize which students are likely to become dropouts and provide supports and intervention programs during the early warning signs (Battin-Pearson, et al., 2000). Poor attendance accounts for a high percentage of the estimated increase in the failure rate of ninth grade students (Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Roby, 2004). The three most common reasons students have given for dropping out are: a) not liking school, b) not getting along with teachers and others, and c) failing (Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Battin-Pearson, et al., 2000). Similarly, students fail a course for three reasons a) failure to attend classes and/or school regularly, b) low scores on district and state assessments c) incomplete

assignments that reinforce information and skills taught (Eccles, et al., 1993; Fine, 1994; Mezirow & Associates, 1990). Ninth graders continue to account for the largest number of students who demonstrate poor attendance, lateness to class or school, cause disturbances and disruptions, and are suspended (Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Eccles, et al., 1993; Roby, 2004).

Rising ninth graders' perceptions of transition to high school were used to determine student dropout rates and involvement in extracurricular activities (Alspaugh & Harting, 1995; Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Battin-Pearson, et al., 2000; Blyth, et al., 1993). Additional evidence included academic achievement, a high rate of daily attendance, involvement in school activities, and discipline referrals submitted for behaviors that would negatively influence school success (Roby, 2004). Time management and time on task along with the student's adjustment to the high school environment were also useful as indicators of a successful transition (Barone, et al., 1991; Blyth, et al., 1993). The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) embarked on a three-year study in *Breaking Ranks* (NASSP, 1996) that focused on critical transitions for students. The schools involved in the study identified times when transitions appeared to be the most problematic for students were: (a) changing from self-contained classes to departmentalized classes, (b) changing from school buildings, and (c) moving to a school where the philosophical approach to instruction was dissimilar. They further identified the following areas as evidence that students were having trouble coping with the transitions: (a) high absenteeism, (b) increased discipline referrals, (c) high failure rates in core academic courses, (d) inability to match the expectations with abilities, (e) dissatisfaction from students and parents, (f) unclear goals and objectives, and (g) lack of vertical articulation and communication. Research shows that by the time students who are at risk reach high school, patterns of underachievement or low academic performance may

be entrenched (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Barone, et al. 1991; Lee & Smith, 1995). Studies that explored the effect support groups had on the ability of students to make a comfortable transition, showed that one warm relationship with a caring adult and positive experience with the wider community and its institutions outside the immediate home were factors that promoted success (Barone et al., 1991; Hertzog & Morgan, 1998; Marzano, et al., 2001). Therefore, personal attention from school personnel is needed at the first sign of excessive absenteeism (Baker & Sansone, 1990). As evidenced by the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, today's societal expectations are different. Secondary schools that allow high school students to leave school without developing required competencies are no longer acceptable. Educational failure can place a permanent drain on any community (Muijs, et al., 2004).

### **Considerations for Effective Transition Programs**

Rising ninth graders are curious about high school and the expectations (Felner, et al., 1982). Students and parents need to know and understand what the requirements are for successful completion of high school in order to overcome their concerns, face their fears, and satisfy their curiosity (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Eccles, et al., 1993). The reality that parents and students do not familiarize themselves with high school requirements is an essential factor to consider when evaluating and designing appropriate transition programs for rising ninth graders. Transition programs must engage students academically, provide an opportunity for them to develop socially, and allow them to assimilate culturally into the high school environment (Schiller, 1999; Sizer, 1984, 1992).

Middle and high schools have developed strategies and designed instructional delivery programs essential to a smooth and appropriate transition for students in the ninth grade (Alsbaugh & Harting, 1995; Blyth, et al., 1993; Eccles, et al., 1993; Letgers & Kerr, 2001;

Reents, 2002; Schiller, 1999). Studies indicate that transition into a classroom where the teacher acts as the facilitator of learning can spark positive changes in motivation and self-perception (Boyer, 1983; Marzano, et al., 2001; Sizer, 1984, 1992). In spite of reform recommendations, minimal efforts have replaced existing conditions, classroom practices and ultimately, the ninth graders' overall experience (Boykin, 2000; NASSP, 1996). For example, students are not regularly engaged in active, inquiry-based learning, little attention is given to diverse student needs, collaboration among teachers who service the same students is minimal, and teachers do not operate in a structure that allows them to know their students beyond the classroom (Marzano, et al., 2001). The ninth grade curriculum is traditional and controlled by the instructor's expertise and interest (Boykin, 2000; McPartland, et al., 1998). There is also little evidence that teachers are aware of instructional goals and objectives that other teachers present other than limited discussion during departmental meetings. High schools must be organized to address the individual needs of students more effectively.

Schools that utilized one or two transition practices had higher ninth grade retention and dropout rates than those schools that implemented three or more (Hertzog & Morgan, 1998, 1999; Schiller, 1999). The retention rate was as high as 40%, similar to pre-transition program implementation in previous studies.

**Small Learning Communities (SLCs).** Diametrically opposed to Conant's (1959) findings, high school organizational reforms, such as small learning communities (SLCs), schools within schools, and ninth grade academies are being promoted as key high school reforms (Oxley, 2001; Raywid, 1997/1998). In the movement to create responsive learning environments and abate the high dropout rates, SLCs are meeting the challenges presented by ninth grade students (Battin-Pearson, et al., 2000; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Raywid, 1997/1998;

Reents, 2002). This approach establishes a smaller unit with a separate educational program or academies that function effectively within large comprehensive high schools (Boykin, 2000; McPartland, et al., 1998). The school within a school model operates under the philosophy that smaller, autonomous learning environments are more conducive to student learning than the larger high schools (Boykin, 2000). The smaller models are designed to smooth the transition to high school and provide more attention in a student-centered environment focusing on curriculum, instruction, and collaboration among all members of the learning community (Boykin, 2000; Fine, 1994; McPartland, et al., 1998; Oxley, 2001; Raywid, 1997/1998; Schiller, 1999).

The SLC organizes teachers into an interdisciplinary team, consisting of a member for each core academic content area that shares its students. This team approach creates a more concentrated focus on the student than in traditional schools departmentalized by content area (Fine, 1994; Oxley, 2001; Raywid, 1997/1998). A study by Hertzog and Morgan (1999) found that this was a promising method to ensure a successful transition for students. They also found that an effective transition practice was utilizing a middle school/high school transition team, with staff from both eighth and ninth grades, counselors, students, administrators, and parents. The transition teams met early in the year and planned activities for rising ninth grade students. The activities continued through the ninth grade with a culminating end of the year activity (Hertzog & Morgan, 1999).

Specifically, there are common practices that must be implemented in order for SLCs to be effective. Common preparation time is a consistent item on a short list of SLC best practices necessary in successful planning and academic programs linked to positive student outcomes (Felner, et al., 1982; McPartland, et al., 1998; Newmann, et al., 2001; Oxley, 2001). The

physical proximity of teachers' classrooms assists teacher partnerships, encourages interaction among teachers and students and helps establish a sense of community among team members (Boykin, 2000; McPartland, et al., 1998; Oxley, 2001; Raywid, 1997/1998). The ninth grade interdisciplinary team compares and shares notes on student progress and teachers have greater opportunities to work together and learn from each other.

The most common and acceptable approaches to organizing the SLCs are to designate corridors, wings, or floors for specific academies or subunits (Fine, 1994; McPartland, et al., 1998). Although the literature has focused on the positive results reported by new start-ups and single site facilities, due to budget constraints urban districts place a growing emphasis on establishing small learning communities within large comprehensive high schools (Boykin, 2000). This structural design is the most cost effective because SLCs can be successfully implemented without major modifications to the physical plant (Boykin, 2000; Lee & Smith, 1995). SLCs have also been created in the interest of accommodating particular populations, ranging from the most at-risk student to the most academically gifted and talented (McPartland, et al., 1998; Raywid, 1997/1998; Reents, 2002).

***Significance of Proper Implementation of SLCs.*** In general, SLCs are more often associated with encouraging student outcomes, positive effects on student relationships with peers, teachers, and staff, participation in extracurricular activities, and a sense of community among staff (Boykin, 2000; McPartland, et al., 1998; Lee & Smith, 1995; Lindsay, 1982; Letgers, 1999; Letgers & Kerr, 2001). A number of studies have examined the effects of ninth grade academies on achievement, attendance, and retention rates of regular students (Hertzog & Morgan, 1999; Lee & Smith, 1995; Letgers, 1999; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Reents, 2002; Roby, 2004). The studies have shown that the SLC models, such as schools-within-schools and

academies, can have a positive impact on students. Improvement was evident in the areas of attendance rates, behavior, dropout rates, a more positive affiliation with the school, and greater self-esteem as compared with similar students in more traditional high school settings (Alspaugh & Harting, 1995; Boykin, 2000; Hertzog & Morgan, 1999; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Raywid, 1993, 1997/1998; Reents, 2002; Roby, 2004; Oxley, 2001). Lee and Smith (1995) reported that achievement gains of students attending academies were equally distributed resulting in greater gains by disadvantaged students in the school-within-a-school design. Many of these students reportedly outperformed comparison groups in comprehensive high schools (Boykin, 2000).

Letgers and Kerr (2001) studied the relationship between a school-within-a-school organization and ninth grade promotion. Their study yielded three major findings: 1) schools implementing SLCs improved promotion rates by almost ten percent during study period, 2) average passing rate on state math assessments rose 40%, compared with less than 30% prior to implementation, 3) schools succeeded in lowering dropout rates. Precautionary measures must be exercised when transforming large high schools into SLCs to guard against tracking students (Boykin, 2000). This practice runs the risk of labeling students with potentially damaging consequences to their future options and their self-esteem. A critical factor to ensure success of the SLC and maximize student learning potential is a commitment to implementing the program fully and allowing it to be independent and distinctive, thereby creating a separate identity (Boykin, 2000; Lee & Smith, 1995; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; McPartland, et al., 1998; Oxley, 2001; Raywid, 1993, 1997/1998). Weak implementation significantly decreases positive outcomes for students and staff (Boykin, 2000; Fine, 1994; Oxley, 2001). Careful planning is necessary for proper implementation of the SLC reform model. As with any new



program or initiative, a needs and resource assessment should be completed before making basic decisions regarding the establishment of SLCs. School leadership teams must be intimately involved in the assignment of students and faculty. A review of disaggregated student data, available human resources, and teacher performance analysis is necessary (Bernhardt, 1998). Lack of key SLC organizational structures creates cynicism among staff, students and the community (Oxley, 2001). This establishes a pervasive defeatist attitude toward educational reform. The effective implementation of a ninth-grade academy and multiple career-academies requires selection and participation of the entire faculty and staff (Jordan, McPartland, Letgers, & Balfanz, 2000; Letgers & Kerr, 2001). The most successful restructured learning units are those whose teachers and students have made a conscious choice to be there. Designers and supporters of the SLC reform model often find implementation of the structural elements incomplete (Felner, et al., 1982). The major challenges are: 1) interdisciplinary team members do not have consistent common planning time, 2) classes are outside their SLC, 3) they have too many students, 4) course selection is limited, and 5) certain students are denied access (Oxley, 2001).

In conclusion, restructuring a comprehensive high school is a very difficult task that requires a tremendous coordination of effort, resources, and a significant investment of time, effort, and funds in professional development as well as, curriculum and instruction. However, we must make the effort for the sake of our students at risk. In these critical times of poor academic achievement among our ninth graders and upper classmen in urban centers who are predisposed to retention and failing grades, we cannot afford to maintain the status quo. Maximum resources must be made available to ensure success and combat the common resistors to change (Boykin, 2000; McPartland, et al., 1998; Letgers & Kerr, 2001).

## Chapter 3

### Methodology and Change Framework

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, overview, and change framework of my participatory action research project (PAR). The process of educational change is complex. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) established the terms first order and second order to distinguish between the levels of change initiatives in schools. First order change conforms to the status quo and does not require any additional knowledge or skill from the staff or administrators (Fullan, 2001; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Fullan (2001) indicates that first order change includes, building a new facility or restructuring an existing facility and supplementing existing curriculum or programs. First order change builds on what has proven successful. Consequently, second order change requires training and professional development to learn about new programs or to redirect goals and objectives, while challenging accepted past practices (Waters, et al., 2003). In order for second order change to be successful, there must be a change in the way we think and a willingness to take risks on new and innovative practices (Fullan, 2001).

Schools implement change initiatives to enhance how a school operates in order to improve instructional practices and/or structures in our local school districts (Evans, 1996). According to Fullan (2001), educational change occurs in two ways. The first occurs by what is taught in the classroom, what materials are used to teach the curriculum, and what pedagogy or instructional practices are operating in the classroom. The second corresponds to leadership and management by school administrators and the influence that teachers and administrators have in the implementation of new programs, policies, and procedures. Many attempts to

change how a school operates or educational reform measures are implemented tend to be met with resistance for a number of reasons (Fullan, 2001).

Understanding organizational culture is an essential factor in any change initiative (Schein, 2004). Before change can begin, the culture of the organization must be examined and learned. Culture is defined as norms, values, behavior patterns, rituals; traditions accumulated from shared learning and shared history, influences how teachers dress, talk about their students, teach, interact with stakeholders, and decorate their classrooms (Deal & Peterson, 2003). Everything in a school is likely to change if the culture of a school changes. As the gatekeepers of educational change, principals influence change in the culture of schools (Fullan, 2001; Schein, 2004). I believe the difference between the successes or failure of any school is inextricably bound to the quality of the principal. Principals foster the conditions required for school growth and establish a commitment to a mutual purpose and a shared belief (Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Senge, 1990). We are responsible for advocating for an environment that is conducive to learning and embraces professional growth for the staff. The environment should also be able to nurture and sustain a school culture that includes quality instructional practices (Deal & Peterson, 2003). Successful implementation of these practices to develop school-wide capacity affects the quality of teaching in the school. This will minimize a fragmented curriculum caused by multitudinous initiatives (Fullan, 2001). The purpose of my study was to explore parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while applying principles of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* to improve instruction in a ninth grade academy and effect change at HHS9. In order to achieve this end, I employed quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies.

Details of the site, participants, instruments, data collection, data analysis, and validity are discussed.

## **Research Design**

I utilized qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies to conduct a participatory action research project. The study, written in a self-narrative format, allowed me to conduct a self-reflective study of my leadership. A narrative permits others to share in my experiences as I tell my story (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006, Patton, 2002). A narrative, when presented in traditional narrative style with a plot, climax, beginning, and an end, evoke memories that encourage us to reflect on what we have said or done. A narrative design includes personal interpretations on the part of the researcher. Qualitative and quantitative data collection occurred simultaneously while I implemented a second-order change initiative to provide a framework for improving instruction at HHS9.

Participatory Action Research (PAR), defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles, affords practitioners an opportunity to learn about what they do, why they do it, and how they can change what they do (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). During the first phase of PAR, researchers develop questions; in the second phase, they take action and experiment with possible solutions to identified problems; during the third phase, the researcher observes and gathers more data to look for possible trends. The fourth phase allows the researcher to reflect on the proposed plan, take action, and conduct more observations. In the fifth phase, there is a repetitious cyclical process of the four phases, as needed. The cyclical process allows facilitation of the process while understanding the change in the system. Action research is an intentional results-oriented investigatory process, promoting professional growth, and developing educators to become reflective practitioners

(Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Sagor, 1992). PAR designs add greater profundity to the components of qualitative narratives. Research practitioners are able to view their everyday practice with continuous critical reflection, meaningful experiences, and self-directed inquiry. This enables us to make changes in our practice based on what we have learned (Sergiovanni, 1999). PAR can have a major impact on improving instruction and academic performance when other research-based practices have yielded insufficient results. Practitioners increase knowledge about research-based practices, improve instructional delivery, enhance curriculum alignment, improve professional practice, and encourage continued professional growth we engage in action research (Calhoun, 1994; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Without self-reflection, practitioners would unknowingly repeat prior actions (Dewey, 1910/2008).

### **Data Collection**

Data collection tools vary greatly in self-narrative research and autobiographical studies. To ensure proper validity, I provided clear and detailed descriptions of how I: 1) collected data, 2) constructed the representation of the data, 3) extended triangulation beyond multiple sources of data, and 4) evolved or changed (Creswell, 2003). I captured organizational experiences through emails, calendars, meeting agendas, minutes from meetings, staff development documentation, formative and summative assessment and progressive discipline documentation and began keeping a reflective journal immediately after my appointment to HHS9. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form

of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism.

**Data Collection Strategies.** I employed qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies for this study. I chose qualitative data collection strategies because qualitative research employs multi-methods to explore phenomena in a natural environment (Creswell, 2003). Gaining acceptance in the field of research, qualitative based research is an investigative tool that uses the researcher as a data source (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). The researcher may serve as a participant in the study, collecting, analyzing, and documenting simultaneously (Glesne, 2006). Data collection in qualitative research permits the researcher to delve into new areas that may emerge during the investigative process. Immersing him/herself into the participant's world, the researcher gains firsthand knowledge of the research problem and can interpret the data through his or her own personal analysis. This interactive approach to research allows for flexibility, a deeper understanding of the selected phenomena, and brings rich meaning to the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002).

I also chose to employ quantitative data collection strategies to establish a baseline for an overall discussion on teacher effectiveness and instructional practices for HHS9. Quantitative research allows the researcher to test and verify theories or explore relationships among variables (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative analysis further allows the researcher to measure information numerically, using statistical data to create inferences for further analysis (Patton, 2002). Using a Nonequivalent Group Design (NEGD) I limited my analysis to the use of descriptive statistics to perform descriptive analysis, variance, mean, comparison and

correlation to present relationships between dependent variables linked to academic performance, and inductively examined the results (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). NEDG denotes there are two pre-existing groups, a treatment group and a comparison group, each measured by a pre-test and post-test instrument (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Patton, 2002). The pre-test instrument measurement used was the state assessment administered to all eighth grade students, and the post- test instrument measurement was a district assessment administered to all ninth grade students in the HPS District.

In order to collect data on my leadership, I returned to the qualitative tradition. Qualitative research naturally lends itself to a narrative design because the data collected is largely textual. Focusing on the lives of individuals and their stories, narratives allow the researcher to include his or her own story and show a connection to the participants (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). Stories evoke memories that encourage us to reflect on what we have said or done. A narrative design includes personal interpretations on the part of the researcher. Narratives, rooted in social science, are a chronological explication of a series of events told or lived by one person (Creswell, 2003). I chose a self-narrative because we, as human beings, are natural storytellers.

Although Glesne (2006) and Creswell (2003) warn against backyard research or the study of our own organization, Glesne (2006) clarifies that this is a caveat applied to traditional qualitative research. Glesne (2006) and Creswell (2003) advise, that any self-study should be investigated using ethnographic research practices. Glesne (2006) further clarifies PAR as an exception because the role of the researcher is autobiographical and centers on our own thoughts in order to guide our actions during a change process. Ellis and Bouchner (2000) call action research for the individual, an autoethnography. An autoethnography allows the

presentation of data to be composed by insiders of an organization and leads to a more authentic representation of experiences, than one done by an outside ethnographer (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002).

Autoethnographical accounts begin with self as the participant-observer, giving a voice to the author that contains contextual details, dialogue, emotion, self-consciousness, and stories affected by history, social structure, and culture (Ellis & Bouchner, 2000). Any research that centers on our own thoughts and draws on our past experience is reflexive (Dewey, 1910/2008). Action research is the beginning of reflection and action. I employed autoethnographic methods to study my leadership and explore parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while I applied the principles in Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework*. This was a second-order change initiative to improve teacher effectiveness and instructional practices at HHS9 (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). The qualitative research collection strategies, utilizing an iterative approach of circumgyrating from collecting data to data analysis, re-planning and back again, makes qualitative research data collection strategies appropriate for the self-study of my leadership in this participatory action research project (Glesne, 2006; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

### **Role of the Researcher**

Ethical issues are generic to any study (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). The researcher served as the newly appointed principal of Henderson High School Ninth Grade Success Academy (HHS9), a pseudonym. My assignment was to build a successful ninth grade academy defined as: 1) ensuring a smooth transition to high school, 2) addressing the needs of HHS ninth grade students, and 3) improving academic performance to meet NCLB (2001) standards. My position as principal was evaluative and as a non-tenured principal, I had an



invested interest in the ninth grade academy's success. This study was limited in scope to the viewpoints and experiences of one principal. I received an expedited approval from Henderson Public Schools' (HPS) Institutional Review Board (IRB) on April 5, 2007 and IRB approval from Rowan University on May 16, 2007. The IRB approval authorized me to collect data for purposes of this study. I was limited to collecting summative and cumulative data for HHS9. My position could have prevented openness and trust of participants towards me as the researcher (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). Secondary analysis of pre-existing data provides for unobtrusive measures, thereby limiting the possible effect of the researcher on recorded data and participants (Patton, 2002).

My responsibility was to adhere to the guidelines presented in the HPS IRB approval (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002) and student information was presented as summative and cumulative data. This study was autoethnographical and I was the primary data source. The dual positions of administrator and researcher posed additional ethical issues because I had certain knowledge of specific employees in my capacity as principal. I also had knowledge of, and access to, confidential records, and school information that included all school files, data, confidential reports gathered by staff within the school, confidential letters written by individuals in and outside of the local school district, and material that could depict certain individuals in an unfavorable light. Archival data collection sources included a combination of emails, meeting agendas, staff development documentation, minutes, formative and summative assessments, progressive discipline documents, and documented experiences recorded in a reflective journal. I documented my experiences, actions, and reactions to those experiences, during two school terms, August 2006 through June 2007 and August 2007 through March 2008.

Although I made a concerted effort to ensure anonymity by changing names, gender and places of events, I realized this descriptive self-narrative to study my leadership may contain information that may resemble individuals and events. As a result, it was possible that these descriptions could bring attention to staff and district personnel. I delayed publication to protect their identity. I must stress that this study was a participatory action research project specific to my leadership. This project informed my practice as I moved to improve instructional practices at HHS9. My interpretations and perceptions of events and individuals were specific to my leadership and the impact that each had on my leadership.

### **Sample**

I was a 45-year old, African American, female, educational leader operating as a principal at HHS9, the site of the action research project. I was in my nineteenth year as an educator. My experiences allowed me to serve in large urban, suburban and affluent communities. I taught high school for 10 years and served as an administrator for nine years, five at the elementary level and four at the secondary level. I hold a B. A. in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting and minor in English and Africana Studies, an M.S. in Urban Education, and post-graduate degree credits in Educational Supervision and Administration. Prior to entering the field of education, I was an accounting supervisor for a major not-for-profit agency in Manhattan. My experience varied in the field of accounting and I entered education as a career change. I made a personal choice to change careers because I always had a passion to teach those whom society had labeled “at-risk.” I believed my business and industry background allowed me to offer a different perspective from the educator who entered the education field immediately after their undergraduate studies in education.

This study utilized the researcher as the primary sample for the study. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) panel for the Henderson Public School District (HPS) determined that there was a possibility of undue influence on participants due to my position of authority as the principal. After a making a second request for permission to perform the participatory action research project, I was given approval to collect summative and cumulative data for HHS9. The data were aggregated to ensure that information on individual students would not be released.

Considering the constraints placed on me and the influence my cultural identity had on my life, my action research project was a reflexive self -study of my leadership. I used the autoethnographic inquiry method to chronicle my thoughts, actions, and reactions to individuals during a series of events commencing August 2006 and ending March 2008. This allowed me to reflect on my leadership practices and to comply with district requirements while implementing a second order change in my organization. I was the researcher and subject of this self-narrative; therefore, I was the primary data source for the study of my leadership during this process. The autoethnography allowed me to draw on personalized accounts of my experiences as participant-observer-author in an attempt to broaden the understanding of my leadership within my organization (Dewey, 1910/2008; Glesne, 2006; Sergiovanni, 1999). Typically written in the first person, autoethnographical accounts contain contextual details, dialogue, emotion, self-consciousness, and stories affected by history, social structure, and culture (Ellis & Bouchner, 2000).

### **Setting**

This section describes the site I used for the participatory action research project. Henderson High School (HHS) is a pseudonym for a comprehensive high school that serves a

large urban school district located in the Northeast. One thousand nine hundred eighty one students were enrolled during the 2006-2007 academic year. The demographic data for total students attending HHS were, 68% Hispanic, 30% African American, and 1% Asian, White or Native American. Disaggregating the data by educational program revealed that 71% of the student population was enrolled in general education, 11% in bilingual education, and 21% in special education with overlaps in bilingual and special education programs. Over 61% of the students at HHS received free or reduced lunch and there was a student mobility rate of 47%. The attendance rate for 2005-2006 was 91%, which is three percent below the state average. HHS state assessments grade reflected that only 28% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students scored proficient in language arts and 19% in mathematics during the 2005-2006 academic year.

During the 2001-2002 academic year, this northeastern district implemented small learning communities (SLCs) using the John Hopkins' Talent Development Model for service delivery through a SLC grant. HHS was one of the first sites in the district to implement the program. In the academic year 2005-2006, HHS was in the fourth year of implementation. The Talent Development Model with Career Academies was a comprehensive multi-phased reform model for large high schools that have problems with student attendance, discipline, achievement scores, and dropout rates (Boykin, 2000; Jordan, et al., 2000; Marzano, et al., 2004). The first phase of the Talent Development High School reform involved changes in school organization and management to establish a safe climate for learning and to motivate regular attendance by staff and students (Jordan, et al., 2000). The second phase included improvement in curriculum and classroom instruction to engage students in a rigorous learning environment. It was anticipated that these changes would lead to improved academic performance.

Career Cluster Academies using the SLC structure averaged 300 students in grades 10, 11, and 12. Similar to other secondary schools using the Johns Hopkins Talent Development Model, HHS had four career academies and one Freshmen Academy for first-time ninth graders. The career academies were: 1) Aerospace and Technology, 2) Law and International Studies, 3) Visual Arts and Graphic Design, and 4) Health Sciences and Related Careers. Each career academy offered the same core academic courses with appropriate career applications to match the academy theme. Select faculty members were assigned for academic courses and career aligned electives.

HHS9 was established as a strategy to address academic performance linked to student achievement as freshmen transition from middle school to the high school setting. This transitional program was provided for students in their first year of high school. Each student was placed with a group of core academic teachers on interdisciplinary teams in the subjects of English, mathematics, social studies, and science. A team leader served as liaison between the team and the department chairperson. The small teams were comprised of five teachers who shared the same students. Common planning time was scheduled for each team. During 2005-2006, each academy was located in a specific section of the building. A separate management team was responsible for the HHS9 with authority for student discipline, instruction, and curriculum designated to the ninth grade academy vice principal. Guidance counselors were assigned to each academy for student support.

A basic set of college preparatory academic courses was required for all students. All classes were scheduled using a 4 x 4-block schedule, consisting of a four- period day for two 20-week terms per school year. Students who scored partially proficient on the eighth grade state assessment were enrolled in mathematics and English for extended periods to acquire

additional skills. Teachers received staff development on the use of an 80-minute class period, integration of technology in classroom instruction, differentiated instruction to meet the needs of a heterogeneous classroom, effective use of manipulatives, and other instructional strategies to develop critical thinking skills and to keep students engaged in the learning process.

Collaborative lesson planning and development of departmental exams were encouraged to ensure adherence to district curriculum and pacing guides, to identify strengths and gaps in curricula, and maximize instruction by developing cross-curricular thematic units. The Twilight School, an alternative after-hours program, was offered in the main building for students who had serious attendance or discipline problems. The Twilight School held small classes for instruction in the core academic subject areas along with guidance and other support services. The goal was to help students develop coping skills to successfully transition into the mainstream setting during the regular school day.

An administrative decision was made to move the ninth grade students from the main campus of HHS for the 2006-2007 school year to a former middle school facility nearby. The focus was two-fold: 1) to eliminate overcrowding in the main campus and 2) to provide an environment that would lead to improved academic performance. The new structural design of the single-site program maintained the John Hopkins Talent Development Model for service delivery. A new management team was identified and I was selected as the new principal to lead the initiative and manage the new facility. The ninth grade academy vice principal from the previous model was assigned to the new site. His background was in elementary education and he was transferred to an elementary school vice principal position in January 2007. The transfer of this key position left the vice principal position vacant for five months. The HHS9 vice principal position was filled in June 2007. Staff members were transferred from the main

campus to the new site without input from the newly appointed principal. The staff was comprised of one nurse, one media specialist, two guidance counselors, two clerical support staff, and 42 classroom-teaching positions. The staff members were from diverse ethnic backgrounds. While 14 or 30% of the teaching positions, were vacant in the critical content areas, including math, science and special education, tenured staff members occupied 14 or 50% of the filled positions. Average teaching experience among the staff was 10 years, with 6 or 20% holding advanced degrees. Two tenured teachers from within the district and new to administration were selected as department chairpersons for English and Mathematics. A third department chairperson, new to administration and the district, was hired in January 2007 to supervise the Special Education Department. There were five building administrators for HHS9. A Social Worker and an On-Site-Suspension Teacher were added in January 2007. In addition, staff members from the former middle school were absorbed into the operating budget for the new site. The absorbed staff included one clerical support person, one technology coordinator, one parent representative, seven custodial staff including four vacancies, two security personnel, and six cafeteria workers.

### **Overview of Action Research Project**

The purpose of my study was to explore parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use as I applied principles of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* in an effort to improve instruction in a ninth grade academy at HHS9. This action research project allowed me to reflect on my leadership and understand my leadership theory-in-use. This self-study reviewed my espoused leadership theory and explored what leadership theory-in-use emerged during the implementation of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework* to effect change in my organization. Each stage in the Collins' (2001,

2005) *Good to Great Change Framework* was reviewed as an individual cycle. Using qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies, I developed autoethnographic self-narratives for each cycle to show evidence of how I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) corresponding *Good to Great* principles for each stage in the *Good to Create Framework* for social sectors and answered each research question. Each cycle included the events retold with personal reflections and perceptions of my experiences as documented in a reflective journal. I examined and discussed the parallel of my espoused leadership theory and my leadership-in-use in a subsequent chapter using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bernard M. Bass (1985) and found in Northouse (2007).

### **Change Framework: Good to Great**

Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework* was not exclusive to business and industry. Organizations of all types have adopted this schema to orchestrate change including, what Collins (2001, 2005) refers to as, the social sectors: schools, churches, and government agencies. Practical applications unique to social sectors were presented in Collins' (2005) accompanying monograph, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: Why Business Thinking is not the Answer*. Collins (2001, 2005) discussed how the concept of an "economic engine" that drives business leaders could be adapted to school leaders using "economic resources" as the driving force. Researchers concur that enormous responsibilities exude from the principal's office, much like the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a major corporation (Collins, 2005; Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001). CEOs are accountable for profit margins, the bottom line on profit and loss statements, and the rate of return on investments to the corporation. Similarly, school principals are held accountable for adequate yearly progress (AYP), student test scores, and the rate of return to the community in which they serve.



Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* for the social sectors, developed the concept that their measure of success is tantamount to the measure of business' profitability. This viewpoint deserves serious consideration when we reflect on the ramifications that poor academic performance has on graduation rates, economic growth, and our global society.

HPS's district superintendent introduced Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework* as the impetus to improve instructional practices throughout the district and setting the stage for a second-order change initiative. Change can only be realized if it is embraced and put into action (Fullan, 2001). I embraced Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework*. I believed it was my responsibility as an agent of the district to either implement district policies and initiatives or offer reasonable explanations as to why we should reconsider the proposed initiative. In my capacity as the new principal I implemented Collins' (2001, 2005) four-stage *Good to Great Change Framework* shown in figure 1. I used this second-order change initiative to improve teacher effectiveness and classroom instructional practices in an effort to accelerate the academic performance of HHS's ninth graders.

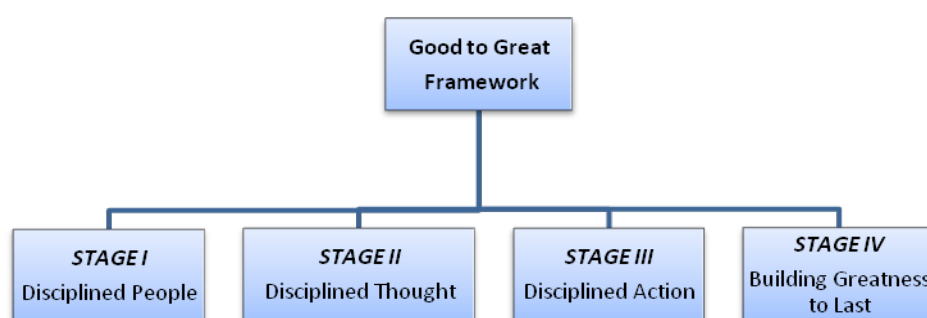


Figure 1. The four stages identified in Jim Collins' *Good to Great Framework* necessary to move an organization from good to great.

---

Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* was based on the premise; increased performance on stock returns and sustained greatness. Comparatively, the premise of public educational institutions is increased performance on state assessments and sustained academic growth. Collins (2001, 2005) defines a great company as a company that demonstrates a pattern of good performance with a cumulative total stock return at least three times higher than the general market from the point of transition. The transition has to be a direct result of a company's actions that continue for 15 years beyond the transition point (Collins, 2001, 2005). Imagine urban schools meeting or exceeding AYP for more than 15 successive years. There were great companies that were compared to companies with similar characteristics and yet were unable to ascend to Collins' (2001, 2005) definition of greatness. This dilemma is similar to the one our urban school systems face daily. There have been large urban districts such as, Chicago and Indianapolis that have successfully improved academic performance with reform strategies while others, such as HPS have not realized such gains.

Collins (2001, 2005) focused on the characteristics that differentiated the *Good to Great* companies from the comparison companies. He found every *Good to Great* company exhibited all of the following identifiers:

1. Level 5 leadership—an individual demonstrating professional will and personal humility. Fullan (2001) and Collins (2001, 2005) contend this skill is limited to a minority of current leaders
2. First who...Then what—getting the right people on the bus, getting the wrong people off the bus, and putting the right people in the right seats before you decide where you are going or the vision and mission statement is conceived.

3. Confront the brutal facts—acknowledge the reality of what is happening here and now while pressing forward to achieve the goal of greatness in spite of the challenges ahead.
4. Hedgehog Concept—one purpose should drive all decision-making, from hiring decisions to budget to program planning. A good idea for one group may not be a good idea for another group so never lose focus of the stated purpose.
5. Culture of discipline—establish an organization with disciplined people who will embrace disciplined thought and respond with disciplined action.
6. Sustainability—gradual change will produce longer results. Make changes that will transcend a long period of time and assist in meeting the stated purpose. If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is (Collin, 2001; 2005).

According to Collins (2001, 2005), these are categorical dynamics that operate when an organization surpasses expected outcomes. He identified the characteristics as the criteria vital to moving an organization from good to great (Collins, 2001, 2005). Continued discipline is a perpetual cycle in the four stages of development. If the organization is successful in accomplishing this goal individually and collectively, the organization will catapult to a stature of greatness (Collins, 2001, 2005). Each stage of discipline is a building block that moves a good company to a tipping point (Gladwell, 2002), which results in a breakthrough to desired greatness. Within each stage, there are two functioning ideologies. Figure 2 depicts Collins' (2001, 2005) illustration of the *Good to Great Change Framework* at work.

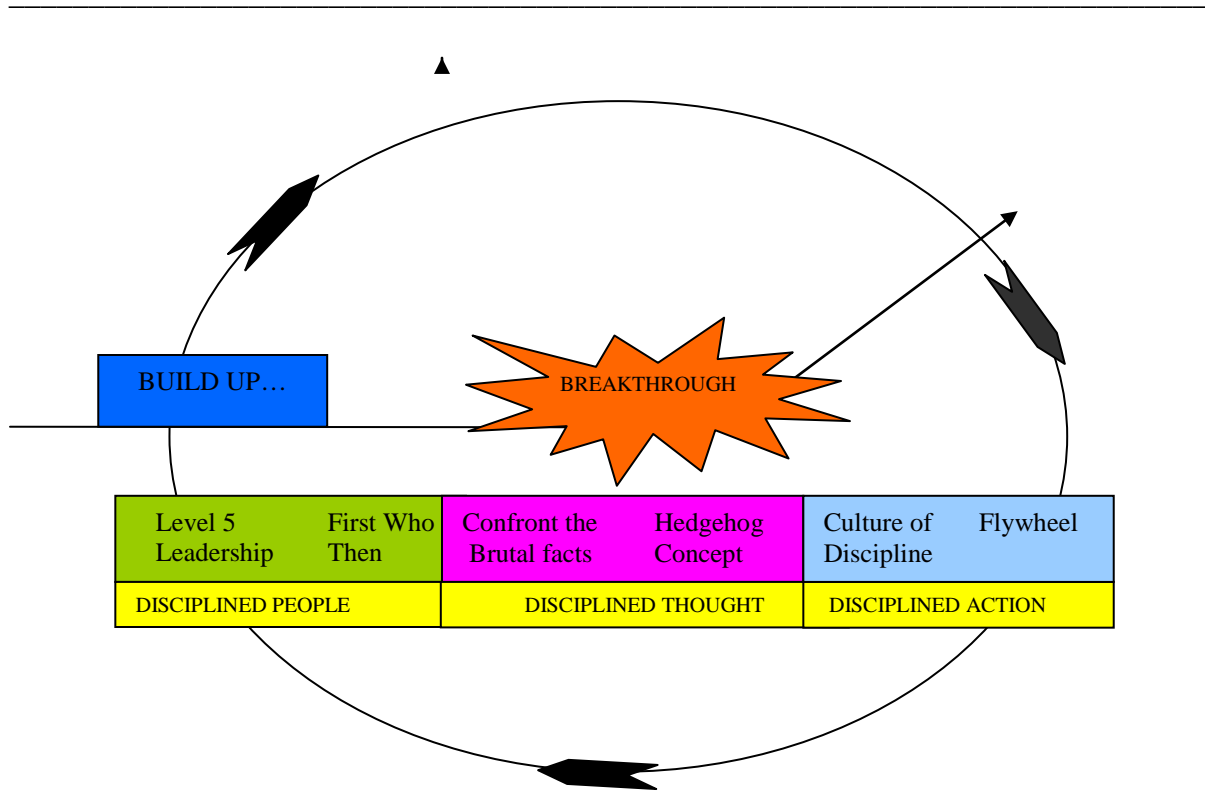


Figure 2. Collins' *Good to Great Framework* at Work.

### Cycle I: Stage I: Disciplined People

**Purpose.** The purpose of cycle I was to answer research question one: *How does my leadership influence the academic environment at HHS9* using participatory action research (PAR). (PAR) is defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). I explored parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while applying the principle of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage I *Good to Great Change Framework: Disciplined People*. Disciplined people included a Level 5 leader and committed, motivated members of an organization who were dedicated to a common goal. I reviewed and compared Jim Collins'

(2001, 2005) criteria for a Level 5 leader to show evidence of my Level 5 leadership and employed (PAR), which afforded me an opportunity to reflect on how I led and the rationale for my decisions. Further, (PAR) skills allowed me to reflect on what changes I could implement (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). I established a measuring stick for disciplined people using the district-wide formative assessment instrument (Appendix B) and showed evidence that I implemented the First who...Then what, strategy for disciplined people in Collins' (2001, 2005) stage I of the *Good to Great Framework*.

**Data Collection.** I used qualitative data collection strategies for cycle I. Data collection included teacher formative observation evaluation instruments *HPS Achieving Excellence in Teaching* (see appendix B), memos generated by implementing HPS progressive discipline plan, minutes generated from HHS9 weekly building administrators meetings, and personal interactions with staff. I documented my actions and reactions to these documents in a reflective journal. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. Data related to my Level 5 leadership were coded 1A and data related to the staff were coded 1B, representing stage I part A and stage I part B respectively. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. I used

autoethnographic qualitative data collection strategies to show evidence of my Level 5 leadership characteristics by documenting my reactions to experiences in a reflective journal.

**Action.** I reviewed formative observation evaluation instruments *HPS Achieving Excellence in Teaching* (see Appendix B), memos generated through implementation of the district progressive discipline plan, minutes generated from weekly building administrators meetings, and personal interactions with staff that was documented in a reflective journal. I coded and sorted the events using stage I: Disciplined People outlined in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* as a guide. Data related to my Level 5 leadership were coded 1A and data related to the staff were coded 1B, representing stage I part A and stage I part B respectively. I reviewed and compared Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) criteria for a Level 5 leader and created explicative narratives from the data collected to document the events and to show evidence of how I applied Stage I: Disciplined People in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* as a second-order change initiative at HHS9. The narratives showed evidence of the selection process, instruments used to determine who would be on the bus, the role that individual would assume, and my commitment to building an organization with disciplined people. Disciplined people, the first stage in the *Good to Great Framework*, begins with what Collins (2001, 2005) describes as a Level 5 leader. A rare individual (Collins 2001, 2005; Fullan, 2001), Level 5 leaders lay the foundation for building a *Good to Great* company (Collins, 2001, 2005). Collins (2001, 2005) insists that the administrator in the top position has to be a Level 5 leader or the change initiative to move a school from good to great will not happen. Level 5 leaders are credited with being the catalyst for change and exhibit Level 5 leadership qualities that embody the characteristics of all levels of leadership as outlined in

figure 3.

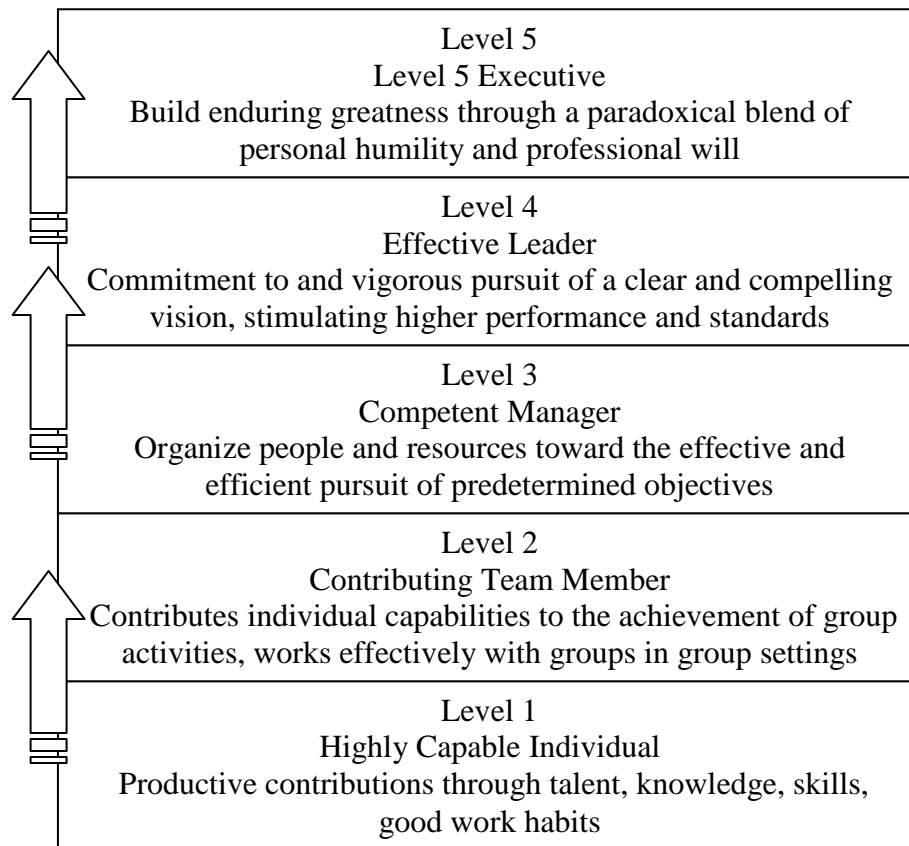


Figure 3. Hierarchy of Level 5 Leadership

---

Successful schools have leaders who enforce through moral obligations and consistent standards (Fairholm, 1997; Greenleaf, 2003). Collins' (2001, 2005) supposes the Level 5 leader's predisposition is the goal of the organization and is motivated by a desire to reach the ultimate goal of defined greatness. The Level 5 leader exhibits a tenacity to do whatever it takes to make the company great. Team members are recognized for their contributions during periods of success. The Level 5 leader accepts responsibility for missed opportunities for success and acknowledges that we are moving towards our goal (Collins, 2001, 2005). I

embraced the qualities of the Level 5 leader. I exhibited a work ethic that incorporated sacrifice, dedication, and commitment as a way of life in accordance with moving the agenda of the organization (Collins, 2001, 2005; Deal & Peterson, 2003). This included rejecting detractors and detours that would have hindered my progress in reaching my goal. My desire to succeed caused me to remain laser-focused while constantly employing PAR and reflecting on what I should have done differently, while giving praise to individuals responsible for the incremental successes. My values and actions outlined in my currere and espoused leadership theory, along with my tenacity exhibited through this doctoral educational leadership experience, provided additional evidence of my strong will and personality.

The second component in Stage I: Disciplined People is, First who...Then what (Collins, 2001, 2005). Collins (2001, 2005) insists that beginning with the right people rather than a vision, allows the company to adapt to changes, alleviate future concerns over how to motivate and manage staff, and achieve greatness. Evans (1996) argues that controlling staff hiring and professional development in instructional practice is critical to creating a school with improved academic performance. Collins (2005) acknowledges the power structure of schools is at best, complicated. Principals do not have the luxury of getting the wrong people off the bus while getting the right people on the bus. State law, labor agreements, and board regulations that protect tenured staff make staff selection, ejection, and correction challenging.

Fullan (2001) credits effective teachers for a 30% variance of student progress, giving students a voice in their classrooms, and inviting students to share in what makes learning fun. In order for students to be successful, HHS9 needed effective teachers who would provide relevant, engaging, and worthwhile experiences. Administrators are required under the New Jersey Administrative Code (NJASC) 18A, to observe and evaluate staff. Observations and



evaluations helped me to determine what was being taught in the classroom, the culture of the classroom environment, teacher acumen, and evidence of academic rigor. HPS District adopted the guidelines and practices in Charlotte Danielson's (1996) *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* and formulated a standard for all HPS teachers entitled *Achieving Excellence in Teaching* (appendix B). The four areas identified these essential components to effective teaching:

- 1) Planning and Preparation—where the practitioner and observer discuss the lesson that is to be taught including objectives, engagement of students, instructional strategies, anticipated outcomes, ongoing assessment, resources, unique characteristics of the class and more. It is during the planning conference where the observer can ask guiding questions to cause the teacher to consider the planned learning experience, or suggest possible alternatives to enhance the lesson before it is delivered,
- 2) Classroom Environment—a prerequisite for effective student learning measures the interpersonal respect and rapport, behavior and procedural management, a commitment for learning and the organization of physical space,
- 3) Instruction—encompasses the heart of teaching, to enhance learning for all regardless of ability levels through instructional practices that translates knowledge into meaning, and last but certainly not least,
- 4) Professional Responsibilities—although not always observable in the classroom, have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning and are evident across the components in each domain.

Each of these areas were scored using a rubric (see Appendix B for details) for observed teaching practices during formative and summative teacher observations and

evaluations. The observable practice in each domain was rated from unsatisfactory to distinguished, with distinguished designated as the highest rating.

Formative assessments captured a moment in time, a specific lesson announced or unannounced on a given day by an administrator and are included in domains one through three. Domain Four: Professional Responsibilities, is ongoing and may or may not be included in any formative assessment. Data gathering to assess teacher performance before, during, and after classroom instruction results in a cumulative process used to, identify areas of strength and weakness in teacher practice, and establish objective benchmarks to improve teachers quality of instruction. During classroom visitations at HHS9, I looked for teachers who provided students with relevant, engaging and worthwhile experiences, promoted a positive classroom environment, demonstrated high expectations, and exuded a passion for improving student performance. The evidence of effective teaching was established by these common themes in the *HPS Achieving Excellence in Teaching Model*: a) equity, b) cultural sensitivity, c) high expectations, d) developmental appropriateness, e) appropriate use of technology, and a classroom environment where f) students exhibit an assumption of responsibility. I also provided staff with a self-created acrostic indicating what teachers that care about students would be able to do as a fun approach to identifying characteristics of an effective teacher (Appendix A).

Building a team of disciplined people allowed me to focus on instructional leadership as opposed to managerial tasks and minimized future concerns of motivating and managing staff (Collins, 2001, 2005; Fink & Resnick, 2001). The numerous vacancies at HHS9 provided a great opportunity to screen and select candidates who exhibited the qualities of disciplined people in stage I of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* and an effective teacher. I

reviewed interactions with staff, documented experiences recorded in a reflective journal, and compared the criteria for Disciplined People in the *Good to Great Framework* to determine if we employed the strategies outlined in stage I for selecting candidates to fill vacancies.

Collins (2001, 2005) suggests the use of the three-year probationary period as an extended interview. I followed that recommendation. Our newly hired teachers were given a three-year probationary period prior to tenure. I reviewed formative observation evaluations, memos generated using the progressive discipline plan, and personal interactions with staff documented in a reflective journal to look for evidence in classroom practices, areas needing improvement, areas of strength, and means of addressing areas of concern. Collins' (2001, 2005) second practical discipline stipulates that when I know someone is not on the right bus, I should act. I reviewed staff observation and evaluation documents, instructional improvement plans, professional improvement plans, and correspondence guided by a district-sponsored workshop entitled, "Progressive Discipline and Facilitating Positive Performance and Conduct." Progressive discipline strategies were used to document concerns regarding behavior or performance in this order: 1) oral warnings, 2) written warnings, 3) disciplinary actions, and 4) subsequent occurrences of documented behavior or performance. Oral warnings were used to notify the staff member he or she was not meeting the standard behavior or performance level desired. All communication was documented internally as a confirmation of conference. This communication remained a matter of record in the staff member's evidence file that was located in the principal's office. Although it was not submitted to staff member's formal personnel file, the documents would be used to substantiate subsequent progressive disciplinary action. Written warnings documented a second warning and included the previous documentation from the confirmation of conference. The written warning was submitted to the

staff member's personnel file. Written performance improvement plans identified specific areas of concern and outlined recommendations for improvement of the exhibited behavior or performance. Administrators were required to make follow-up classroom visits to determine progressive of staff member on the performance improvement plan. Disciplinary action for subsequent occurrences included prior documentation, and reprimands for ensuing behavior and performance. All documentation became a part of the staff member's personnel file including suspensions, demotions, or discharges. I reviewed these documents to ensure implementation of stage I strategies in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*.

The last practical discipline promoted by Collins (2001, 2005) is that rules made to encourage poor performers to do their jobs, could have a negative effect on committed staff. I reviewed samples of the *Opening Day Binder* and documented experiences recorded in a reflective journal to determine how rules were developed and disseminated to staff. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism.

I reviewed the flow of communication through meeting agendas and minutes to ensure all staff members were knowledgeable of to policies and procedures and held accountable. I

discussed strategies with the administrative team on how to monitor and address individual behavior that may have a negative impact on the school culture and documented these discussions in a reflective journal.

### **Cycle II: Stage II: Disciplined Thought**

**Purpose.** The purpose of cycle II was to answer research question two: *How can the application of Collins' Good to Great Framework impact the organizational culture of HHS9* using participatory action research (PAR). Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) define PAR as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles. I explored parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while applying the principle of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage II *Good to Great Change Framework: Disciplined Thought*. Collins (2001, 2005) found that companies that moved from good to great began by evaluating the reality of their company. Disciplined thought has two components and is three-fold. First, Collins (2001, 2005) asserts that the first order of business in evaluating the reality of a company is to confront the brutal facts. Secondly, Collins (2001, 2005) stress understanding the purpose of the organization's existence, a theorem Collins refers to as the Hedgehog Concept. Consequently, Schein (2004) reverberates that in order to understand an organization, you must understand the culture of the organization. We cannot look at an organization without understanding the existing culture. Many organizations, specifically schools operate within a similar structure. The variable is the culture currently operating within the organization. Schein (2004) describes culture as norms, values, behavior patterns, rituals, traditions accumulated from shared learning, and shared history that must be learned. Confronting the brutal facts and establishing a Hedgehog Concept can lend itself to establish or change an organization culture (Collins, 2001, 2005; Schein, 2004).

I showed evidence of how I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage II *Good to Great Change Framework: Disciplined Thought*. Confronting the brutal facts forced me to determine what was working in HHS9. I continued to focus on improving teacher effectiveness and instructional practices at HHS9 in order to effect change in an effort to accelerated student academic performance. Moreover, the Hedgehog Concept was based on the behavior of the hedgehog. Hedgehogs simplify their world into one construct and this one construct provided an understanding that guided everything they did. The precept of the hedgehog was to focus on survival and everything a hedgehog did was directly related to that survival. The resources necessary to remain fiscally responsible as a school, improve teacher effectiveness, and instructional practices as a strategy to effect change in an effort to accelerate academic performance for HHS9 are similar to Collins' (2001) economic engine for business. Therefore, it was reasonable to substitute the educational goal that Collins refers to as the resource engine for the economic engine (Collins, 2001, 2005). Collins (2005) suggested that the economic resource engine for the social sectors and schools had three basic components: time, money, and brand. Time, for HHS9, translated into how soon we would be able to attract disciplined people to fill our vacancies. Money equated to the approved district and school-based budgets we are always struggling to maintain. Meanwhile, brand referred to the school spirit embodied by the stakeholders and their willingness to become actively involved in the process of improving instruction in an effort to accelerate academic performance. Collins (2001, 2005) introduced three thought-provoking questions in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* Hedgehog Concept in order to allow an organization to determine its hedgehog concept. Each of these questions was represented in a ring. Collins (2001, 2005) defined the intersection of these three rings as the Hedgehog Concept as shown in figure 4.

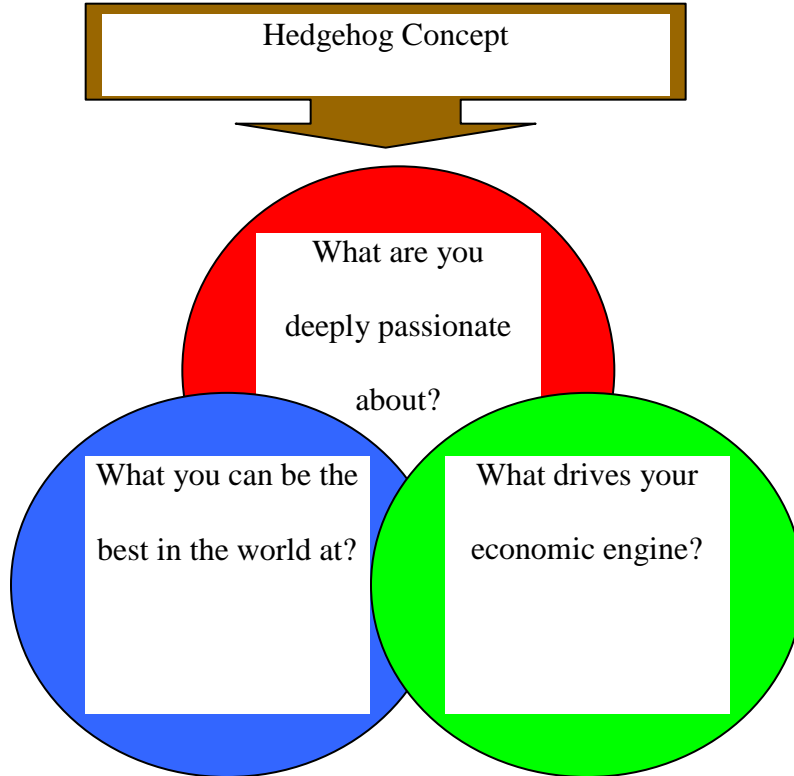


Figure 4. Jim Collins' *Good to Great* Hedgehog Concept

---

**Data Collection.** I used autoethnographic, qualitative, and quantitative data collection strategies for cycle II. Collins (2001, 2005) recommended using four practices to evaluate an organization. The initial practice of leading with questions, not answers, led to the next three practices in successive order: engaging in dialogue and debate, conducting autopsies without blame, and building red flag mechanisms that turned information into information that could not be ignored. Qualitative data related to confronting the brutal facts were coded 2A data related to the Hedgehog Concept were coded 2B and data related to school culture 2C. I used qualitative data collection strategies and collected interactions with staff, formative assessments, and minutes from meetings, and documented experiences in a reflective journal.

My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism.

I also used quantitative data collection methods to evaluate HHS9 during a pilot study I conducted in the spring of 2007 for Leadership Applications Fieldwork Seminar (LAFS). I used the pilot study to examine selected outcome variables linked to academic performance within the context of HHS9. Specifically, I compared summative and cumulative student data on, 1) grade point averages, 2) state and local assessments, 3) attendance, and 4) out of school suspension data for two HHS ninth grade transition cohorts.

**Action.** I analyzed and correlated the quantitative data using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 14.0)*. Descriptive statistics obtained from SPSS such as percentages, means and standard deviations were used to review data gathered, as dictated by the dependent and independent variables (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). The data were analyzed using a variety of descriptive frequencies to formulate a descriptive inductive analysis to identify similarities and differences among independent variables between TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub>. This analysis allowed me to make better interpretations of the factors linked to academic performance and to determine what areas presented the greatest concerns and establish a baseline for student



performance data by comparing state and local assessment data using SPSS14.0 to analyze frequencies and averages. Data gathered were displayed using graphs and tables.

I included the findings from the LAFS pilot study to explore possible underlying causes for student academic performance. I used inductive analysis to reflect on the data linked to student achievement. The first transition cohort were the 2005-2006 ninth grade students attending the comprehensive high school SLC design, hereinafter referred to as transition cohort 1 (TC<sub>1</sub>). The second cohort were the 2006-2007 ninth grade students using a different SLC structural design, the single-site facility, hereinafter referred to as transition cohort 2 (TC<sub>2</sub>). I also used inductive analysis to explore gender and ethnic differences to determine if there were any trends in academic performance or other areas of possible interest among, within, and between the two cohorts. I created explicative narratives from the qualitative data collected to show evidence that I implemented Stage II: Disciplined Thought. I showed the data to my staff as a red flag mechanism to expose the brutal facts of the skill areas students. I also presented data each academic cycle to show the status of our students' academic progress.

Understanding organizational culture is an essential factor in any reform initiative (Schein, 2004). Before change can begin the culture, defined as norms, values, behavior patterns, rituals, traditions accumulated from shared learning and shared history must be learned. It was important for me to understand the political landscape in this new environment, the history of the organization, and the unspoken leaders, all aspects of the established culture (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Schein, 2004). Organizations chose different management structures. Bureaucratic models of decision-making, such as the model that exists in my school district, strive to optimize values through choices based on established rules and processes proven effective in the past (Pfeiffer, 1981). Organizational politics involve the acquisition,

development, and use of power to obtain preferred outcomes in an environment of uncertainty or disagreement (Pfeiffer, 1981). Politics involves activities and behaviors through which power is developed and used (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Pfeiffer, 1981). Disturbingly, politics have become personalized by the use of power to protect self-interest. HPS District was not exempt from the political influences that encouraged this practice and neither was HHS.

The facts are, in urban districts such as HPS, conditions for teachers and the students in his or her classes have deteriorated while the accountability for administrators and teachers has increased (Fullan, 2001). Isolated, a majority of administrators and teachers are frustrated with accountability demands. Second-order change challenges the way teachers have been taught to think and they often lose the desire to persevere. Social and emotional processes complicate reform efforts for teachers. It will take time for teachers to unlearn their attitudes toward administrators, to develop a strong sense of professionalism, or to take responsibility for their own decisions (Argyris, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In a setting with disciplined thought, there would be a unified purpose to maximize the goal. However, political influences produce games between the players who perceive different sides to issues and prefer different responses. The teacher's union was a strong force in the HPS district. The power held by these players decided the outcome of some of the conflicts. In the end, it was the relative power the players possessed that resolved issues within the organization, demonstrating that preferences and intentions drove many of the decisions at the district level. As a Level 5 leader, I had to navigate the external and internal political landscapes in order to implement second-order change successfully.

Realistically, HHS9's Hedgehog Concept was evolving, as we continued to build our cadre of disciplined people. We were in the infancy stage of this second-order change process.

I reviewed interactions with staff, minutes from Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) meetings, and experiences that were documented in a reflective journal to look at the staffs' collaborative efforts and provide evidence of implementing the principles of disciplined thought in Stage II of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*.

### **Cycle III: Stage III: Disciplined Action**

**Purpose .** The purpose of cycle III was to answer research question three: *What applied strategies introduced in Collins' Good to Great Framework can sustain change at HHS9?* Using participatory action research (PAR), defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000), I explored parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while applying the principles of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage III *Good to Great Change Framework: Disciplined Action*. I showed evidence that I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage III *Good to Great Change Framework: Disciplined Action*. Disciplined action dynamics impart the supposition of a culture of discipline (Collins, 2001, 2005). Stage III was less tangible than *Good to Great Change Framework* stages I and II. As discussed in the Cycle II, the culture was established by the organization, and the organization is made up of the people who serve within it (Schein, 2004). Therefore, the retention and hiring of disciplined staff members had a major impact on the established culture in the organization. Disciplined people understand the Hedgehog Concept and work towards the desired goal (Collins, 2001, 2005). Disciplined people have a disciplined thought that leads to a disciplined action. In the school system we are bound by tenure laws and other state codes and statutes and may not be able to eject staff members from our team as readily as the businesses in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* companies (Collins, 2001, 2005). Therefore, it is incumbent upon principals to offer

professional development activities and opportunities for staff members to access professional development in an effort to address the concerns of the uncommitted, unmotivated, and inexperienced staff members. Providing and modeling professional development activities, in some cases, can improve the skill level of a staff member and motivate others to a higher standard (Loucks-Horsely, 1996). The leader of the organization sets the standard for the culture of discipline without instilling fear in order to achieve a goal (Collins, 2001, 2005). A flexible leader will have a better opportunity of reaching the desired goal of greatness.

Secondly, the purpose of cycle III was to provide evidence that I implemented strategies to push the flywheel into motion. The flywheel is a heavy piece of equipment that jolts all other pieces of the equipment into motion once it gains momentum (Collins, 2001, 2005). I wanted HHS9's flywheel to affect everything it was connected. Therefore, HHS9 could never stop pushing. Everyone wants to be part of a winning team (Blanchard & Bowles, 2001; Collins, 2001, 2005). Once we gained momentum, we would become a magnet, drawing positive energy and more momentum. The result would be an upward climb to greatness (Blanchard & Bowles, 2001; Collins, 2001, 2005).

**Data Collection.** Autoethnographic qualitative data collection methods were used in cycle III. Data collection consisted of information from teachers' formative assessments as described in cycle I (see Appendix B), teachers' summative assessments (see Appendix C), daily administrative walkthroughs, professional improvement plans (PIPSs), interactions with staff, feedback from professional development opportunities and activities recorded and documented in a reflective journal in an reflective journal. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and

file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. Data related to my Level 5 leadership were coded 1A and data related to the staff were coded 1B, representing stage I part A and stage I part B respectively and used in my espoused vs. theory-in-use data collection reported in cycle V.

**Action.** I reviewed the agendas, the professional development activities and created explicative narratives from the experiences to document events that showed evidence that I implemented Stage III: Disciplined Action in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*. I implemented professional development activities that were directed at problem areas identified by teaching staff and administrative staff in order to improve instruction at HHS9. Research indicates that improvement in instruction will ultimately improve academic performance (Danielson, 1996; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Schomker, 1996). As discussed in cycle I, formative assessments (see Appendix B) by an administrator, captured a specific lesson on a given day and were included in domains one through three of the teacher observation instrument. The areas captured were: 1) planning and preparation, 2) classroom environment, and 3) instruction. Professional Responsibilities, assessed in domain four, was ongoing and may or may not have been included in the formative assessments. Summative assessments (see Appendix C) were cumulative and resulted in an annual evaluation of observed instructional practices and professional practices evidenced by all aspects of a

teacher's performance, and included formal and informal classroom visits or walkthroughs. Both administrators and teachers were eligible to provide evidence that supported or disputed effective teacher practices. Evidence included benchmarks established through professional improvement plans, instructional improvement plans, and previous formative and summative assessments. This was a systematic approach to assessing tenured and non-tenured teachers' growth and development. Summative assessments provided us with another opportunity to, (a) assess which teachers were effective in increasing academic performance, (b) discuss future professional development plans, (c) develop relevant action plans, and (d) determine which staff members would be recommended for continued employment.

I looked for evidence that staff members were committed to implementing the newly introduced professional development activities into his or her classroom. This evidentiary piece determined whether there was an overall culture of discipline, gaining flywheel momentum. I also continued to discuss strategies with the administrative team on how to monitor and provide support for individuals who did not show evidence of infusing the professional development strategies offered and did not take responsibility for his or her professional development. These actions ultimately resulted in behaviors that had a negative impact on the school culture. I created explicative narratives from entries in my reflective journal to document evidence of the culture of discipline and the flywheel momentum building through professional development opportunities.

#### **Cycle IV: Stage IV: Building Greatness to Last—Sustainability**

**Purpose.** The purpose of cycle IV was to mark HHS9 progress after applying the strategies introduced in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* Framework using Jim Collins' Diagnostic Tool: *Where are you on your journey from Good to Great?* This diagnostic tool

employs the strategies of participatory action research (PAR), defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). I explored parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while marking HHS9 progress applying the principles of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) Stages I through IV *Good to Great Change Framework*: I showed evidence of any impact that the application of the principles of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework* had on HHS9. I used the results of the *Good to Great* Diagnostic Tool to assess the impact.

**Data Collection.** I used qualitative data collection strategies for cycle IV. I used a diagnostic tool, developed by Jim Collins (2006), "*Where are You on Your Journey from Good to Great ?*," to reflect on the instructional practices that were evident at HHS9 after I applied the *Good to Great* principles and employing participatory action research (PAR). PAR was defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles (Collins, 2006; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). The assessment tool was a ninety-eight question survey using a Likert scale selection. The ratings ranged from A to F, where A = we exemplify this trait exceptionally well—there is little room for improvement to F = we operate almost entirely contrary to this I used this as an assessment tool to measure my perception of the impact the implementation of the principles in *Good to Great* had on HHS9 (Collins, 2006). I used summative assessments (see Appendix C) to view staff data, minutes from weekly administrative meetings to derive a consensus of HHS9 status, and interactions with staff that was documented in a reflective journal to reflect on my interpretations, and reactions to data collected. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these

artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. I triangulated the data by reviewing my notes I documented in my reflective journal by personal interactions with staff and from reviewing my notes I documented in my reflective journal by an outside consultant, Mr. Short.

**Action.** I performed a self-evaluation of my organization's progress as I reflected on each stage of the Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* using participatory action research (PAR). Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) defined PAR as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles. I used Collins' (2006) assessment to reflect on and to rate the how I perceived HHS9 responded to the *Good to Great* principles I applied during a second-order change initiative. I used this assessment tool to determine if there were any measurable results evident in HHS9. To reflect on the *Good to Great Frameworks*, as directed, I read and manually answered each item on the survey (Collins, 2006). Next, I averaged the letter grade for each section in the assessment. Each section reflected the components described as *Good to Great* input variables. The input variables represented each stage in the *Good to Great Framework*. I averaged my response data and transferred the resultant scores to the identified output variables: delivers superior performance, makes a distinctive impact, and achieves lasting endurance (Collins, 2006). My responses were used to determine how I perceived HHS9 rated after applying the principles



from *Good to Great* as a change initiative. I reviewed the results using reflective practice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Osterman & Kottcamp, 2004).

This last stage in the *Good to Great Framework* required a paradigm shift to what Collins (2001, 2005) defines as “(1) clock building—not time telling, and (2) preserving the core and stimulating progress (p.35).” These hypotheses question the reason for the success. Collins (2001, 2005) expressed that greatness should not be linked to one-time marketing strategies, in order to be sustained. Rather, a great organization will stand the test of time with the passing of the baton multiple times, never losing focus of their core values—their reason for being present in the first place (Collins, 2001, 2005). The impetus for educational leaders is to create schools that work best for all children, schools that promote academic improvement for all students (Evans, 1996).

#### **Cycle V: Espoused Leadership Theory vs. Theory in Use**

**Purpose.** The purpose of cycle V was to answer research question four: *How does my espoused theory parallel my leadership theory-in-use while applying Collins’ (2001, 2005) Good to Great Framework?* I used participatory action research (PAR) that Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles. Using PAR allowed me to explore parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use in each cycle while applying the principles of Jim Collins’ (2001, 2005) Stage II *Good to Great Change Frameworks: Disciplined People, Disciplined Thought, Disciplined Action, and Building Greatness to Last—Sustainability* (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Osterman & Kottcamp, 2004; Sagor, 1992). I discussed the emergent characteristics of my leadership from cycles I, II, III, and IV and determined if my espoused leadership theory paralleled my leadership theory-in-use, while applying the

principles in Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework*, as a strategy to improve classroom instruction to accelerate academic performance at HHS9. I provided evidence to support my findings by showing my results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Northouse, 2007).

**Data Collection.** I used autoethnographic qualitative data collection strategies for cycle V. I documented events, my reactions, frustrations, perceptions of my experiences from August 2006 through March 2008 in a reflective journal. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism.

I measured my leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) an assessment instrument developed by Bernard M. Bass (1985) and found in Northouse (2007). I chose this instrument because it:

- a) measured the characteristics of my espoused leadership theory which was based on the tenets of social justice, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and spiritual leadership,
- b) is the most widely used assessment for transformational and transactional leadership evaluation

c) provided me an opportunity to validate my leadership, and

d) allowed me to reflect on my leadership practices (Northouse, 2007).

Due to the limitations of IRB approval from HPS, I only performed a self-analysis of my leadership. I used Form 6S for data collection purposes because it was readily available (Northouse, 2007). The MLQ has undergone several revisions and version 5x is now the latest MLQ. I located a sample of version Leader Form 5x Short and used it to compare my results for validity. Both of the forms are copy written and duplication was unauthorized and could not be included as an appendix (Northouse, 2007).

MLQ form 6S was a survey of twenty-one questions with three items per scale, measuring seven leadership components and was considered a short form of the MLQ. Version 5x was a comprehensive survey of 45 items, which measured a full range of leadership models. Version 5x consisted of 36 leadership items with four items per scale, measuring nine leadership components. On MLQ, form 6S four components were attributed to transformational leadership, (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. Based on opposing opinions of charismatic behaviors attributed to transformational leaders, the MLQ was modified and on Version 5x, idealized influence was divided into two categories, idealized attributed and idealized behavior, creating five components related to transformational leadership for Version 5x.

MLQ form 6S identified two components attributed to transactional leadership: (a) contingent rewards and (b) management by exception (Northouse, 2007). The modified version 5x divided management by exception into two components: 1) active and 2) passive, creating another dimension of measurement for transactional leadership. The one non-transactional leadership component, laissez-faire, remained unchanged. The MLQ Version 5x

also included three outcome measures of leadership, 1) effectiveness, 2) extra effort, and 3) satisfaction. Each item had four, three, and two items per scale respectively. These measures were not available on form 6S. Effectiveness measured perceptions of how effectively the leader leads, extra effort measured whether followers were investing more effort, and satisfaction measured how satisfied the followers are with the leader (Northouse, 2007).

Both versions of the MLQ used a five-point Likert scale scoring measure from 0 to 4, with 0= not at all, 1= once in a while, 2=sometimes, 3=fairly often, and 4=frequently, if not always.

The MLQ has strong validity and reliability and has been proven a strong predictor of leadership performance across a broad range of organizations, levels, and cultures (Northouse, 2007).

**Action.** I performed a self-analysis of my leadership using an assessment instrument developed by Bass (1985), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Northouse, 2007) Form 6S and Version 5x. My leadership theory-in-use was evident throughout the narratives created from my experiences documented in my reflective journal. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. I used reflective practice to

compare emergent leadership characteristics to my espoused leadership theory (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Osterman & Kottcamp, 2004).

I used the MLQ form 6S assessment as: a) predictor of my theory-in-use leadership, b) to reflect on my leadership behavior and practice. To analyze my results I manually totaled the sum of the items on the scale and divided the number of answered items that made up the scale. Using reflective practice, I reviewed my results by comparing my espoused leadership theory to my leadership theory-in-use. I used graphs for ease of discussion.

### **Data Analysis and Validity**

Interactions with human data sources were kept confidential. Pseudonyms were used for the name of the school, name of the district, programs, and all human data sources described in journal entries. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. The records were kept private and I was the only one who had access to the original records. Qualitative research allows for data collection and data analysis to occur simultaneously (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). As I collected data from, meetings, memos, and teacher assessments, I placed them in personal binders. Reflective practice was used to review my personal and professional characteristics, perceptions on ways

of leading, and my approach to implementing a change initiative to improve academic performance (Glesne, 2006). I re-read materials and formulated analytic conclusion statements of the autoethnographic data experiences. Data sources were sorted and categorized by identified principles in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*. This helped me to sort relevant material for each action research cycle. Vignettes were used throughout the study to bring the reader into the research site through the lens of participant-researcher. Reflections were embedded within these vignettes. The data was layered and nested to provide a fluid weaving of my story.

There were no clear criteria for judging validity in this form of self-narrative (Creswell, 2003). To ensure proper validity, I provided a clear and detailed description of how I collected data, constructed the representation of the data and extended triangulation beyond multiple sources of data. The varied data included acceptable items such as a reflective journal, memos, meeting agendas, and other artifacts (Creswell, 2003). Common strands were analyzed through peer debriefing. This process aided in triangulation of the data (Glesne, 2006).

## Chapter 4

### Cycle I: Disciplined People

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses how I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage I *Good to Great Framework: Disciplined People*. I used participatory action research (PAR) which Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) define as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles. I explored parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while applying the principle of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage I *Good to Great Change Framework: Disciplined People*. Disciplined people include a Level 5 leader, and committed, motivated members of an organization who are dedicated to a common goal. I reviewed and compared Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) criteria for a Level 5 leader to show evidence of my Level 5 leadership and employed (PAR). This afforded me an opportunity to reflect on my leadership and the rationale for my decisions. Further, (PAR) skills allowed me to reflect on what changes I could implement (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000).

The second component of Disciplined People was, First who...Then what (Collins, 2001, 2005). Collins (2001, 2005) concludes, that beginning with the right people allows a company to decrease inhibitors to achieving greatness, adapt to changes, and alleviate future concerns over how to motivate and manage staff (Collins, 2001, 2005). Evidence of my Level 5 leadership and the application of the, First who...Then what, precepts in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* answered the following research question:

*How does my leadership influence the academic environment at Henderson High School Ninth Grade Academy?*

## **Data Collection**

I used qualitative data collection strategies for cycle I. Data collection included teacher formative observation evaluation instruments *HPS Achieving Excellence in Teaching* (see appendix B), memos generated by implementing HPS progressive discipline plan, minutes generated from HHS9 weekly building administrators meetings, and personal interactions with staff. I documented my actions and reactions to these documents in a reflective journal. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. Data related to my Level 5 leadership were coded 1A and data related to the staff were coded 1B, representing stage I part A and stage I part B respectively. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. I used autoethnographic qualitative data collection strategies to show evidence of my Level 5 leadership characteristics by documenting my reactions to experiences in a reflective journal (Glesne, 2006; Osterman & Kottcamp, 2004).

These narratives evidenced how I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage I *Good to Great Framework: Disciplined People*. Disciplined people, begin with a Level 5 leader (Collins, 2001, 2005). Level 5 leaders lay the foundation for building a good to great company. They are credited with being the catalyst for change in their organizations and exhibit Level 5 leadership



qualities that embody the characteristics of all levels of leadership which include, being a highly capable individual, a contributing team member, a competent manager, an effective leader, and an humble, determined Level 5 executive (Collins, 2001, 2005).

### **Action**

I reviewed formative observation evaluation instruments *HPS Achieving Excellence in Teaching* (see Appendix B), memos generated through implementation of the district progressive discipline plan, minutes generated from weekly building administrators meetings, and personal interactions with staff that was documented in a reflective journal. I coded and sorted the events using stage I: Disciplined People outlined in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* as a guide. Data related to my Level 5 leadership were coded 1A and data related to the staff I coded 1B, representing stage I part A and stage I part B respectively. I reviewed and compared Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) criteria for a Level 5 leader and created explicative narratives from the data collected to document the events and to show evidence of how I applied Stage I: Disciplined People in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* as a second-order change initiative at HHS9. Explicative autoethnographic narratives were developed from teacher evidence files, the teacher formative observation evaluations, memos generated by implementing HPS progressive discipline plan, minutes generated from HHS9 weekly building administrators meetings, and personal interactions with staff. The narratives showed evidence of the selection process, instruments used to determine who would be on the bus, the role that individual would assume, and my commitment to building an organization with disciplined people. Disciplined people, the first stage in the *Good to Great Framework*, begins with what Collins (2001, 2005) describes as a Level 5 leader. Level 5 leaders are

credited with being the catalyst for change and exhibit Level 5 leadership qualities that embody the characteristics of all levels of leadership.

### **The First Meeting**

According to Collins (2001, 2005), Level 1 leaders are highly capable individuals who offer productive contributions to the organization through their talent, knowledge, skills and, good work habits. Evidence of my Level 1 leadership characteristics was immediately recognizable. I knew the staff were acquainted with each other from the main campus and that they were curious about me. I began our first meeting by sharing my professional experiences with the staff. I shared my years of experience in education. I had been in education for almost seventeen years and with the district for one month. I taught high school, alternative education, special education, adult education, and summer school in New York for 10 years. I taught accounting, computer applications, global studies, and American History because I held several certifications. I also shared my extra-curricular experiences as an advisor for the Future Business Leaders of America, the Certified Public Accountants Club, Class Advisor for freshmen through senior classes on two occasions, allowing me to organize proms, talent shows, BBQs, pep rallies, homecomings, walk-a-thons, selling cookies, candy, and hot dogs at basketball and football games, etc.

As I surveyed the room, I noted the staff members were still looking at me circumspectly. I continued to share my experiences as an educator informing them that I had served on several committees and I was a building representative for the teachers and administrators union. I assured them that I was intimately aware of high school culture because I shared the high school cultural experience and taught social Studies, Special Education, and Business Education, making me keenly aware of the different cultures that exist in each

department. I continued sharing my administrative experiences. I told them that I was a high school assistant principal in New York and New Jersey, an elementary school assistant principal in New York and an elementary school principal in New York and New Jersey. Staff members stood up and shared their information in succession. I took mental notes on the information they shared and tried to match the faces with the names I had seen on schedules and rosters over the past few weeks. Some of the comments included how surprised they were to see such a clean and well cared for facility. I asked the custodial staff to come inside and the staff gave them a standing ovation for all their work. Ms. Stone looked at me and we exchanged knowing looks.

Although the assignment to open a newly formed organization at HHS9 was challenging, I organized a multitude of items before school opened without ancillary support. I possessed the skill and knowledge to accomplish the required tasks. I was a born organizer and I appreciated my prior experience as a principal. The following narrative evidences my Level 1 leadership characteristics:

September 5, 2006...It was 7 a.m. and as I walked in the building, I was grateful for the opportunity to have rested all day yesterday. The floors were shining like glass. I could almost see my face as I walked through the hallways to check for anything missing or out of place. I placed an easel in the front entrance that read "Welcome to HHS9." Everything appeared ready to receive the staff. The hard work and dedication of everyone really paid off. I went to my office. Faithful Ms. Moses and Ms. Karon were there. I brought in coffee and Dunkin' Doughnuts and Ms. Moses took them downstairs. The cafeteria staff set up a serving station for the entire staff.

Ms. Karon offered to distribute the binders entitled "Teachers' Opening Day Package" and room keys if they were available. The binder contained basic information about the building, district goals, policies and procedures, curriculum and instruction, student management, state and district assessment data, and other relevant materials. Welcome letters with instructions for the day were mailed to everyone who had an address on file and an additional copy was inserted in the pocket of the binder. I saw the staff milling around greeting familiar and unfamiliar colleagues. Everyone appeared anxious and excited. I, too, was nervous because I hate public speaking. A sign-in sheet was sent around for everyone's signature as I called the meeting to order. After our

initial introductions, I continued by drawing their attention to the agenda and the materials that were distributed. I gave a brief overview of the agenda and an idea of what they could expect to happen during the day and throughout the year. I concluded my introduction by sharing an acrostic I wrote during a summer educational leadership program several years ago entitled “Teachers Who Care About Students” (see Appendix A) during a summer educational leadership program. An ageless piece, it expresses my expectations for teachers. I share it with my staff wherever I go (D. L. personal communication, Journal entry, September 5, 2006).

Level 5 leaders exhibit characteristics of Level 2 leaders (Collins, 2001, 2005). Level 2 leaders are contributing team members of the organization and contribute individual capabilities to the achievement of group activities while working effectively with groups’ in-group settings. As a level 2 leader, I was aware of group dynamics and the power of working effectively in a group. At HHS9, numerous impossible tasks existed that would require a contribution from the whole group. I was new to the district and had not participated in the planning process of the new structural design for HHS9. I was sifting through mounds of material from former principals and I did not want to discard anything that would provide an audit trail or guidance to the bureaucratic and political landscape of the district. Reviewing the documents gave me insight into due dates, content and structure of report documents, and forms, as well as insight into school climate, culture, and history. I relied on a number of individuals for information and support. Sometimes the information was inaccurate. The district movers transported all of the furniture, books, and supplies to the new middle school site and we were receiving replacement items. Orchestrating the move from one site to the other and then from another site to this one was confusing. To add to the confusion, the staff lists seemed to change every day. Staff changes reflected: 1) staff members who had accepted new positions within and outside of the district, 2) teachers involved in special programs or extra-curricular activities that elected to remain with the main campus and, 3) vacancies that

listed substitutes as full-time teachers. The district schedule allotted time for me to be in the building for most of the first week. However, for the ensuing few weeks I had meetings and training sessions spanning the entire day. The building was in total disarray with desks, chairs, and boxes stacked in the hallway, waiting for shipping, and deliveries of new supplies waiting to be inventoried. The custodial staff plowed through the summer cleaning efforts while I kept reminding myself of the September 5, 2006 deadline. The following narrative, *Help is on the Way* evidences my Level 2 leadership characteristics.

### **Help is on the Way.**

August 7, 2006...began my first official week at HHS9. I was standing at the counter trying to decide where to begin. I looked up as Ms. Moses walked into the office. She looked at me as if reading my mind and asked, "Do you need any help?" Breathing a sigh of relief, I said, "yes." She smiled and said, "Let's go to lunch. We can take care of this when we get back." Reluctantly, I went to lunch but my mind was still in the office conceptualizing a plan to organize and strategize the multitude of managerial tasks that loomed before me. My mind started racing with so many thoughts. In the midst of district meetings, navigating the procedures in a new district, identifying the bureaucracies and hierarchy, and having the building ready to receive staff, parents, and students in a little more than a month without secretarial support, without knowing anyone, their strengths or weaknesses, I could not afford to go out to lunch today or ever. I did not want to make a bad impression with this stranger who had offered to assist me. After all, I did not know how much she could help unless I let her. At that moment I could have used all the help I could get and I was hungry.

Returning to the daunting task of organizing the office, Ms. Moses asked where I wanted to begin, again my head started to spin. I called out a list of things I needed to do, beginning with identifying what remained at this site and what we would send to the new site. Ms. Moses said, "Hold on a minute." Dialing her cell phone, she went into the hallway and made several calls. Ms. Moses returned to the office area and exclaimed, "I have some help coming, don't worry about a thing." Ms. Moses took over and began to go through everything in the drawers, under the counter, in the file cabinets in the main office, and my office, boxing and organizing materials. About fifteen minutes later, the doorbell rang and several women entered looking for Ms. Moses. Ms. Moses greeted the women and introduced me as the new principal. She introduced the women as "our helpers" and stated, "Whatever you need, these ladies are here to help you." The women proved to be extremely helpful. It was 6 p.m. when I looked around and saw that the whole office was transformed into an organized environment. Boxes were lined in the hallway ready for shipping, garbage bags were

filled with discarded items, the counter top was clear, and when I opened the drawers, all the supplies inside were organized.

I was speechless. I enthusiastically thanked Ms. Moses and “our helpers” for the miracle they performed in such a short time. They were so humble, acting as if it was all quite effortless. They added, “You’re welcome, and we’ll be back tomorrow to see if you need anything.” The task that would have taken me days to complete was now finished. I hugged each of them goodbye as I thought, “Thank you Jesus,” for sending me these angels of mercy to lift a heavy burden. Ms. Moses and one of “our helpers” returned faithfully until school opened to assist in every capacity, including moving furniture, labeling mailboxes, making copies, and answering the phone. This was truly a Godsend (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, August 4, 2006).

Level 3 leaders are competent managers and are able to organize people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives. These skills are also evident in Level 5 leaders (Collins, 2001, 2005). It was apparent that the staff that previously occupied the building, had left with haste or hesitation. I was anxious to get started and relieved I surveyed the building before my contractual start date and from the looks of things, time was going to be a precious commodity between today and the first day of school. Without the help of Ms. Moses and “our helpers,” I would not have been able to accomplish cleaning up the main office in such a short time period. My ability to organize the group and focus them on specific tasks exhibited characteristics of a Level 3 leader, a competent manager. I am a born organizer and the following autoethnographic narratives, *Main Campus Visit* and *Freshmen Orientation* evidences my Level 3 leadership characteristics.

### **Main Campus Visit.**

I decided to meet with the principal at the HHS main campus along with her administrative team. The former vice principal for the school with-in-a school model Ninth Grade Academy, was the vice principal for this high school’s summer school program and was scheduled to be the vice principal for the new structural design. Another vice principal was scheduled to be shared with HHS9 for one quarter of his contractual time to manage the student information system and master scheduling responsibilities. Computer programming linked access to data files for the two campuses. The scheduling vice principal played a significant role in maintaining staff and student schedules. The three of us met to discuss organizational issues such as the

layout of the building and the design of the schedule. Twenty-nine interdisciplinary teams were constructed for an anticipated 525 students. We designed a bell schedule to accommodate the 80-minute block schedule. A 17-minute block was set aside for homeroom or advisory groups. The administrative team from the main campus gave me a brief background on each staff member transferred from the main campus to the HHS9. The meeting was informative and took my mind off the major clean-up campaign that loomed before me (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, August 11, 2006).

The next few weeks involved networking, meeting, greeting of other administrators, and training for new and current administrators. All of the sessions were valuable and allowed me to gain a better understanding of the organizational structure of the district. I made sure that I took copious notes. This made my job easier when I was ready to use the information provided or skill gained. During session breaks, my thoughts trailed back to the organizational and managerial concerns in the building. I was cognizant of the trust the superintendent had invested in me to facilitate the successful opening of this new program. I was determined that I would not let him or the district down. I spent endless hours in the building, staying most nights until 2 a.m. I took the 45-minute drive home at the end of each day, slept for a few hours only to wake up at 6 a.m. to start another day. This cycle continued for the ensuing weeks before school opened. I knew I could not keep up that pace forever. However, I felt like I had no choice. I had a deadline to meet and excuses were not acceptable. At the conclusion of daily meetings and training sessions, I returned to the building to check on the summer cleaning status, facilitate the move, prepare materials for the first faculty meeting, review student schedules, review student data, arrange interviews to fill vacancies, and the multitude of other items that needed completion before the doors officially opened.

The Freshmen Orientation Program would set the tone for the students and their parents. This first encounter would leave a lasting impression. I wanted the parents, students,

and staff to be impressed with the opening of HHS9. Although I could organize the event on my own, I knew how important it was to include everyone in the process. I was assigned a department chairperson and a vice principal and I needed to assess each administrator's skill level.

In order to determine the vice principal's skill level and commitment, I assigned him to organize and execute the Freshman Orientation Program. The outcome would help me to determine if he was a disciplined person and his level of organizational skills. He told me that he had coordinated the Freshmen Orientation Program last year and had all the material. Each week I checked in with him, asking, "How is the Freshmen Orientation Program coming?" Each time he responded, "Fine." I did not want to micromanage my vice principal. I wanted to trust the process. However, I grew increasingly concerned when I did not see any evidence of planning or preparation for the Freshman Orientation Program. I made a mental note to prepare myself for the worst-case scenario. The following narrative continues the evidence of my Level 3 leadership.

### **Organization of Freshmen Orientation.**

Week beginning August 21, 2006...The week before Freshman Orientation, I emailed the vice principal to request his presence at a meeting to discuss the status. He met with me and we reviewed the agenda, making minor adjustments. After I told him I was pleased with the agenda, I inquired about the handbook that we originally discussed and he printed an electronic copy updated from last year. I felt better knowing that the materials were prepared and asked about the logistics for that day. He appeared confused, so I asked about specific topics that I felt should be addressed prior to the students' arrival. The items I wanted addressed included:

- 1) Distribution of registration and orientation materials, e.g., lunch applications and emergency forms,
- 2) Where students would gather upon arrival, directional signage for parents and students, where we were going to take ID photos,
- 3) Identification of presenters for each topic during the information session and a timeline for each agenda item,
- 4) Security concerns and their role for the day,



5) Notification of the event and when letters would be mailed to parents and students.

He appeared agitated and said he was not able to stay late to discuss the logistics. I interpreted this as an act of avoidance because he had not anticipated the logistical issues. Perhaps I could have been more specific about my expectations when I asked him to facilitate. However, I made the incorrect assumption that since he had experience organizing the event last year, I would not have to outline the details. I also did not want him to think that I did not trust him to handle the assignment. I like to begin a working relationship by believing that an individual has the position because the skill level has been demonstrated. I soon learned that I could not make assumptions about even the most basic details. I failed to factor into the equation the fact that not all leaders have the same level of expectation (D. L. Marable, personal communication, journal, August 24, 2006).

According to Collins (2001, 2005), Level 4 leaders are effective leaders with a commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision that stimulates higher performance and standards in the people of the organization. Level 5 leaders build an enduring organization with their will and humility. I was anxious to begin my assignment, so I visited the site prior to my contractual start date. I faced every task with commitment and dedication to the cause. The responsibilities of this assignment were no exception. I remained laser focused on the vision of opening the HHS9 and pursued it against all odds. The following autoethnographic narrative, *Getting Ready for Opening Day*, evidences my Level 4 and Level 5 leadership characteristics.

#### **Getting Ready for Opening Day: Level 4 and Level 5 Leadership.**

As I entered the hallway, I saw two men sitting on the floor with their backs against the wall, while a woman stood over them with her hand on her hip laughing. Furniture and cleaning supplies were all over; it was obvious that summer cleaning was in full swing. Not wanting to seem like a taskmaster on my first day, I jokingly said, "Are we on a break?" One of the males sitting on the floor responded, "As a matter of fact we are, and who might you be?" He looked at me from head to toe. I responded, "I am the new principal, Ms. Marable-Ship." There was a pause and the jovial chatter ceased while the two men stood up and introduced themselves by name; they are Mr. Jones and Mr. Ross. The woman introduced herself as Ms. Stone. I did not want to keep them from their work. I left, returning to the main entrance hallway where I first encountered the female security officer, Ms. Ramirez. She was still there and I asked

her where the main office was. She pointed to a glass door across from the security office that led to a room where all the lights were out. I opened the door and looked for a light switch.

When the lights came on, I sighed relief, stood at the door, and looked around, quickly taking inventory. The office appeared small for a main office; it contained two desks, a 15-foot countertop, two computer screens, a telephone, a two-drawer lateral file cabinet, a copy machine, a fax machine, and boxes seemingly everywhere, on the counter, on the desks, and on the floor. There was nowhere to walk, so I stepped over the boxes and moved them to create a pathway. The pathway led to two doors that were on the opposite side of the main office. The first door was a storage/utility room. When I opened the other door, I saw it was the principal's office. The principal's office was void of paper and had a big desk pushed off to the side of the room. Nearby items included an attached bookshelf and computer, two four-drawer lateral file cabinets, two bookcases, two chairs in front of the desk, and a TV monitor on top of one of the file cabinets. There was also a door leading to a room with a large conference table, six chairs, a bookcase, more boxes, and an adjoining bathroom. Another door led back to the main office. I looked in the drawers under the countertop, on the bookcases, in the file cabinets in the outer office, and in the principal's office and realized that the light illuminated more than I could possibly imagine (D. L. Marable, personal communication, August 1, 2006).

The next day, and each day thereafter, I felt more and more resistance from staff members. It seemed that the closer we came to opening day, the more tension and resistance I felt. I attributed this aura to everyone's working furiously to prepare the building for opening day. I questioned myself, wondering if I was pushing the staff too hard. Regardless of my concern, one thing that was nonnegotiable was when the job had to be completed. I thought about dismissing the tension I was sensing, thinking if I asked the wrong person the wrong question, I could make matters worse. I quickly decided ignoring it would most assuredly make matters worse. I approached Ms. Stone, one of the custodial workers, asking her if everything was all right. She snapped, "This building is not going to be ready to open." I could not believe what my ears were hearing and I responded in a firm tone, "Excuse me?" Much to my dismay, she repeated her response, this time with much attitude. I felt my ears turn red, my heart racing, and my smile disappearing while visions of later nights raced through my mind as I retorted, "That is not an option." I called the facilities management office and expressed my concern about the comment that Ms. Stone had made to me. The facilities manager responded immediately and assured me that the building would be ready to open.

It was clear that everyone was feeling the pressure and in my determination to make happen what seemed on the surface impossible, I had not stopped to check the pulse of the people around me. Recognizing my shortcoming, I spoke with Ms. Stone and told her that I understood how she felt and why she had made the proclamation. I also told her that she was not alone in her frustration and exhaustion. I asked her to think about the message that we would send if a new school did not open on time because we were not able to make it happen. I told her that we had control of whether the school opened or not. I also let her know how far I was willing to go to go to ensure we opened as scheduled, including cleaning the building myself. Ms. Stone looked at

me with a hand on her hip, her head tilted to the side and said, “You know, you are something else. You’re right, let’s get this building ready to open.” She walked away and I smiled as I witnessed her work harder than I had seen her work. The other custodial workers began to work just as hard. Then I saw it, the special look on their faces. I had seen that look before. I have that same look when my back is against the wall. The look that says, “I won’t give up, no matter what.” It was the look of uncompromising resolve (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal, August 25, 2006).

Regardless of the obstacles in my way and the resistance I initially received from the custodial staff, I was able to stimulate higher performance and standards. I did not let my initial survey of the building dissuade me. Despite the chaotic confusion, I was determined to open the building as scheduled. I did not take my responsibility lightly. I did not need encouragement or external motivation. My internal drive was enough to keep me focused on the task until the mission was accomplished. My attitude towards my initial organizational scan demonstrates Level 4 leadership. I believe my motivation was my humility and strong will, evidence of Level 5 leadership characteristics. Collins’ (2001, 2005) Level 4 leaders exhibit a stimulation of higher performance while Level 5 leaders exhibit humility and strong will. I evidenced my humility when I recognized my shortcomings and openly acknowledged them. I exhibited my strong will when I was willing to perform the tasks necessary to accomplish the immediate goal of getting the building ready to open on time. I was not averse to rolling up my sleeves, assisting the custodial staff, and if necessary, I was willing to perform the tasks alone.

Gladwell (2002) reminds of us of the 80/20 principle when twenty individuals usually do eighty percent of the work. This allows us to realize you do not need the entire one hundred people to turn a situation around, just a few disciplined people who recognize the potential for success or usefulness of that situation. It is true in many schools; we rely on a few staff members to get things done. It seems that schools rely on the same persons to implement a new

initiative or serve on a committee. These individuals are the soul of an organization. However, schools and other organizations tend to “burn out” these individuals because others will not share the responsibility. I imagined an entire staff that would exhibit that same drive, dedication, and service. With an entire staff of disciplined people, improvement in instruction among staff, which leads to academic improvement among students, would be inevitable (Collins, 2001, 2005; Leithwood, et al., 2004).

The second stage of disciplined people was to get the right people on the bus. Collins (2001, 2005) insisted that this was our first and foremost objective. I inherited the staff for the Ninth Grade Academy and I did not know their strengths or weaknesses. As a seasoned administrator, I did know however, that if I had the opportunity to excess staff, I would choose to send the staff members who did not exhibit the principles outlined in Collins’ (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*. I would not send staff members who were disciplined in thought and action. I raised my concern prior to accepting the position, and I believe there was an earnest effort on behalf of senior administration, to balance the experience of the staff between the two sites. I was assured initially, that I would open my building without any classroom teacher vacancies. The administrative changes in teacher assignments during the month of August escalated my level of concern. I further believed that the principal at the main campus was compromising the efforts of the senior administrators in the district. The unexplained transfer and identification of staff created so much confusion that I could not identify a true number of vacancies until the end of September.

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to hire one staff member to fill our administrative position. When hiring new staff members, I made an earnest effort to follow Collins’ (2001, 2005) first practical discipline. Candidates that did not meet the criteria of an effective teacher

or administrator were not considered to move forward in the interview process. Regardless of how arduous the process the key was, to be discerning about the potential candidates, diligent in following up with demonstration lessons, contacting previous employers and requiring a writing sample. Our academic performance records indicated our school could not afford to settle for mediocre candidates. The wrong selection would have a negative impact on school culture and future student outcomes (Collins, 2001, 2005).

The administrative vacancy was a crucial spot to fill, because that individual would have input related to new hires. Individuals that were not selected for the position were upset about the recommendation the committee made and began spreading rumors that I had hired my friend. Actually, the committee decided to fill the position with the best candidate. I did not know Ms. Amber prior to the interviewing process. We were fortunate to fill this administrative vacancy early in the year. I was also not afraid to let the position remain vacant until the best candidate was found. The practice of waiting to fill the high number of classroom positions available placed a greater responsibility on everyone. However, I thought it was worth the wait. I believed that if we recommended the wrong person for any position, we would compromise the culture of discipline we were trying to build (Collins, 2001, 2005). The following narrative, *Right Person on the Bus* demonstrates my determination to find a disciplined person for the administrative position.

### **Right Person on the Bus.**

Week beginning August 21, 2006 continues...several individuals within the district saw the posting for an administrator in our building and came by to express interest. I took the opportunity to prescreen these individuals one on one in advance of their possibly being interviewed by a committee that consisted of building level and district level personnel. I wanted to make sure that the individual had the passion and desire to do what it would take to meet our needs. An administrator would have to be willing to work long hours, take criticism, and make tough decisions about staff

members. The successful candidate would have to be capable of prescreening individuals in their area and discerning if an individual would be suitable to fill any of our vacancies. That person would also have to be well versed in the field and be able to provide, or make available, necessary staff development to build capacity in our staff. I could not afford to give the responsibility to anyone who would take it lightly or who did not have the capacity to improve performance among staff and students (D.L. Marable, personal communication, August 22, 2007).

I received a phone call from an acquaintance informing me they knew someone perfect for the position. I took the information for Ms. Amber's number and contacted her to come into the office to discuss the position. Ms. Amber was available and came over right away. I was called away in the interim to retrieve some items that had been inadvertently moved to the new middle school site. When I returned Ms. Amber was waiting in the outer office. She seemed harried and carried a large binder. My office was still disheveled and I apologized for the appearance. Ms. Amber seemed preoccupied with the meeting, so I tried to ease her discomfort by offering her a bottle of water. She thanked me and appeared a little more relaxed when I gave her the water. I proceeded to ask Ms. Amber to tell me about herself. I did not have time to review any resumes, so this allowed me to hear about the individual and clarify items on the resume as I listened to other information that the person provided. Her responses were in line with the type of person I felt needed to fill this position. Ms. Amber's responses showed evidence of strong will and determination, self-motivation, high expectations, knowledge of curriculum and instruction, and great pedagogical skills. At the end of the meeting, I thanked Ms. Amber for coming and directed her attention to a shelf in my office filled with Language Arts information. I told her that all the items on the shelf would belong to her if she were the successful candidate for the position. She did not seem intimidated by the voluminous material. In fact, Ms. Amber smiled and graciously acknowledged my comment by saying, "OK, that's good; that means I will have something to work with." I had prescreened other candidates before Ms. Amber and later others after her, but none of them seemed to fit the characteristics of a disciplined person with disciplined thought. I convened a committee that included a supervisor for the Language Arts Department, to interview the three candidates. It was no surprise that she was the committee's number one choice. I contacted her current principal at the school she taught. I knew him from another district, and trusted his opinion. He gave her an excellent recommendation. I was satisfied with the selection and submitted the recommendation to the assistant superintendent for approval. With the filling of this position, I was building my team of disciplined people (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, August 26, 2007).

Disciplined people include a Level 5 leader and committed, motivated members of an organization who are dedicated to a common goal. At this point, the only information I had about my new staff was from the sharing session I had with the administrative team from the main campus. The information received from that meeting caused me to proceed with caution.

I was careful to listen for conversations that would identify the disciplined people. Positive conversations about classrooms, textbooks, and students were helpful. Many factors preclude individuals from taking action. These factors include fear of incompetence, intimidation, and foreign ways of operating. These are not the characteristics of disciplined people.

Very few disciplined people came by to organize his or her classroom.

Ms. Moses was an ever-present figure from the day we met and she never wavered. During the week of August 28, 2006, a teacher Ms. Karon came by and introduced herself. She offered to do whatever she could to assist. Ms. Karon became a member of the “late night crew.” The following narrative, *Ms. Karon* shows the spirit and drive exhibited by Ms. Moses and Ms. Karon.

#### **Ms. Moses and Ms. Karon.**

September 3, 2006...today is Sunday and tomorrow is Labor Day. There was one day before the first staff meeting and we had no idea how we were still standing. One more task had to be completed before I went home. I had to stay even if Ms. Moses and Ms. Karon collapsed. I had to complete the teachers' opening day package. Mr. Masters had provided me with an exemplary package when he visited earlier in the month to offer his assistance. I gathered all the necessary documents, using the package he had brought me as a guide. Ms. Moses made copies, Ms. Karon 3-hole punched the sets, and I inserted them into each binder along with items for the side pockets. The assembly line lasted until 6 a.m. We broke the record, an overnight stay without any sleep. This was the longest we had ever stayed in the building. Together we dragged our tired, weary bodies out the door, down the steps, and to our waiting cars refreshed only by the thought that we were done, at least for now, and Labor Day was going to be our day of rest (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, September 5, 2006).

The second component in Stage I: Disciplined People is, First who...Then what.

Beginning with the right people rather than a vision, allows the company to adapt to changes and alleviate future concerns over how to motivate and manage staff and achieve greatness Collins (2001, 2005). Evans (1996) argues that controlling staff hiring and professional

development in instructional practice is critical to creating a school with improved academic performance. Collins (2001, 2005) acknowledges the power structure of schools is complicated. Principals do not have the luxury of getting the wrong people off the bus while getting the right people on the bus expeditiously. State law, labor agreements, and board regulations that protect tenured staff make staff selection, ejection, and correction challenging.

Fullan (2001) credits effective teachers for a 30% variance of student progress, giving students a voice in their classrooms, and inviting students to share in what makes learning fun. In order for students to be successful, HHS9 needed effective teachers who would provide relevant, engaging, and worthwhile experiences. Administrators are required under the New Jersey Administrative Code (NJASC) 18A, to observe and evaluate staff. Observations and evaluations helped me to determine what was being taught in the classroom, the culture of the classroom environment, teacher acumen, and evidence of academic rigor. HPS District adopted the guidelines and practices in Charlotte Danielson's (1996) *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* and formulated a standard for all HPS teachers entitled *Achieving Excellence in Teaching*. The four areas identified these essential components to effective teaching:

- 1) Planning and Preparation—where the practitioner and observer discuss the lesson that is to be taught including objectives, engagement of students, instructional strategies, anticipated outcomes, ongoing assessment, resources, unique characteristics of the class and more. It is during the planning conference where the observer can ask guiding questions to cause the teacher to consider the planned learning experience, or suggest possible alternatives to enhance the lesson before it is delivered,



2) Classroom Environment—a prerequisite for effective student learning measures the interpersonal respect and rapport, behavior and procedural management, a commitment for learning and the organization of physical space,

3) Instruction—encompasses the heart of teaching, to enhance learning for all regardless of ability levels through instructional practices that translates knowledge into meaning, and last but certainly not least,

4) Professional Responsibilities—although not always observable in the classroom, have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning and are evident across the components in each domain.

Each of these areas were scored using a rubric for each are in observed teaching practices during formative and summative teacher observations and evaluations. The observable practice in each domain was rated from unsatisfactory to distinguished, with distinguished rated the highest. Formative assessments captured a moment in time. Formative assessments captured a specific lesson, announced or unannounced on a given day by an administrator, and are included in domains one through three. Domain Four: Professional Responsibilities, was ongoing and may or may not have been included in any formative assessment. Data gathering to assess teacher performance before, during, and after classroom instruction resulted in a cumulative process used to identify areas of strength and weakness in teacher practice, and established objective benchmarks to improve teachers' quality of instruction. During classroom visitations at HHS9, I looked for teachers who provided students with relevant, engaging, and worthwhile experiences. I also look for evidence that teachers promoted a positive classroom environment, demonstrated high expectations, and exuded a passion for improving student performance. The evidence of effective teaching was established

by the common themes in the *HPS Achieving Excellence in Teaching Model*: a) equity, b) cultural sensitivity, c) high expectations, d) developmental appropriateness, e) appropriate use of technology, and a classroom environment where f) students exhibit an assumption of responsibility. I also provided staff with a self-created acrostic indicating what teachers that care about students would be able to do as a fun approach to identifying characteristics of an effective teacher (Appendix A).

Building a team of disciplined people allowed me to focus on instructional leadership as opposed to managerial tasks (Collins, 2001, 2005; Fink & Resnick, 2001). This practice minimized future concerns of motivating and managing staff. The numerous vacancies at HHS9 provided a great opportunity to screen and select candidates who exhibited the qualities of disciplined people in stage I of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* and an effective teacher. I reviewed interactions with staff, documented experiences recorded in a reflective journal, and compared the criteria for disciplined people in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* to determine if we employed the strategies outlined in stage I for selecting candidates to fill vacancies.

Although I did not have the opportunity to hire staff initially, a number of the teachers transferred to the Ninth Grade Success Academy had fewer than three years of service in the district and were non-tenured. Collins (2001, 2005) suggested using the three-year probationary period as an extended interview; and that was precisely what I planned to do. It was a rare opportunity for a principal to have a large number of non-tenured staff and a high number of vacancies. A large number of inexperienced teachers and unfilled positions also worked against the school. I had to fill the 14 vacancies with substitute teachers. Unfortunately, substitutes usually did not have the content knowledge or sufficient classroom

management skills to provide a stable classroom environment. This posed a dilemma for me because I did not want to fall into the dangerous cycle of recommending staff to fill the vacancies when they may not be the best people for the positions. I encouraged my administrative team to continue to search for the right person to fill the vacancy in their department. I recommended they contact colleges, universities, and colleagues in other districts to identify potential candidates to fill positions. Classroom visitations were going to be a key factor in determining which individuals would stay on the bus and who needed to get off at the next stop.

An equally difficult decision was removing a member from the team. We had to observe and evaluate veteran teachers to determine whether they were effective teachers. Improved academic performance depended on us building the capacity of my inexperienced administrative team to be able to discern who should fill the vacant positions. Another suggestion made by Collins (2001, 2005), was to use the required years for attaining tenure as an extended interview, not automatic tenure, was an opportunity we could not afford to take lightly. We render a disservice to the individual and the school if we fail to observe, evaluate, model, inform, and mentor an individual to determine whether the individual should stay with the team or not (Collins, 2001, 2005). As leaders, I believe that it is our responsibility to exhaust every opportunity to provide instructional support to every individual, whether or not we have discerned he or she should be on the team. If the individual did not meet the standard after a saturation of support, or did not take ownership or responsibility for his or her own professional growth, the individual was ejected from the seat (Collins, 2001, 2005) This left room for the right individual later. We had a large number of vacancies in critical shortage areas, including math, science, and special education. However, I was cognizant to reiterate to

the HHS administrative team, that if we accepted the wrong person to fill a position for one of our shortage areas, we would lose a valuable opportunity to hire a great teacher (Collins, 2001, 2005). Support service positions such as teacher aides, secretarial, custodial, and cafeteria staff are sometimes eligible for promotional opportunities. I also believe staff selections in these areas are just as important because they contribute to the culture of the school (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Deal & Peterson, 2003; Schein, 2004). The first person a parent or visitor encounters when they enter a school can set the tone for their entire experience.

My first order of business was to direct the newly appointed administrative team to use the current observation and evaluation assessments to eradicate substandard teaching. Daily walkthroughs using reflective practice was a tool used by administrators to assist teachers with improving instruction (Osterman & Kottcamp, 2004; Sagor, 1992). This practice had a direct correlation to improving academic performance among students. The major foci at HHS during this period of change were to support teachers through modeling, motivation, and documentation of their progress. Our intention was to assist veteran teachers to self-correct or self-eject and provide a check and balance system for non-tenured staff (Collins, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The following narrative, *Classroom Visit* describes one experience during a daily walkthrough.

### **Classroom Visit.**

November 2006...I looked at the clock and it was 9:30 a.m. I wanted to stop by Mr. David's class. I knew he had been having trouble organizing his class. Each time I or another administrator walked by the room he would yell out, "Could you come in here for a minute. Mr. Jones (or another student), does not want to spit his gum out of his mouth. He keeps getting up to bother Ms. Flores (or another student)." I spoke to Ms. Amber, the department chairperson about the classroom management issues I saw in Mr. David's class. Ms. Amber, the newest administrator on our team was aware of my concern and indicated she was providing Mr. David with instructional support. She also showed me a copy of an improvement plan she had developed for Mr. David in

addition to working with after school, almost daily (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, November 23, 2006).

I continued to make a point of visiting Mr. David's room in order to assist Ms. Amber in identifying areas that needed addressing with Mr. David. He was one of the non-tenured staff transferred from the main campus. During my frequent visits to his room, I noted several misspelled words on the board, incoherent lessons, students, making inappropriate comments, and Mr. David's need for constant administrative or security intervention for behavior issues. I informed Ms. Amber that we would need to document Mr. David's actions and evidence of poor teaching. It was becoming more apparent everyday that Mr. David was not benefiting from the time Ms. Amber spent with him after school. Mr. David was a liability to the staff and the students. He was usurping entirely too much of Ms. Amber's time.

Collins (2005) suggested the use of the three-year probationary period as an extended interview. I followed that recommendation. Our newly hired teachers were given a three-year probationary period prior to tenure. I reviewed formative observation evaluations, memos generated using the progressive discipline plan, and personal interactions with staff documented in a reflective journal to look for evidence in classroom practices, areas needing improvement, areas of strength, and means of addressing areas of concern.

This was Mr. David's second year in the district. I reviewed his evidence file. The data revealed Mr. David exhibited weak skills from the onset. Ms. Amber shared with me the instructional strategies she outlined with him. She informed me he had gained the skill of writing his lesson plans, however, execution of the lesson was a major concern. The vice principal also shared his concern for the numerous discipline referrals that were generated from his classroom. Similarly, our head security guard approached me about the frequent calls for

security from Mr. David during the school day and the number of students who frequently left his classroom without a proper pass. I wanted to make sure we provided Mr. David with the proper support. When I received a phone call from our curriculum and instruction office regarding an outside consultant that had been assigned to our school under a grant, I made sure Mr. David was identified as one of the individuals who would receive special attention.

After our daily walkthroughs, the administrative team met with teachers about improving teacher practices, learning to better assess curriculum, and monitor instructional alignment on a day-to-day basis. In today's climate of high standards and accountability, it is important that instructional leaders are able to spend a considerable amount of time in the classrooms collecting data, coaching, and supporting quality classroom instruction (Fink & Resnick, 2001). Despite the saturation of professional development, mentoring, and support, Mr. David, he did not meet the standards of an effective teacher as identified on our formative assessment (see details in Appendix B). Students were not engaged and the learning environment did not promote an optimal learning experience. Mr. David was non-renewed for the ensuing school year.

Collins' (2001, 2005) second practical discipline stipulated that when I knew someone was not on the right bus, I should act. I reviewed staff observation and evaluation documents, instructional improvement plans, professional improvement plans, and correspondence guided by a district-sponsored workshop entitled, "Progressive Discipline and Facilitating Positive Performance and Conduct." The progressive discipline strategies from that workshop were used to document concerns regarding behavior or performance in this order: 1) oral warnings, 2) written warnings, 3) disciplinary actions, and 4) subsequent occurrences of documented behavior or performance. Oral warnings were used to notify the staff member he or she was

not meeting the standard behavior or performance level desired. This communication was internal and remained a matter of record. A letter confirming the conference was submitted to staff member's evidence file. Written warnings constituted a second warning and included the documentation from the initial warning. The written warning was submitted to the staff member's personnel file. Written performance improvement plans identified specific areas of concern and outlined recommendations for improvement of the exhibited behavior or performance.

Mr. David was not the only teacher whose contract was non-renewed for the following school year. Other staff members were identified as ineffective, including an administrator. There were some teachers I could count on to come to work late, call out sick, leave the building at unauthorized times, leave their classes unattended, submit lesson plans late, and omit objective from the board. Some staff members would not sign in upon reporting to work in an effort to disguise their tardiness to work. Some items were evident during our administrative walkthroughs. Due to state law, labor agreements, and board regulations that protect tenured staff, admittedly, principals do not often have the luxury of quickly getting the wrong people off the bus while getting the right people on the bus (Collins, 2001, 2005). We used the progressive discipline guide to document unacceptable behavior and push for the high standards exhibited by disciplined people exercising disciplined thought. Rationales for progressive discipline documentation included excessive absences, conduct unbecoming, insubordination, and incompetency. During the course of this study, there were five recommendations for non-renewals, and three requests for transfers. These individuals were not recommended for rehire. Disciplinary action for subsequent occurrences included prior documentation, and reprimands for ensuing behavior and performance. All documentation

became a part of the staff member's personnel file including suspensions, demotions, or discharges. I reviewed these documents to ensure implementation of stage I strategies in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*.

## **Conclusion**

Building a team of disciplined people allowed me to focus on instructional leadership as opposed to managerial tasks and minimized future concerns of motivating and managing staff (Collins, 2001, 2005; Fink & Resnick, 2001). Many of the staff members transferred from the main campus exhibited weaknesses in areas such as, teacher acumen and classroom management, which were prerequisites to academic success. There were 14 positions occupied by substitute teachers and the outward manifestation of these weaknesses had a major impact on the school environment. The numerous vacancies at HHS9 provided a great opportunity to screen and select candidates who exhibited the qualities of disciplined people in stage I of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* and an effective teacher. I reviewed interactions with staff, documented experiences recorded in a reflective journal, and compared the criteria for disciplined people in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*. I used this to determine if we employed the strategies outlined in stage I for selecting candidates to fill vacancies.

I believe I exhibited all the characteristics of a Level 5 leader: 1) highly capable, 2) contributing team member, 3) competent manager, 4) effective leader, 5) exhibiting personal humility and professional will throughout the documented experiences. I did not look for accolades; in fact, it was very difficult for me to write about myself because I did not think that what I did or who I am should have been the focal point. I believed that the most important goal was to get the job done.



## Chapter 5

### Cycle II: Disciplined Thought

#### Baseline for Discussion

This chapter discusses how I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage II *Good to Great Framework: Disciplined Thought*. Disciplined thought is exhibited when: 1) a leader can acknowledge the realities attributed to his or her organization without losing focus of the overarching goal, i.e., educational excellence for all students and 2) when the members of an organization can understand the purpose of their existence. The second component of Collins' (2001, 2005) stage II *Good to Great Framework: Disciplined Thought*, was evident in the answers to the following questions: 1) what are you passionate about?, 2) what drives your economic or resource engine?, and 3) what can you be the best at?

This chapter includes explicative autoethnographic narratives developed from a pilot study conducted in the spring of 2007, teacher evidence files, teacher formative observation evaluation instruments *HPS Achieving Excellence in Teaching*, memos generated by implementing HPS progressive discipline plan, minutes generated from HHS9 weekly building administrators meetings, and personal interactions with staff. These narratives support how I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage II *Great to Great Framework: Disciplined Thought* and answered the following research question:

*How does the application of Collins' Good to Great Framework impact the organizational culture of HHS9?*

Using participatory action research (PAR), I explored parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while applying the principle of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage II *Good to Great Change Framework: Disciplined Thought* (Kemmis &

McTaggart, 2000). Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) define PAR as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles. Disciplined thought has two components; however, it is three-fold. First, Collins asserts that the first order of business in evaluating the reality of a company is to confront the brutal facts. Collins (2001, 2005) found that companies that moved from good to great began by evaluating the reality of their company. Secondly, Collins (2001, 2005) stresses understanding the purpose of the organization's existence, a theorem Collins (2001, 2005) refers to as the Hedgehog Concept.

Consequently, Schein (2004) reverberates that in order to understand an organization, you must understand the culture of the organization. We cannot look at an organization without understanding the existing culture. Many organizations, specifically schools operate within a similar structure. The variable is the culture currently operating within the organization. Schein (2004) describes culture as norms, values, behavior patterns, rituals, traditions accumulated from shared learning, and shared history that must be learned. Confronting the brutal facts and establishing a Hedgehog Concept can lend itself to establish or change an organization culture (Collins, 2001, 2005; Schein, 2004).

### **Data Collection**

I used autoethnographic, qualitative, and quantitative data collection strategies for cycle II (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). Collins' (2001, 2005) recommended using four practices to evaluate an organization. The initial practice of leading with questions, not answers, led to the next three practices in successive order: engaging in dialogue and debate, conducting autopsies without blame, and building red flag mechanisms that turned information into data that could not be ignored (Collins, 2001, 2005).. Qualitative data related to confronting the brutal facts were coded 2A data related to the Hedgehog Concept were coded 2B and data related to school

culture 2C (Collins, 2001, 2005). I used qualitative data collection strategies and collected interactions with staff, formative assessments, and minutes from meetings, and documented experiences in a reflective journal (Glesne, 2006). My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Osterman & Kottcamp, 2004). I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism.

I also used quantitative data collection methods to evaluate HHS9 during a pilot study I conducted in the spring of 2007 for Leadership Applications Fieldwork Seminar (LAFS) (Glesne, 2006). I used the pilot study to examine selected outcome variables linked to academic performance within the context of HHS9. Specifically, I compared summative and cumulative student data on, 1) grade point averages, 2) state and local assessments, 3) attendance, and 4) out of school suspension data for two HHS ninth grade transition cohorts.

### **Action**

I analyzed and correlated the quantitative data using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 14.0)*. Descriptive statistics obtained from SPSS such as percentages, means and standard deviations were used to review data gathered, as dictated by the dependent and independent variables (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). The data were analyzed using a

variety of descriptive frequencies to formulate a descriptive inductive analysis to identify similarities and differences among independent variables between TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub>. This analysis allowed me to make better interpretations of the factors linked to academic performance and to determine what areas presented the greatest concerns and establish a baseline for student performance data by comparing state and local assessment data using SPSS14.0 to analyze frequencies and averages. Data gathered were displayed in the pilot study using graphs and tables. Those graphs and tables are not included in this study. I have included the findings from the LAFS pilot study as a baseline study to explore possible underlying causes for student academic performance. The findings were derived using inductive analysis to reflect on data linked to student achievement. The first transition cohort were the 2005-2006 ninth grade students attending the comprehensive high school SLC design, hereinafter referred to as transition cohort 1 (TC<sub>1</sub>). The second cohort were the 2006-2007 ninth grade students using a different SLC structural design, the single-site facility, hereinafter referred to as transition cohort 2 (TC<sub>2</sub>). I also used inductive analysis to explore gender and ethnic differences to determine if there were any trends in academic performance or other areas of possible interest among, within, and between the two cohorts. I created explicative narratives from the qualitative data collected to show evidence that I implemented Stage II: Disciplined Thought. I showed the LAFS 2007 pilot study data to my staff as a red flag mechanism to expose the brutal facts of the skill areas students (Collins, 2001, 2005). I also presented data each academic cycle to show the status of our students' academic progress. Confronting the brutal facts forced me to determine what was working in HHS9. I continued to focus on improving teacher effectiveness and instructional practices at HHS9 in order to effect change that would lead to accelerated student academic performance.

## **School Culture**

Understanding organizational culture is an essential factor in any reform initiative (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Schein, 2004). Before change can begin the culture, defined as norms, values, behavior patterns, rituals, traditions accumulated from shared learning and shared history must be learned. It was important for me to understand the political landscape in this new environment, the history of the organization, and the unspoken leaders, all aspects of the established culture (Schein, 2004). Organizations chose different management structures (Mintzberg, 1979). Bureaucratic models of decision-making, such as the model that exists in my school district, strive to optimize values through choices based on established rules and processes proven effective in the past. Organizational politics involve the acquisition, development, and use of power to obtain preferred outcomes in an environment of uncertainty or disagreement (Pfeiffer, 1981). Politics involves activities and behaviors through which power is developed and used (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Deal & Peterson, 2003; Pfeiffer, 1981). Disturbingly, politics have become personalized and abused by the use of power to protect self-interest. HPS District was not exempt from the political influences that encouraged this practice and neither was HHS.

The facts are, in urban districts such as HPS, conditions for teachers and the students in his or her classes have deteriorated while the accountability for administrators and teachers has increased (Fullan, 2001). Isolated, a majority of administrators and teachers are frustrated with accountability demands. Second-order change challenges the way teachers have been taught to think and they often lose the desire to persevere. Social and emotional processes complicate reform efforts for teachers. It will take time for teachers to unlearn their attitudes toward administrators, to develop a strong sense of professionalism, or to take responsibility for their

own decisions (Argyris, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In a setting with disciplined thought, there would be a unified purpose to maximize the goal. However, political influences produce games between the players who perceive different sides to issues and prefer different responses (Pfeiffer, 1981). The teacher's union was a strong force in the HPS district. The power held by these players decided the outcome of some of the conflicts. In the end, it was the relative power the players possessed that resolved issues within the organization, demonstrating that preferences and intentions drove many of the decisions at the district level.

Collins (2001, 2005) found that companies that moved from good to great began by evaluating the reality of their company. He indicated it was impossible to make good decisions without infusing the entire process with an honest confrontation of the brutal facts. There were a number of brutal facts to confront at HHS9 (Collins, 2001, 2005). The facts were:

- a) We were currently in year five of NCLB's (2001) Schools In Need of Improvement (SINI) status,
- b) Many of the staff members transferred from the main campus exhibited weaknesses in areas such as teacher acumen and classroom management,
- c) There were 14 positions occupied by substitute teachers, students academic skills were weak, and
- d) The outward manifestation of these facts had a major impact on the school learning environment.

HPS was a school district where bureaucracy and hierarchy are so ingrained, most rules were written (Mintzberg, 1979). I wanted to make sure everyone was aware of the policies and had some input where we could be flexible. We needed to establish the governing rules for staff and students. The identification of policies and procedures early would allow for

teachers who were conscientious to comply and advise staff of consequences for noncompliance. Disciplined thought can be exhibited through body language (Collins, 2001, 2005). I tried to take note of any evidence of concern among staff exhibited in their body language in the staff's reaction as we reviewed the information in the *Opening Day Binder*.

I used the *Opening Day Binder* to establish disciplined thought through policies and procedures (Collins, 2001, 2005). I knew that this was going to be a long session and since we were new to each other and needed to establish a degree of trust. I seized it as an opportunity to establish a collaborative working environment. I explained the development process of the binder. I shared that it was a template that I had received from another school and that it was considered a work in progress. I invited the staff to discuss prior practices and offer suggestions for improvement on what was presented with regard to professional practice, organization, policies and procedures and other protocols. I felt that their input was extremely important because I knew it would ease confusion for day-to-day practices and help me to understand their level of disciplined thought or rationale for prior practices. As we went through each document, staff members offered few suggestions. They seemed more concerned about the section related to the student code of conduct. The staff asked a series of clarifying questions about their role and the administrator's role. I remember thinking, "This is not going well. I can see the biggest hurdle is going to be, my job versus your job." I deferred many questions to the vice principal. He was the person responsible for receiving majority of the discipline issues and I wanted him to establish his authority. I was comfortable with The vice principal leading the discussion because we had discussed our philosophies during our planning sessions for our recent Freshmen Orientation Program and they were congruent when handling matters of student discipline matters.

The vice principal addressed the staff and informed them of the expectations concerning student discipline. He informed everyone that we must work together, and that there were interventions and disciplinary measures that the teacher could take before sending students out for administrative intervention. He offered remedies in line with the HPS District Student Discipline Policy such as a telephone call home to the parent, teacher detention, a request for a parent conference, or a one on one conference with the student. Further, he referred to the district policy, which was very specific about how discipline concerns would be addressed. The staff's body language told the story of their disciplined thought. They began to shift in their seats, stretch their arms, fold their arms, and turn their heads. Then I heard a buzzing sound as they began to whisper to colleagues nearby. I interceded in support of the vice principals' presentation and informed the staff the ramifications of them abdicating their authority and sending students out of the room for discipline. I expressed to the staff how this type of response sent the wrong message. I further shared that students would infer that the teacher was not in control. Moreover, I explained that this reaction would set a tone of disaster for the duration of the course. I wanted to assure the staff that the administrative team was here to support their actions, not to take the action for them. I made it clear that it was their responsibility to manage their classrooms, and that administrators cannot and would not manage their classrooms. Additionally, I explained that the best defense against classroom disruptions is good instruction. I informed the staff that from experience, I have realized that classroom disruptions are minimized if the students are engaged in stimulating, creative lessons that are relevant to their lives.

Staff members met this presentation with mixed reactions. A few staff members nodded in agreement, but it was obvious that there was no consensus on the matter. It became apparent



to me that this was going to be an area I needed to watch. I made a mental note to pay careful attention to classroom management during my daily classroom visits and to consider a staff workshop in classroom management. The time was growing short and I wrapped up our session so that staff members could go to lunch and begin to organize their rooms in order to be ready to receive students. I knew this discussion on student discipline was not over.

When I began my journey in this district, I had to assess the status of the organization. Interrogating various individuals, I engaged in the first of Collins' (2001, 2005) four recommended practices, leading with questions, not answers. I had to ask what the data said about academic performance. A review of the literature suggested that the use of data to drive instructional practices would assist in addressing areas linked to student achievement by causing teachers to question and challenge their instructional practices (Bernhardt, 1998). I conducted a quantitative pilot study in the spring of 2007 for my Leadership in Applications Field Seminar (LAFS) course. I have included this pilot study in cycle II. I used the analysis of the data collected during this pilot study to develop a baseline for discussion of academic performance and teacher effectiveness at HHS9. Data on student gathered from standardized tests, district-made tests, and other sources provided important input to the selection of school or district improvement goals and provided focus for staff development efforts. This process of data analysis and goal development typically determined the content of teachers' professional learning in the areas of instruction, curriculum, and assessment (Bernhardt, 1998; Guskey, 1986). Helpful data are usually drawn from other sources, including norm-referenced and reports of disciplinary actions, school vandalism costs, enrollment (Bernhardt, 1998). Data on individual tests can be analyzed to learn how much students advanced in one year. These data are typically disaggregated to reveal differences in learning among subgroups of students

(Bernhardt, 1998). The most common forms of disaggregation include gender, socioeconomic status, native language, The following data share the findings of the pilot study.

### **Summary of LAFS Pilot Study**

I sought to determine any differences or trends in the following variables linked to academic performance in HHS9 transitioning ninth grade students, 1) student attendance, 2) Grade Point Averages (GPA), 3) Out of School Suspensions, and 4) local district assessments during this pilot study. I relied on archival summative and cumulative data to review student performance before and after the district's initiative to implement a single site ninth grade academy. I utilized a quantitative method and employed a computerized program, SPSS Student Version 14.0 (SPSS) to emphasize inductive analysis of descriptive statistics, frequencies, variances, mean. I also used this program to present relationships between the dependent variables, which linked to academic performance and inductively compared the results. The measures linked to student achievement were dependent variables, (1) attendance (ATT), (2) out of school suspensions (OSS), (3) Grade Point Average (GPA), and (4) results from district assessment for ninth grade students (LDA9) in Language Arts Literacy (LAL) and Mathematics. As I reviewed data from Transition Cohort 1 (TC<sub>1</sub>) and Transition Cohort 2 (TC<sub>2</sub>), I made comparisons, and drew parallels to ascertain if there were differences or trends in the established dependent variables for TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub>. Any differences in the dependent variables prior to and after the implementation of the single-site facility were reported. I used the archival data to drive future staff development program implementation and to perform what Collins' (2001, 2005) refers to as an autopsy (Bernhardt, 1998; Guskey, 1986).

Participants in the pilot study consisted of a comparative group of 795 first-time ninth grade students between 13 and 16 years of age. Programs for Retained and Bilingual students

during the academic year 2006-2007 were held at the main campus. As a result, students who participated in these programs for both academic years were eliminated from the study for the sake of consistency. The size of each group entering the HHS9 was smaller than initially estimated due to a high student mobility rate, averaging 47% (NJDOE, Report Card, 2005; 2006). An enrollment criterion was established to account for students who received grades of N/A for insufficient data due to late enrollment or early discharge. Only students who were enrolled on the last day of the third academic cycle and entered the Academy no later than January 1st of the second academic cycle for both academic years were included in data collection. There were 487 TC<sub>1</sub> students enrolled in the start of the academic year 2005-2006, however, based on the enrollment criterion used, 364 students were included in the study. Similarly, TC<sub>2</sub> recorded an enrollment of 523 students at the start of the academic year 2006-2007 and data for 431 students were included.

A descriptive cross tab analysis was performed to determine similarity based on ethnic grouping. The results showed that the two groups, Black and Latino, represented similar ethnic backgrounds. The data further showed a high proportion of Latino students compared to other ethnic groups. Latinos represented 58% (N= 211) and 62% (N=266) of the student population, in TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub> respectively, while Blacks represented 40% (N=145) in TC<sub>1</sub> and 37% (N=159) in TC<sub>2</sub>. Whites and Asian Pacific Islanders comprised the remaining one to two percent. Due to the disproportionate number of Whites and Asian Pacific Islanders, I excluded these ethnic groups from further analysis. Review of the literature indicated that Black students achieved at higher rates than Latino students (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 1993; Umbach & Porter, 2002). There was an indirect relationship on race due to the poor education of some minority

students at the high school level (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 1993; Umbach & Porter, 2002).

A descriptive cross tab analysis was also performed to determine similarity based on gender. The results of the cross tab analysis indicated a comparative ratio of males and females between both cohorts. The data further depicted a high proportionate number of male students in comparison to female students. Males were the dominant gender in both cohorts. The male students comprised 56% (N=205) of the student population for TC<sub>1</sub> and an even higher rate of 60% (N=259), for TC<sub>2</sub>. Gender likely indirectly affected student achievement (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Generally, males and females have different learning styles. Male students tend to progress through a sequential thinking process while female students are more apt to progress through a staged thinking process (Perry, 1970; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986).

Descriptive analyses from results on the eighth grade assessments (EGA) were used to compare academic ability for TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub> in the areas of language arts literacy (LAL) and mathematics. The scores were used to determine if there were differences between the two groups academically before they entered the Ninth Grade Academy. The comparable pre-test data achievement measures were taken from the students' scores on the EGA before the students entered the Ninth Grade Academy. Students' EGA scores were collected and compared. A performance gap was calculated for TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub>.

The data showed the total number of students from each middle level feeder school in cohorts TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub> who scored partially proficient or proficient on the eighth grade language arts literacy (LAL) and math ESA scores. Math scores were lower on average than the LAL scores. The data indicated that the mean for TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub> in the areas of LAL and Math

showed the two groups were similar academically. Further analyses were performed to compare cohorts TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub> on the four dependent variables, (ATT), (GPA), (OSS), (LDA9 LAL and Math).

**Attendance Variable.** There is a direct correlation between a student's attendance patterns and school performance (Hertzog & Morgan, 1998, 1999; Letgers, 1999; Letgers & Kerr, 2001; Roby, 2004). High absentee rates increase the already high risk of dropping out for some minority students (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Roby, 2004). The academic year consisted of 180 days. The school year was divided into four academic cycles and two semesters. Each course was offered for 80 minutes in a block-scheduling format. Therefore, a student who missed one day of class in essence was missing two days; the equivalent of two 40-minute periods in a traditional school setting. Therefore, the consequences for missed assignments and classroom instruction were compounded when a student was absent from school. Consequently, attendance improvement plans are required by the district in order to minimize excessive absences. The data suggested that attendance rates were better for TC<sub>1</sub> than TC<sub>2</sub>. It was important to review other attendance patterns that may be operating.

Summative and cumulative attendance records for TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub> were reviewed to answer the following research question: *Was there a difference in student attendance?* Attendance for both cohorts was retrieved from SASI, the HPS student data management system. A query for individual students was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet to determine summative and cumulative data. The summative and cumulative data were analyzed using SPSS 14.0. The data revealed that some of the students had very high absentee rates. Analysis of the data indicated that during academic cycle 1, the mean number of days absent for comparison group TC<sub>1</sub> was 1.63. The treatment group TC<sub>2</sub>, had a mean number of days absent

of 4.13. TC<sub>2</sub> also had some students with high absentee rates of over 29 during academic cycles 2 and 3 (ATT2 and ATT3), the maximum number of days absent recorded for TC<sub>1</sub>, which skewed the data. An examination of the data using an analysis of frequencies showed 93% (N=336) of TC<sub>1</sub> students had five absences or fewer during academic cycle 1 and 72% (N=263) of TC<sub>2</sub> students had five absences or fewer for the same time period. A frequency analysis of academic cycle 2 attendance revealed little difference in the attendance rate for both cohorts. During academic cycle 2 (ATT2), TC<sub>1</sub> has a mean number of days absent of 5.13 while TC<sub>2</sub> had a mean of 5.26 days. Attendance for academic cycle 3 (ATT3) revealed a similar pattern in attendance in academic cycle 1(ATT1). There were a mean number of days in academic cycle 3 (ATT3) for TC<sub>1</sub> was 4.49 and the mean number of days for TC<sub>2</sub> was 7.12.

The data reflected an overall higher attendance rate for Latino male and female students. TC<sub>1</sub> had 2 to 9% higher attendance rates than Black students in TC<sub>1</sub>. The converse was true for TC<sub>2</sub>, where the range was 5 to 13 % higher attendance rates for Black students. Latino males had the lowest attendance rates for academic cycle 3 (ATT3) in both cohorts. Female attendance rates for both cohorts were lower than their male counterparts. The only exception was ATT3, where Latino female attendance rates were higher than Latino males for TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub> and Black females in TC<sub>1</sub>. There was a notable pattern in the attendance rates for TC<sub>1</sub> and TC<sub>2</sub>. The attendance rates in academic cycle 1 (ATT1) for TC<sub>1</sub> were aligned with the state average of 93.6%. Attendance rates took a sharp decline in academic cycle 2 (ATT2) and increased slightly in ATT3. Meanwhile, TC<sub>2</sub> ATT1 attendance rates were in the same range as TC<sub>1</sub> attendance rates in ATT2. TC<sub>2</sub> attendance rates continued to decline in ATT2 and ATT3 by 15-20%. A significant number of students in ATT1 for both cohorts missed five or fewer days of school. The data shown in Table 5 revealed that in TC<sub>2</sub> by ATT3 there were just

as many students missing six or more days of school, as there were missing five or fewer. TC<sub>2</sub> students had the largest percentage of total days missed. The data suggests that the absence of a full-time attendance counselor as a resource to track and encourage attendance contributed to TC<sub>2</sub> students, exhibiting more frequent absences than the students of TC<sub>1</sub>.

**Grade Point Average (GPA) Variable.** GPAs are viewed by the U.S. government assessment organization, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), as a viable measure of student academic achievement and they are recorded for grant writing and other data collection purposes (NAEP, 2006). One measure linked to student achievement for the purposes of this study was the cumulative GPA students in TC<sub>1</sub> received in academic cycle III during academic year 2005-2006 when compared to the GPA students in TC<sub>2</sub> received in academic cycle III during academic year 2006-2007. This is an example of ratio scale of measurement as described by Rubin and Babbie (1993). The GPA represents the average number of grade points a student earns for each graded high school course. Grade points are points per course credit assigned to a passing grade, indicating the numerical value of the grade. Dividing a student's total grade points earned by the total course credits attempted determines a student's GPA. GPAs are based on a scale of 0 to 4.0 where, 0=F and 4.0=A. Zero (0) is the lowest GPA a student can earn and 4.0 is the highest. Additional points beyond 4.0 can be earned for advanced and/or honors courses. The data were reviewed to answer the following research question: *Was there a difference in students' GPA?* GPAs were kept in all secondary schools in the HPS, using SASIxp, HPS student management system. Grade Point Averages (GPA) for both cohorts were retrieved from SASIxp. A query for individual students was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet to determine summative and cumulative data. The summative and cumulative data were analyzed using SPSS 14.0.

The data showed the mean GPA for TC<sub>1</sub> was higher than TC<sub>2</sub> for all academic cycles. The mean score in each academic cycle for TC<sub>2</sub> was relatively constant. It was important to note that the highest mean score for TC<sub>2</sub> was 10 points lower than the lowest mean score for TC<sub>1</sub>. Analysis of the data showed that during academic cycle 1, the mean GPA (GPA1) for comparison group TC<sub>1</sub> was 1.66. The treatment group TC<sub>2</sub>, had a mean GPA of 1.42. Although the mean GPA in academic cycle 3 (GPA3) for TC<sub>2</sub> was 1.44, the maximum GPA in the same cycle for TC<sub>2</sub> was higher than TC<sub>1</sub> by .075. Initial review of the data showed a decline of 13% and an increase for TC<sub>1</sub> of .02% in GPAs for TC<sub>1</sub> when comparing GPA1 and GPA 3. Although this may not have seemed significant at first, the consistent mean indicated that TC<sub>2</sub> students maintained achievement levels, as opposed to the significant loss in evidenced achievement experienced by TC<sub>1</sub>. Further examination of the data using an analysis of frequencies indicated 42% (N=152) of TC<sub>1</sub> students received GPAs below 2.0 during GPA1 and 53% (N=228) of TC<sub>2</sub> students received below a 2.0 during GPA1. A frequency analysis of academic cycle 2 (GPA2) revealed a slight decrease of 3% in students earning below a 2.0 for TC<sub>1</sub> and a negligible increase of .5% for TC<sub>2</sub>. Both cohorts had an equal percentage of 30% of students earning between a 2.0 and 2.9 during GPA2. An equal percentage of students totaling 18% in each cohort also earned a 3.0 or higher during GPA3. TC<sub>1</sub> realized an 8% increase in the number of students earning below a 2.0 in GPA3 from GPA2 while TC<sub>2</sub> students earning below a 2.0 increased 3%.

The data showed data for subgroups of Latinos and Blacks by gender and further reflects a higher percentage of female students over male students in both cohorts receiving a GPA of 3.0 or higher in each academic cycle. More Black females in both cohorts received a GPA of 3.0 or higher than other Blacks and Latinos in GPA1 while more Latino females



received a GPA of 3.0 or higher in GPA2 and GPA3. Overall TC<sub>2</sub> GPA remained similar for GPA1, 2, and 3, increasing by 3% in GPA2, and decreasing moderately by 2% in GPA3. Black males in TC<sub>1</sub> fared better than Latino males in GPA2 and GPA3, while Latino males earned a slightly higher GPA of 1% in GPA1. The converse was true for TC<sub>2</sub>. Black males consistently earned a higher GPA than Latino males in GPA1, 2, and 3. Black females in TC<sub>1</sub> earned a GPA for GPA1 and GPA2 that was higher than Latino females, while this was only true for GPA1 in TC<sub>2</sub>. Latino and Black females earned similar GPAs for GPA3, with Latino females earning 6% higher than Black females. The Black females earned higher GPAs than Black male students in each instance. Overall, Latino females earned higher GPAs than Latino males. HPS recognized a rounded grade of 60% = 1.0 or above as passing for each subject. The GPAs are higher for TC<sub>1</sub> than TC<sub>2</sub>. The data presented did not support the theory that earned GPAs improved for TC<sub>2</sub>. More data must be examined to fully understand TC<sub>2</sub> achievements. The importance of looking at GPAs is to help establish an overall picture of the academic achievement of the ninth grade students. While the theory that the single-site facility would have a greater percentage of students having high GPAs, the key component was that they be at least equal to or higher than 2.0. These results presented an overall account of the students' academic achievement according to their percentage grades. However, other data, such as credits attempted and earned, and major subject percentage grades, should be analyzed to develop a more thorough understanding of the academic performance of HHS ninth graders.

**Local District Assessment Grade 9 (LDA 9) Variable.** Another measure of student achievement for the purposes of this pilot study was the cumulative scores received on the Local District Assessments for Grade 9 (LDA9) during academic year 2005-2006 when compared to TC<sub>2</sub> during academic year 2006-2007. NCLB (2001) regulations require all

students to meet established benchmarks by grade level. This Northeastern Department of Education does not have a state assessment for students in grades 9 or 10. Districts are required however, to submit data to inform the academic performance of students in these grades. Consequently, HPS developed a local assessment similar to the design and administration of recognized High School State Assessment (HSSA) where proficiency was a requirement for high school graduation. The assessment was a collaborative effort through the department of Curriculum and Instruction for Mathematics and Language Arts Literacy (LAL). Teachers throughout the district were brought together to compile grade level, content specific questions aligned with the format and structure of the HSSA. A total minimum score of 125 was established to indicate proficiency for each content area assessed. The data were reviewed to answer the following research question: *Was there a difference in students' LDA 9 results?* LDA9 scoring was outsourced where data was compiled and sent to the district for further analysis. Principals had access to the website to view current and historical data. Individual student scores were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet to create a summative and cumulative data analysis. The summative and cumulative data were analyzed using SPSS 14.0.

Analysis of the data showed overall, TC<sub>2</sub> scored higher on the LDA9. When comparing data for general education and special education students, it was noted that the subgroups also performed slightly better. However, when the data was disaggregated, TC<sub>2</sub> general education students scored 4% higher in mathematics and 18% higher in LAL than TC<sub>1</sub>. Further examination of the data using an analysis of frequencies showed data for subgroups of Latinos and Blacks by gender. The data showed that Latinos earned higher scores in LAL than all subgroups for TC<sub>1</sub>. Latino males also earned higher scores in math. Using the same comparative data, 10% of TC<sub>2</sub> Black females earned higher scores than the Latino females in

TC<sub>1</sub>. Blacks overall in TC<sub>2</sub> earned higher scores than Latinos in both categories except math, where a higher percentage of Latino females earned proficient in higher numbers than Black females, with the highest percentage being among Black males. Females in both ethnic groups had a higher percentage of students scoring proficient in LAL, while males had a higher percentage scoring proficient in math. Latino males had the highest percentage scoring proficient in math between both cohorts. It was important to note that the reporting number of student scores available differed from the number of students included in the data reporting in each cohort. A number of variables contributed to this disparity. Factors considered included student absenteeism during one or more days of test administration and voided scores due to inappropriate student behavior during test administration. The results on the LDA9 were the most promising among the academic performance variables, showing an increased difference in LDA9 results for TC<sub>2</sub> over TC<sub>1</sub>. LDA9 data has been determined by the HPS Office of Testing and Assessment to be a good indicator of the number of students who will score proficient on the HSSA. The data presented supported the theory that LDA9 improved for TC<sub>2</sub>.

**Out of School Suspensions (OSS) variable.** The final component of my archival data search involved suspensions in response to students' recalcitrant behaviors. A goal of the ninth grade academy was to help students alter behaviors that led to suspension. The program was designed to identify and address factors that could lead to potential decreases in graduation rates. Suspension, as a result of violation of school policies exhibited in student behaviors, has been identified as one of those factors. Suspensions led to time out of the classroom and thus missed instructional time. The data showed the results of the summative and cumulative data gathered from the SASI generated discipline report used to compile a listing of all students receiving out of school suspensions.

TC<sub>1</sub> students received a total of 8 suspensions in OSS1 and 17 in OSS2. However, there were students who received more than one suspension. TC<sub>2</sub> recorded a higher number of suspensions in each academic cycle. A difference did exist. The data revealed that the number of out of school suspensions within TC<sub>1</sub> was significantly lower than the number of suspensions in TC<sub>2</sub>. However, the highest number of suspension occurred during OSS2 for both cohorts. Further examination of the data using an analysis of frequencies for subgroups of Latinos and Blacks by gender showed that there was a higher percentage of Latinos in both cohorts suspended in OSS1 except among Black males. The percentage of Black males suspended almost doubled in both cohorts for OSS2. There was a decline for in school suspensions by OSS3 for TC1 for all subgroups except Black females. The converse was true for TC<sub>2</sub>, with the exception of Latino females. The data suggested that the students in TC<sub>2</sub> had difficulty adjusting to ninth grade as reflected by their high numbers of suspensions. One incident involving a large number of Black females in the 3<sup>rd</sup> academic cycle caused the numbers for OSS3 to be skewed, showing a higher percentage of Black females being suspended than usual.

The four-outcome variable did not clearly support the success of TC<sub>2</sub> in the single site facility. The differences found in the variables of attendance, student behavior, grade point averages and Local District Assessment 9 scores could not support the argument that the single site facility made a positive difference quantitatively. Although the implementation of the single-site Ninth Grade Academy did not produce differences in gains in academic performance as evidenced by their GPAs, attendance, or student behavior for TC<sub>2</sub> there were some noteworthy differences among the two cohorts on the LDA9 results. Review of the data revealed students in both cohorts were weak academically. Attendance was an area of concern

for TC<sub>1</sub> and presented an even greater concern for TC<sub>2</sub>. A full-time attendance counselor was needed. I had been advocating for one and one added in January 2008. Ninth graders need to have more support than upperclassmen. This will establish a stronger foundation and facilitate a more successful high school experience.

The data from the 2007 spring pilot study revealed that it was too early to determine the impact the new structural design of the ninth grade academy had on the four variables linked to student achievement. After one year, there was not enough data to formulate a true assessment. Assessment of the program should continue from year to year. An ongoing assessment of the data for variables linked to student achievement should continue to be thoroughly examined and analyzed. A further investigation should also determine the effect the implementation of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* as a second-order change initiative had on the school culture. An assessment of the knowledge gained from the data should be explored.

The initial practice of start with question not answers suggested by Collins (2001, 2005), naturally led to the next three interestingly enough in successive order: engage in dialogue and debate, conducting autopsies without blame, and building red flag mechanisms that turn information into data that could not be ignored. A newspaper article was featured in a newspaper that had statewide distribution. The phone rang at 8 a.m. on Sunday morning, March 2, 2008. The voice on the other end was familiar and filled with doom and gloom. "We made the paper." I sat up and took a deep breath, not wanting the caller to hear my disappointment. Although I knew there was a story brewing, I hoped the storm would pass over without any casualties. As I braced myself for the worst, I asked the caller to read the article to me. The caller began to highlight the worst passages. I cringed as she read the headlines, *Failures of the Success Academy* ( Heyboer, 2007). HHS Success Academy not

living up to its name...200 students classified as sophomores...the spirit of disappointment for the leadership of Success Academy oozing out of the pages and through the caller's inflection.

Once this article was published, the brutal facts that existed in the community could not be ignored (Collins, 2001, 2005). The article was a tactic to discredit the HHS9 and the administration. Although the writer of the article did not print an accurate article, there was some cause for concern for the academic performance of the HHS9. I agonized over how I would address the staff and students. I asked myself, should I ignore it? That thought left as quickly as it appeared. I realized the best way to handle it was to take a pulse from the staff. Addressing the article was inevitable, how was questionable. The article was distributed statewide and the entire state was reading about our failure. I needed to take my mind off the negative comments in the paper and remind myself that what the devil meant to hurt me, God would turn it around and use it for my good. Although my mind floated back to the article, I continued to dismiss the thought and focused my mind on the biblical scripture, Philippians 4:8, "...all that is good, right, set your mind on these things."

HHS9's Hedgehog Concept was evolving, as we continued to build our cadre of disciplined peoples disciplined thought (Collins, 2001, 2005). We were in the infancy stage of this second-order change process. The following narrative *The Red Flag That Could Not Be Ignored*, depicts what drove HHS9 to the consensus on our economic engine and ultimately our Hedgehog Concept; Ensuring a Quality Education for all Students:

### **The Red Flag That Could Not Be Ignored.**

I arrived earlier than usual to the school on Monday, listening intently for any banter about the article the day before. No one said a word as each staff member signed in. There was an uncomfortable silence. I knew many read the article and surmised the staff had the same reaction that I did; we know our shortcomings, but when it is exposed, it does not feel good. Furthermore, the article was inaccurate and appeared to

be placing undue blame on HHS9. I met with my administrative team the first thing in the morning. This was too important to wait for our weekly meeting that afternoon. I was scheduled to meet that afternoon with the legal department to depose for a hearing during the week. The administrative team had been on the phone with each other on Sunday, so we knew we had to debrief. This had become standard practice this year, collaborative sessions to improve communications among staff. I asked the administrative team to call a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to get an idea of how the staff was processing the article and to report back in the afternoon to make recommendations on how to handle the matter. When the administrative team reconvened for our weekly meeting, there was a general consensus we would call for a voluntary staff meeting the following day to provide an opportunity for the staff to share their thoughts and vent their frustrations (D. L. Marable, personal communication, March 2, 2008).

I announced the meeting during our morning announcements, stressing attendance was voluntary. I introduced the subject with a safe comment, "I know you saw the article on Sunday." There was a floodgate of responses. It appears my instinct was correct, except no one wanted to make the first open comment (It was like having the pink elephant standing in the middle of the room). When I opened the door for discussion, staff members were honest, open about their feelings, expressing their anger, and wanting to respond to the article. Many staff members expressed disappointment and indignation as they reminisced and began to verbalize their experiences with ninth grade students before coming to HHS9. Acknowledging there were always problems with retention, staff members said they felt they were being blamed for something they had no control over. I wanted to provide a safe environment for individuals to express their feelings, and I wanted them to accept responsibility for the facts, as we know them. Admittedly there were challenges last year and maybe the year before, but we had to ask ourselves, individually and then collectively, what am I going to do to help turn it around, commit to doing that, and then move forward. There was a general consensus the response to the article would come in the form of a letter to the superintendent. Five or six staff members formed a committee to write the response on behalf of the entire staff (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, March 2, 2008).

The meeting did not quell the anger exhibited by the staff. They also exhibited feelings of betrayal and guilt. The precept of the hedgehog is focusing on survival. Everything a hedgehog does is explicitly related to that survival. Collins (2001, 2005) suggests the resources necessary to improve instruction as a strategy to improve academic performance for schools, are that the economic resource engine has three basic components: time, money, and brand. Inspired by the Hedgehog Concept questions, I had my own responses. I was passionate about

a child's right to a quality education, the anchor of my social justice leadership (Marshall, 2004). I was driven by my commitment to ensuring students receive the education they deserve. I have also been the best at transforming schools. I transformed two prior schools by increasing student performance on state assessments and changing the school culture. The intersection of my hedgehog rings calls for ensuring a quality education for all students. A majority of HHS9 administrative team expresses this same hedgehog concept. The publication of this article encouraged other staff members to join along with other members of our disciplined people. We established *Ensuring Quality Education for All Students* as our evolving Hedgehog Concept as we continued through the infancy stages of this second-order change process (Collins, 2001, 2005).

## **Conclusion**

The initial practice of start with question not answers, suggested by Collins (2001, 2005) naturally led to the next three, interestingly enough, in successive order: 1) engage in dialogue and debate, 2) conducting autopsies without blame, and 3) building red flag mechanisms that turn information into information that cannot be ignored. Model II theory is the preferred method of communication against organizational defenses (Argyris, 1990). Model II forced me to ask the tough questions, "Why do we do it that way?" and "How can we improve on that practice?" (Argyris, 1990; Collins, 2001, 2005) Schools can move to the next level if we are willing to pull back the curtain and confront the brutal facts to addresses issues and concerns (Collins, 2001, 2005). Often we were afraid to implement Model II because we were reluctant to expose ourselves. On the other hand, Model II allowed people to be responsible for their actions and gives them an opportunity to self-correct. Their efforts were acknowledged in the process. Successful implementation and operation of Model II was



dependent on the existence of a culture of trust and an effective leader. Data from various sources served a number of important staff development purposes such as, formative classroom assessment, data collection, data analysis, and data-driven planning and evaluation (Bernhardt, 1998; Guskey, 1986).

Gladwell (2002) gave me a lot to reflect on. Schools operate so autonomously, it was difficult to capture the one thing that would move an entire educational system to a *Tipping Point* reform model. However, we can create our own *Tipping Points* (Gladwell, 2002) in our own fiefdoms in order to make a positive change for the community we serve every day. The story in the newspaper was our tipping point.

## Chapter 6

### Cycle III: Disciplined Action

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses evidence of the applied strategies I employed at HHS9 to implement Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage III *Good to Great Framework: Disciplined Action*. Disciplined people understand and are committed to the Hedgehog Concept through disciplined thought. Hence, the culture is established by the organization and the organization is made up of the people who serve within it (Schein, 2004). According to Collins' (2001, 2005), disciplined people and disciplined thought lead to disciplined action. The leader of the organization must evidence disciplined action to set the standard for the culture of discipline. In order to achieve the goal of disciplined thought, the culture must be established without instilling fear (Collins, 2001, 2005). A flexible leader will have a better opportunity of reaching the desired goal of greatness. Disciplined people understand the Hedgehog Concept and work to ensure the desired goal will be met (Collins, 2001, 2005). Disciplined people have a disciplined thought that leads to disciplined action. Therefore, the retention and hiring of disciplined staff members has a major impact on the culture in the organization. I used data from teachers' formative assessments (see Appendix B), teachers' summative assessments (see Appendix C), instructional improvement plans, and professional improvement plans (PIPs) to develop and offer professional development opportunities to staff. I applied strategies of Stage III: Disciplined Action in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* to impart the supposition of a culture of discipline at HHS9. Stage III disciplined action was less tangible than Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Change Framework* stages I and II. I created explicative narratives of documented events and staff development activities from the data I

collected to show evidence of how I applied these strategies. The review of disciplined action through the implementation of the professional development opportunities, specifically the National Urban Alliance (NUA), showed an impact on the organizational culture at HHS9 and answered the following research question:

*What applied strategies introduced in Collins' Good to Great Framework can sustain change at HHS9?*

I explored parallels of my espoused leadership theory vs. my leadership theory-in-use while applying the principles of Jim Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage III *Good to Great Change Framework*: I used participatory action research (PAR), defined by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles. In the school system, tenure laws, state codes, and statutes impede our ability to eject staff members that do not exhibit the characteristics that lead to disciplined action, as readily as the businesses in Collins' (2001) *Good to Great* companies, bind us. Therefore, it is incumbent upon principals to offer professional development activities and opportunities for staff members in an effort to address the concerns of the uncommitted, unmotivated, and inexperienced staff members (Collins, 2001, 2005; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Lewandowski & Moller, 1997; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). Providing and modeling professional development activities, in some cases, can improve the skill level of a staff member and motivate others to a higher standard. Staff members that do not embrace the professional development opportunities to enhance instructional practices must be ejected from the team.

Secondly, the purpose of cycle III was to provide evidence that I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* strategies to push the flywheel into motion. Collins (2001, 2005) defines the flywheel as a heavy piece of equipment that jolts all other pieces of the equipment

into motion once it gains momentum. Everyone wants to be part of a winning team (Blanchard & Bowles, 2001; Collins, 2001, 2005). I am no different. I wanted HHS9's flywheel to affect everything it was connected with so that HHS9 could never stop pushing. Once we gained momentum, I believed we would become a magnet. Like a magnet, we would draw positive energy, more momentum, and ultimately an upward climb to greatness (Blanchard & Bowles, 2001; Collins, 2001, 2005).

### **Data Collection**

Autoethnographic qualitative data collection methods were used in cycle III. Data collection consisted of information from teachers' formative assessments as described in cycle I (see Appendix B), teachers' summative assessments (see Appendix C), daily administrative walkthroughs, professional improvement plans (PIPSs), interactions with staff, feedback from professional development opportunities and activities recorded and documented in a reflective journal. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions and reactions related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. Data related to my Level 5 leadership were coded 1A and data related to the staff were coded 1B. I used the data collected for Level 5 leadership in my espoused vs. theory-in-use data collection reported in cycle V.

## **Action**

I reviewed the agendas, the professional development activities, and created explicative narratives from the experiences that evidenced how I applied the strategies outlined in Stage III: Disciplined Action of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*. I designed professional development opportunities and activities that were targeted to address problem areas identified by teaching staff and administrative staff in order to improve instruction at HHS9. Improvement in instructional practice through effective staff development will ultimately improve academic performance by:

- a) Preparing practitioners to understand and appreciate all students, while creating a safe, orderly and supportive learning environment, and holding high expectations for student learning.
- b) Deepening the practitioner's content knowledge and providing research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting high expectations and preparing the practitioner to use classroom assessments appropriately and,
- c) Providing practitioners with the knowledge and skills necessary to increase family involvement in student learning (Cawelti, 1999; Guskey, 1986; Guskey & Sparks, 1996).

## **Measuring Stick for Teacher Effectiveness**

There was no evidence of disciplined action at HHS9 among students or staff. A number of teachers were on extended leave. A daily average teacher absenteeism of 40% and substitute coverage created more disruption to the educational process and overall school climate. The substitutes were not skilled in subject specific content matter or classroom management. We were short-staffed when the vice principal was transferred to a different

facility in January 2007 and spring-like weather was fast approaching. Incidents among students and teachers were escalating. Moreover, staff members filed affirmative action cases against the administrative team to divert our attention away from instruction. However, I refused to allow this undisciplined action of systemic failure to continue to permeate HHS9. I continued my disciplined thought and focused on our hedgehog concept; ensuring a quality education for all students (Collins, 2001, 2005). This disciplined thought turned in to disciplined action as I focused my concentration and efforts to professional development plans for the ensuing school year.

As discussed in cycle I, formative assessments (see Appendix B) by an administrator, captured a specific lesson on a given day and were included in domains one through three of the HH District teacher observation instrument. The areas captured were: 1) planning and preparation, 2) classroom environment, and 3) instruction. Although available, domain four assessed ongoing professional responsibilities and was not required for formative assessments. Summative assessments (see Appendix C) were cumulative and resulted in an annual evaluation of observed instructional practices and professional practices evidenced by all aspects of a teacher's performance. Summative assessments included formal and informal classroom visits. Both administrators and teachers were eligible to provide evidence to support teachers' instructional practice. Similarly, administrators and teachers were eligible to provide evidence of teachers' ineffective instructional practice and evidence that more support was required. Evidence included benchmarks established through professional improvement plans, instructional improvement plans, previous formative and summative assessments, and letters of progressive discipline or commendation located in a teacher's evidence file. This was a systematic approach to assessing tenured and non-tenured teachers' growth and development.

Summative assessments provided us with another opportunity to: a) assess which teachers were effective in increasing academic performance, b) discuss future professional development plans, c) develop relevant action plans, and d) determine which staff members would be recommended for continued employment.

Evidentiary disciplined action, as outlined in Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage III of the *Good to Great Framework*, allowed me to determine if an overall culture of discipline was building that could gain flywheel momentum. DuFour and Berkey (1995) remind building principals of our role in nurturing and developing teachers' professional growth as part of the school culture that lead to disciplined action. They further remind us that it is necessary to create consensus, promote shared values, ensure systematic collaboration, encourage experimentation, model commitment, provide one-on-one staff development, offer meaningful staff development, promote teacher efficacy, and monitor the disciplined action or sustained effort DuFour and Berkey (1995). I looked for evidence that staff members were committed to applying the newly introduced professional development activities into his or her classroom. Therefore, I discussed strategies with the administrative team on how to monitor and provide support for individuals that did not show evidence of infusing the professional development strategies offered. We further discussed how to document staff members that did not take responsibility for his or her professional development. The undisciplined actions exhibited by the undisciplined staff members ultimately resulted in behaviors that had a negative impact on the school culture (Collins, 2001, 2005). The failure to show a commitment to implementing the professional development activities sometimes resulted in progressive disciplinary action. I created explicative narratives from entries in my reflective journal to document evidence of the

disciplined action that was used to establish the culture of discipline and how the flywheel gained momentum (Collins, 2001, 2005).

Looking at the depth of a matter through a principal's lens was overwhelming. We were facing a mountain of incompetence at HHS9 with a majority of staff that were unwilling to buy-in to a program designed to move students to a higher academic level. After the first round of informal assessments of the entire staff, I reflected again on the spring 2007 pilot study data. The pilot study showed a long-term pattern of low-performance. Armed with this data, I still questioned how I was going to address the innumerable challenges the teachers were facing in the classroom and the impact these challenges had on the school culture and climate. The challenges included but were not limited to, lack of motivation, low-performance, and other at-risk factors. Additionally, with limited resources, I did not know how I would empower the teachers with the pedagogical awareness needed to address these issues. The more I reviewed the spring 2007 pilot study and the strategies outlined in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great*, it became apparent that the only way to change the environment in the classroom was to focus on improved instruction in the classroom (Marzano, et al., 2001). My commitment to disciplined action as a Level 5 leader (Collins, 2001, 2005) led me to intensify my efforts on staff development as well as the formative and summative evaluation process of current staff. These crucial components would drive us to reach our evolved hedgehog concept; ensuring a quality education for all students (Collins, 2001, 2005).

My role as the instructional leader was to create a school culture of innovation and continuous improvement by ensure that classrooms were visited regularly to observe instruction and that disciplined staff engaged in frequent conversations with teachers individually and collectively about instruction and student learning (Cawelti, 1999; Cushman,



1996; Marzano, et al., 2001). Calhoun (1994) and Collins (2001, 2005), present practical approaches for organizational improvement by suggesting that we study what is happening at our school through the collection and utilization of data. The results of our data analysis should lead us on a path to decide how we will meet our hedgehog concept; ensuring a quality education for all students (Bernhardt, 1998; Calhoun, 1994; Collins, 2001, 2005). Calhoun (1994) outlines a model for a quick start to action research that, 1) uses student data to inform us about success, by confronting the brutal facts and 2) must be focused on student learning as a collective mission, such as our hedgehog concept (Collins, 2001, 2005). Action research can develop the school as a learning community (Calhoun, 1994; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Sagor, 1992). Through disciplined thought that leads to disciplined action, action research can build organizational capacity to solve problems, push the flywheel to gain momentum, be a form of personal as well as professional development, and create a culture of discipline throughout the organization (Collins, 2001, 2005). I organized the administrative team, which was the core group of disciplined people, to schedule and conduct daily classroom visitations. The administrative team of disciplined people determined specific areas of foci for daily classroom visits so that we could identify professional development opportunities building-wide and individually. The administrative team collected and reviewed these written classroom visit documentation weekly. During our weekly administrative meetings, each administrative team member shared the data gathered during his or her daily classroom visitations so that we all could gain insight on similarities or inconsistencies observed. After our administrative team meetings, we held conferences with teachers to discuss the areas of concern and discuss recommendations for improvement.

The classroom visitations provided overwhelming evidence of ineffective teaching. Confronting the brutal facts using the data from the spring 2007 pilot study and the results of our classroom visitations, I had to consider which changes would have the greatest impact on instructional practices and lead to accelerating student academic performance (Marzano, et al., 2001).

### **Creating a Safe and Nurturing Learning Environment-Classroom Management**

One of the major problem areas that manifested early and had a direct impact on the culture and climate of the school was classroom management. Newly hired and veteran teachers were experiencing problems in the area of classroom management alike. Despite the discussion the vice principal had with the staff during our first staff meeting described in the narrative "*The First Meeting*," A number of staff members sent students to the office for minor infractions indicating behaviors such as, "He didn't bring his notebook," "He's chewing gum," and "She didn't do her homework." Most of our time was spent on classroom management, so we agreed on a staff development plan to ameliorate the number of referrals that were being sent to the vice principal and department chairpersons daily. Some days we had over 30 disciplinary referrals. During our administrative team meetings, I asked the administrative team to identify the area they thought needed the most immediate attention based on the data from our walkthroughs. Classroom management was a unanimous choice as the topic for staff development. Each member of the administration team developed different segments of the presentation. We agreed to come together to finalize the presentation and merge all the PowerPoint slides together to create one presentation. The administrative team felt it was important that I facilitate the workshop to set the tone and standard of the building. The following journal entry reveals our discussion:

October 24, 2006...It was impossible to ignore the impact classroom disruptions were having on student performance. District sponsored staff development days were often scheduled in conjunction with district initiatives. However, sometimes we were given an opportunity to plan a workshop during contractually planned staff development days held throughout the school year. This allows me to create workshops that are indicative to my building needs. I was grateful for the opportunity to plan a day and a half of staff development workshops in the fall of 2006. My administrative team had been discussing the classroom management issues that were prevalent throughout the building and how it was affecting school culture. We agreed that classroom management and disciplinary issues were absorbing our time and limiting our time to focus on instruction. We knew that if this pattern persisted it would be almost impossible for us to impact academic performance at any substantial level (D. L. Marable, personal communication, journal entry, October 24, 2006).

Teachers depend on other knowledge and skills to facilitate student success (Evans, 1996; Hord, 1997). Examples include, classroom management, fundamental technological skills that increase teacher productivity, as well as mentoring and coaching skills for teacher leaders. Again, teachers must experience appropriate staff development designs to facilitate the desired outcome for students (Lewandowski & Moller, 1997). All too many times we make the mistake of employing professional development as a one-time service without opportunities for follow up, little time for reflection, and little time to experiment or information gathering (Kennedy, 1999). Effective leaders exhibit disciplined action to facilitate change (Collins, 2001, 2005; Hord, 1997). These include developing a culture of readiness for change, promoting the vision, providing the necessary resources, ensuring the availability of professional development, maintaining checks on progress, and providing the ongoing assistance necessary for change to occur smoothly (DuFour & Berkey, 1995; Leithwood, et al., 2004). A comprehensive approach to changing teachers' instructional practices include developing and articulating a clear vision, planning and providing necessary resources, investing in training, monitoring progress and, providing ongoing support (DuFour & Berkey, 1995; Hord, 1997). This practice creates the context that is conducive to and fosters change

(Hord, 1997). I always shared my philosophy and objectives with the staff. Lewandowski and Moller (1997) teaches school leaders to facilitate the change process in schools by leading and encouraging group discussion and creating an environment that fosters a spirit for drafting and implementing appropriate school improvement plans. I believe I should always model the behavior I expect. Therefore, all professional development workshops that I facilitated I utilized instructional strategies I expected to see in the classroom. All professional development opportunities engaged participants in active participation and discussion. Teachers will not buy-in to an idea unless they believe the administrator has the skill and the will to do it (DuFour & Berkey, 1995).

I conducted two one-hour workshops. The first was entitled, “Bullying: It’s Impact on School Climate and What to Do” and the other, “Professionalism: Harassment in the Workplace.” We were required by the state to document these workshops, and since they were directly aligned with classroom management this was a great segue for the full day workshop planned for the next day. Staff members were assigned to a team. Each team selected a random scenario and dramatized it for the other staff members. Each team had an opportunity to identify the disruptive behavior and assess how the situation should be resolved while a different team provided feedback on the outcomes identified. The training process of staff development combines diagnosing and prescribing, giving information and demonstrating, discussing application, and coaching (Guskey, 1986). We used research based practices that stressed the importance of designing staff development that are retrofitted to identified areas of needed improvement in teacher characteristics and attitudes (Guskey, 1986; Sparks, 1983). The following journal entry describes the professional development activity:

On October 25, 2006, I opened the meeting with staff awards. I bought award ribbons from the dollar store with different messages such as, “Good Listener,” “Happy Birthday,” “Most Improved,” and “Helper.” I recognized disciplined people for their service, spirit of dedication, and commitment to students. I acknowledged those staff members that were already exhibiting good class management and allowed those individuals to facilitate discussions at his or her table. We also initiated the *Staff Member of the Month* program. We introduced it to the staff before I conducted the classroom management workshop. Ms. Karon contacted Applebee’s and we were granted a gift certificate for two people to have dinner every month. I used this as an incentive for *Staff Member of the Month* program. Initially parking was an issue. There was no designated parking on school premises for staff, and alternate side of the street parking created a problem on Mondays and Tuesdays. The main campus had a parking lot large enough to accommodate staff and visitors, so that was one of the concerns some staff members had when they were transferred to HHS9. The staff member of the month received parking privileges and this became a coveted award. The administrative team established a criterion for the *Member of the Month* program and staff members who were excessively absent, tardy, received any suspensions, or more than three progressive discipline letters would not be eligible. The staff members voted on the selection using the criterion. The staff placed his or her ballot in a box on the counter in the main office and our sunshine committee counted the ballots. I had the pleasure of announcing the winner every month (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, October 25, 2006).

The sessions proved entertaining and informative. I ensured the staff that there would be follow-up sessions to the presentation. Staff members were able to identify areas that would be helpful in the classroom. Walkthroughs, formative assessments, and student performance was helpful as follow-ups to the staff development day. We wrapped up the session by reviewing an article from the October 4, 2006 edition from Education Week. I gave out awards for participation and I asked staff to complete an evaluation instrument for staff feedback. Michael Schmoker (1996) suggests that we explores the conditions under which dramatic results may be achieved, creating opportunities for meaningful teamwork, setting clear and measurable goals, and regularly collecting and analyzing data. Schmoker (1996) concludes that, schools will improve when purpose and effort are one. This strategy was used to model how I expected teachers to introduce an objective in his or her classroom. I heard positive

feedback from a majority of the staff. The comments expressed at the end of each workshop I presented were, “This was the best staff development day I have had in all my twenty three years,” “This was great, I had so much fun,” “Are all of our staff development days going to be like this?” “Can I borrow that handout, I want to use in my classroom with my kids,” “Thank you so much”, and “That was wonderful.” The comments I heard provided evidence that this was a positive workshop. However, there were many instances where staff members attended the professional development workshops and did not implement the strategies taught and shared. The daily administrative classroom visitations allowed me to determine which instructional strategies were used. The daily administrative visitations also provided me with an opportunity to reinforce the strategies from the professional development opportunities.

### **Professional Learning Communities**

The principal’s leadership is one of the keys that must keep everyone's eyes on the prize of improved instructional practice to accelerate student achievement (Day, 2000). Covey (1989) outlines seven habits of highly effective people. These characteristics are also considered researched –based best practices for effective professional development. Especially relevant is Habit 2. Covey’s (1989) habit 2, forces leaders to look at the big picture by beginning with the end in mind. This habit assisted me in theorizing that we must use the backwards design approach to professional development similar to the backwards design approach to lesson planning for students. Just as understanding what we want students to learn before we design a lesson, we must also know what the appropriate strategies are for helping teachers acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to improve student learning. Sergiovanni (1994) postulates the importance of building a learning community by reorganizing our educational values, beliefs, and practices. He argues that a body of individuals who are bonded

together by natural will and a set of shared ideas and ideals can transform from a collection of "I's" into a collective "we." Sergiovanni (1994) further suggests that the "we," members develop as a group of individuals sharing common ideals and goals. Collins (2001, 2005) would describe this cadre of individuals as disciplined people that generate disciplined thought and create disciplined action.

Staff development that aims towards high expectations for all students, teachers, and administrators require professional development activities that are ongoing and meet regularly (Cawelti, 1999; Guskey, 1986; Guskey & Sparks, 1996). This professional development is different from the traditional workshop-driven approach (Kennedy, 1999). PLCs are considerably more effective for practitioners and on student outcomes. HHS9 ongoing professional development activities lead to the establishment of professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs are characterized as a group of practitioners that collaborate and reflect on (a) lesson planning, (b) proven instructional strategies, (c) reviewing of student work, and (d) ameliorating behaviors that impede students' academic success (Corcoran, 1995; Cushman, 1996; Gall & Vojtek, 1994; Hord, 1997).

HHS9 classroom teachers began to reflect on their instructional practices with a focus on accelerating student achievement. Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1994) argue that if education is to improve, the school must be focused on change. They argue that teachers in a strong professional community must demonstrate discussions that are reflective, willing to take risks, deviation from traditional instructional practice, laser-like focus, collaboration, and shared norms and values (Kruse, et al., 1994; Raywid, 1993). The success of PLCs is contingent on the existence of the following components: (a) common planning time, (b) teamed-approach with common students and close proximity to each other, (c) teacher trust and respect, (d) supportive leadership, (e) teacher effectiveness, and (f) reflective practice (Elmore, 2000;

Raywid, 1993). Common planning time is equally as important as equipment, appropriate facilities, or traditional staff development activities. Frequent and efficient use of collaborative time among teachers distinguishes successful schools from unsuccessful ones (Raywid, 1993). A commitment to implementation of PLCs is evidence of disciplined thought (Collins, 2001, 2005). Active participation and engagement of staff in PLCs is evidence of disciplined action and is essential in pushing the flywheel into motion. Successful PLCs will change the conversation in the teacher's lounge and create a sustained approach to improved instructional practices (Kruse, et al., 1994; Raywid, 1993). PLCs include consistency in meetings and participants, active observation of one another in the classroom and review of student work in order to calibrate assessments (Cushman, 1996; Marzano, et al. 2001). This common focus and clear direction, minimizes the problems of fragmentation that typically derail school improvement efforts (Fullan, 1999, 2001). A school that is effective with students is also likely to develop a deliberate plan to support of teacher development (Sparks, 1983).

## **NUA**

A school that establishes a culture of disciplined action will be able to meet today's challenges and meet future challenges (Corcoran, 1995; Danielson, 1996; Sagor, 1992). Teachers need to deepen their content knowledge and learn new methods of teaching to meet the accountability standards imposed on schools today. Professional Learning Communities PLCs are highlighted as a best practice to affect this paradigm shift to assist them in acquiring necessary knowledge or skills (Hord, 1997). Ironically, I received an email from the district supervisor of Language Arts from Curriculum and Instruction informing me we had the opportunity to take advantage of a series of district sponsored professional development sessions. The outside consultants were from the National Urban Alliance (NUA).



I wanted to make sure I provided the non-tenured teachers every opportunity to be a great teacher. Therefore, I accepted the offer after I researched the organization on their website. I learned that NUA was established in 1989. NUA examines and assesses school climate and implements the NUA's Professional Development Model to accelerate student achievement. I was impressed with their offerings and began to conceptualize what the additional staff development sessions should look like at HHS9. I used extreme care in selecting the staff that our designated NUA consultant, Mr. Short would work with. I chose the non-tenured, still impressionable teachers in order to mold and shape them into disciplined people guided by disciplined thought and leading to disciplined action.

Maintaining my laser-focus, it was my disciplined thought that believed the interactions with Mr. Short would counteract the pervasive negative conversations and chronic complaining that had become common-place with veteran staff members in the teacher's lounge. This negative conversation was not representative of disciplined people with disciplined thought that could lead to disciplined action. Mr. Short came to us with impeccable credentials. He was Rhodes Scholar, a former professor at Columbia University, and had served as a classroom teacher in the New York City Public School System. After a lengthy discussion about implementation of professional development sessions, I was sure Mr. Short's expertise would compliment my disciplined thought. I was confident that this combined effort would assist some teachers, move them out of the protracted battle against low student achievement and undisciplined thought and into disciplined action (Collins, 2001, 2005).

When Mr. Short arrived for his first meeting, he waited eagerly in the foyer until I invited him into the principal's office for a conference. He walked into my office wearing a blue blazer, beige khakis, and an off-white turtleneck. He gave a general overview of the

mission of NUA while I gave a synopsis of some of the challenges that HHS9 was facing. Under the circumstances that there were so many cases where staff need instructional support. We knew that before we could devise an effective plan of attack Mr. Short had to become aware of the school climate. I gave him a brief tour of class visitations of all the teachers. While conferencing with Mr. Short at the debriefing session, I had a moment of sheer confirmation; he was one important piece in the puzzle.

Loucks-Horsely (1996) stresses that we should use instructional methods during professional development opportunities that mirror methods that we desire to use with students continue to assess the professional development process. We applied that very principle when deciding where Mr. Short's services, if properly planted, could develop disciplined thought that would lead to disciplined action. Although he was there to service the entire staff, my administrative team compiled a list of teachers whose success in the classroom was impingent upon concentrated professional development based on the district-wide formative assessments and daily administrative classroom visitations. In order to assess the immediate problems in their classes, Mr. Short visited their classes and began to provide one on one mentoring, organized peer poaching opportunities, demonstration lessons, workshops, and debriefing sessions to allow teachers to reflect on his or her teaching practices. The partnership between HHS9 and NUA was phenomenal. Unsuspectingly, I had embarked on a two-year relationship that would prove to benefit a number of my staff members that were receptive.

Disciplined action results in a strong sense of accountability and a sustained focus on classroom instruction. Disciplined action that leads to disciplined thought is supported through ongoing individualized coaching, conferences, support groups, and peer poaching (Collins, 2001, 2005; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Hord, 1997; Kruse, et al., 1994). Evans (1996) found that

teaching and learning are mainly a function of the teacher's beliefs, understandings, and behaviors. Schools can and must provide opportunities for learning. Where teachers have a shared vision, improved teacher practice and student achievement are inextricably bound (Cawelti, 1999; Cushman, 1996). There was clear evidence of the establishment of disciplined action through a culture of discipline for some of our staff members. We still had a long way to go but we were building momentum by taking incremental steps. Stigler and Hiebert (1999) warn us to expect improvement to be continual, gradual, and incremental if we maintain our focus on student learning and improving teachers' instructional skills. Research on organizational learning suggests that focus on our hedgehog concept, disciplined thought, and shared leadership will influence teachers' ability to sustain openness to learning and translate into disciplined action (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Schein, 2004).

## **Conclusion**

According to Bridges (1996), relatively ineffective teachers are usually assigned to the most at risk students. These students are characterized as the marginalized and disenfranchised groups, minority and people of color, students typically thought of as at-risk by the school community. Students in low-income schools were also more likely to receive inexperienced teachers or teachers with experience who were considered less qualified (Sanders, Horn, and Wright, 1997). Sanders, Horn, and Wright (1997) have shown that teacher effectiveness is the largest factor affecting student academic performance. The measurable cumulative teacher effects suggest teacher effectiveness has a residual effect on student performance (Bridges, 1996; Sanders, Horn, & Wright, 1997). When a child failed, no one took into account the quality of the teacher or the child's educational experience before placing the blame on the student, family structure or other possible negative factors in the student's background

(Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Sanders, Horn, & Wright, 1997). Ironically, NCLB (2001) and other accountability reforms were designed to support these very students because they suffer the highest collateral damage (Bridges, 1996). Consequently, professional development for teachers should be at the center of all efforts to improve, rethink, and redesign schools (Guskey, 1996; Lewandowski & Moller, 1997). Richard Elmore (2000) outlines five principles for a model of distributed leadership focused on large-scale education improvement:

- 1) regardless of role, the purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance
- 2) instructional improvement requires continuous learning on the part of the practitioner;
- 3) learning requires leaders that model the values and behavior that they expect to be exhibited and embedded in practice,
- 4) the roles and activities of leadership flow from the requirements need to ensure improved instructional practices, and
- 5) requires accountability and capacity.

There was evidence that of a culture of discipline was being established at HHS9. There were 12 teachers we identified to receive professional development from our NUA consultant. However, we only saw evidence in seven of the classrooms (Marzano, et al., 2001). I found it promising that four veteran teachers that were not identified to receive staff development from Mr. Short, began borrowing the instructional strategies that were shared to implement in their classes. On the surface it appeared that only seven staff members were benefiting from the efforts of Mr. Short, however, there were actually 11. This revelation showed evidence of the flywheel turning and building momentum (Collins, 2001, 2005).

Carefully designed, supported, ambitious professional development focused on instruction and sustained over time can change what happens in classrooms (Cushman, 1996; Hord, 1997; Marzano, et al., 2001; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). In order to have the intended impact, professional development had to be focused on clear goals and delivered over time by, well-trained facilitators. Professional development initiatives that competed with other initiatives and were contrary to our hedgehog concept were distracting and discouraged (Collins, 2001, 2005). We centered our professional development activities on content and practice and planned as a coherent set of strategies to develop teachers' content and pedagogical skills (Gall & Vojtek, 1994; Lewandowski & Moller, 1997). We utilized current resources such as, staff members that lead the professional development and carried the same vision and core values that could be used to move instructional change and accelerate student achievement. Successful implementation could not be realized unless there were district policies that were aligned with the desired instructional reforms as well as the support of school and district administrators. Without these components, long-term sustainability would never come to fruition. Lastly, we had to remember that change took time and allowed the seeds of professional development to take root (Hord, 1997; Sparks, 1983; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).

## Chapter 7

### Cycle IV: Building Greatness to Last...Sustainability

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the implementation of Collins' (2001, 2005) Stage IV *Good to Great Framework: Building Greatness to Last—Sustainability*. Building from initial qualitative and quantitative findings in the previous chapters, this chapter serves to present my assessment of the status of our organization. The following are the results of my self-evaluation of the input principles in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*: disciplined people, disciplined thought, disciplined action, and building greatness to last. The application of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* principles sustained change at HHS9 and the following discussion assesses the following research questions:

1. *How does my leadership influence the academic environment at HHS9?*
2. *How can the application of Collins' Good to Great Framework impact the organizational culture of HHS9?*
3. *What applied strategies introduced in Collins' Good to Great Framework can sustain change at HHS9?*

#### Data Collection

I used qualitative data collection strategies for cycle IV. I used a ninety-eight question survey and diagnostic tool, developed by Jim Collins (2006), "*Where are You on Your Journey from Good to Great ?*", to reflect on the instructional practices that were evident at HHS9 after I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* principles. I used this as an assessment tool to measure my perception of the impact the implementation of the principles in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* had on HHS9. I used participatory action

research (PAR), defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-reflective cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). I used summative assessments (see Appendix C) to view staff data, minutes from weekly administrative meetings to derive a general consensus of HHS9 status, and interactions with staff that was documented in a reflective journal to reflect on my interpretations, and reactions to data collected. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. Data related to my Level 5 leadership were coded 1A and data related to the staff were coded 1B. I used the data collected for Level 5 leadership in my espoused vs. theory-in-use data collection reported in cycle V. I triangulated the data by reviewing my notes I documented in my reflective journal by personal interactions with staff and from reviewing my notes I documented in my reflective journal by an outside consultant from the National Urban Alliance (NUA), Mr. Short.

### **Action**

I performed a self-evaluation of my organization's progress as I reflected on each stage of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* using participatory action research (PAR), defined as planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and repeating the cycle in a spiral of self-

reflective cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). I used Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* Diagnostic Tool: "*Where are You on Your Journey from Good to Great?*" to reflect on my actions and my perception of the current status of HHS9 after applying Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* principles. The assessment tool was a ninety-eight question survey using a Likert scale selection ranging from A to F, where A = we exemplify this trait exceptionally well—there is little room for improvement to F= we operate almost entirely contrary to this trait (Collins, 2006). I also created explicative narratives of documented events and staff development activities from the data I collected to show evidence of my ratings on Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* Diagnostic Tool. The ratings were assigned using reflective practice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). I reflected on Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Frameworks* by reading and manually answering each item on the survey. Next, I averaged the letter grade for each section in the assessment. Each section reflected the components described as *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001, 2005) input variables. The input variables represented each stage in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework*. I averaged my response data and transferred the resultant scores to the identified output variables: delivers superior performance, makes a distinctive impact, and achieves lasting endurance. My responses were used to determine to determine if the application of the Collins' (2001, 2005) principles evidenced any measurable results in response to the second-order change initiative applied during stages I through III of the *Good to Great Framework*.

#### **Stage IV**

Collins (2001, 2005) insists that this last stage of the *Good to Great Framework* requires a paradigm shift to "(1) clock building—not time telling, and (2) preserving the core and stimulating progress (p.35)." Greatness, in order to be sustained, should not be linked to a



one-time marketing strategy (Collins, 2001, 2005). A great organization will endure regardless of a change in leadership because the members of the organization will, never lose focus of their core values. The impetus for educational leaders is to create schools that work best for all children, schools that promote academic improvement for all students (Evans, 1996).

**Disciplined People.** Collins' (2001, 2005) concept of disciplined people in stage I of the *Good to Great Framework* focuses on Level 5 leadership, getting the right people on the bus, and the wrong people off the bus. It was crucial that I evaluate the current employees and their position in order to ascertain if they were right for the organization and operating in the right position. The measuring stick I used was the district-wide formal district observation and evaluation assessment (Appendix B). HHS9 administrative team performed classroom visitations for staff assigned specifically to them by department or location. Specialty certification areas and NCLB (2001) Highly Qualified Teacher requirements mandated that only teachers with specific content area certification could provide direct instruction. Although rare, there were five instances at HHS9 where teachers held dual certifications. Based on formative assessments, classroom visitations, and personal interactions, I reassigned Mr. Kareem, one of our general education math teachers dually certified in math and special education, to teach math to special education students. I applied the strategies in Collins' (2001, 2005) disciplined thought that this reassignment would better serve our special education students. Although I made a decision to move Mr. Kareem to a new assignment, I spoke to him about what I thought was best for the students. Mr. Kareem agreed to the transfer, agreeing with my assessment. I continued to communicate the needs of the students and the building and encouraged staff members to request a voluntary transfer if he or she thought a different position would be more beneficial. The changes I made in staffing, reassignments,

and professional development improved instruction in the classroom as evidenced by, improved student behavior and higher Grade Point Averages (GPAs). Student suspension rates decreased by 20% in the fall of 2007 and 15% more students received a GPA of 2.0 or higher. We used the formative assessment rubric measuring stick to identify people that were not in the right seat or on the right bus. I followed Collins' (2001, 2005) practical discipline #2 and began to act by using the district's progressive discipline approach and documenting areas of weakness.

I rated HHS9 with an overall score of B in the area of disciplined people. The B score translated, we often exemplify this trait, but we also have room for improvement. I found our problem area to be the leaders who sit in the most powerful seats in our organization. In order to establish a common set of beliefs, staff must be committed to the process. Some administrators on our team were not guided by the disciplined people test. There were a large number of vacancies and non-tenured staff members at HHS9. I encouraged the administrative team to utilize the evaluation process and remove the wrong people from the bus. A majority of our administrative team took the time to seek out individuals who embodied our core value and commitment to improving academic performance for at-risk students in urban districts. By applying Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* principles, we were successful in bringing five new members on our team. When we visited the classrooms occupied by the new team members, it was evident teaching was effective and students were engaged in learning (Marzano, et al., 2001). Our new team members became involved in school-wide activities and initiated several new projects aligned to the NJCCC standards. As a result, we expected to see a marked improvement in 2007-2008 student scores on our local district assessments. The commitment to common beliefs and the willingness to act on those beliefs builds trust within

an organization (Greenleaf, 2003). Teachers that did not have the same commitment chose to transfer to other buildings. One veteran teacher who had served in several schools in the district came into my office one day and wanted a transfer out of the academy for next year. He said it was because he felt that a student was given a disciplinary referral and it was taken away, and he just did not understand why. This teacher exhibited poor classroom management skills, demonstrated low expectations for his students, and had been reprimanded for excessive absences and insubordination. This was an example of a “self-ejection” of a member from the team (Collins, 2001, 2005).

**Disciplined Thought.** Collins’ (2001, 2005) concept of disciplined thought in Stage II of the *Good to Great Framework* postulates confronting the brutal facts of the organization without losing hope and understanding the purpose for our existence. I was faced with the challenge of improving academic performance for a school in its 5<sup>th</sup> year of failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). I performed a pilot study during the spring of 2007 and found the students were deficient in academic skills, exhibited high rates of absenteeism, and discipline problems. Daily classroom visitations and directed rounds by the administrative team revealed direct instruction occurred at the rate of 39 out of 41 classrooms. Use of higher level questioning techniques and teacher-student interactions resulted in minimal feedback in 37 out of 42 classrooms. Content area vocabulary and ditto sheets, were the prevalent student activity observed in 33 out of 42 classrooms. In 38 out of 42 classrooms, differentiated instruction, technology use, and student engagement were not evident.

The leadership at the main campus limited my access to students beyond the ninth grade. The main campus principal informed me that I should not speak with anyone assigned to the main campus. All of my requests for information, throughout the reorganization process

were met with obstinacy, conflict, and withdrawal. I was new to the school system and considered an outsider by some staff members. Several staff members filed affirmative action cases when they received unsatisfactory evaluations and progressive disciplinary action, in an effort to encourage me to leave the position. All of the cases were deemed unsubstantiated.

There were administrative staff that also tried to undermine the vision. The vice principal assigned to my building was a protégé of the main campus principal. The main campus principal had political influence in the community. The vice principal was disillusioned because the main campus principal promised and announced that the vice principal would be the principal of HHS9. Considering these conditions, I initially hesitated to employ collaborative decision making among the staff. Non-participative decision-making can be a threatening process to implement (Day, 2000; Leithwood, et al., 2004). Although it is possible to impose restructuring from the top down, the possibility that the process would not be receptive was high (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1999, 2001). However, due to the inherent school culture, I struggled to implement strategies to combat the perception of failure that was systemic throughout the district and the community at large. I understood that these problems did not occur overnight and a simple resolution was unlikely.

On the positive side, there was a common goal that began to permeate the HHS9. The themes centered on: a) improved academic performance and b) ensuring a quality education for all students. Ensuring a quality education for all students became our Hedgehog Concept (Collins, 2001, 2005) and represented our answers to the three probing questions: 1) what are we passionate about?; students, 2) what drives our resource engine?; good teachers, and 3) what can we be the best in the world at?; effective teaching. During our opening staff meeting for 2007-2008, one of the activities for the staff was to come up with a theme we would

commit to for the school year. We divided the staff members into teams and each team were required to display creative ways to express our desire to improve student achievement. Staff members wrote songs, participated in skits, and designed posters. The staff presented the song to our parents during our Back-to-School Night event. As the principal, I had to ensure our commitment towards this goal and all of our efforts were directed at our hedgehog concept; ensuring a quality education for all students (Collins, 2001, 2005). The overall rating I gave HHS9 in the area of disciplined thought was a B (Collins, 2006). We often exemplified this trait. We also had room for improvement. I found that our overarching problem area was confronting the brutal facts to create a climate where the truth could be heard (Collins, 2001, 2005, 2006).

**Disciplined Action.** Collins' (2001, 2005) concept of disciplined action in stage III of the *Good to Great Framework* is a culture where everyone is committed to the goals of the company and accepts responsibility for his or her part in meeting the goal. We earned an overall score of C in the area of disciplined action, based on my self-evaluation (Collins, 2006). This meant I perceived that we showed some evidence of this trait, but our record was spotty. I saw a few problem areas evident in this stage. The first, was building a system of freedom and responsibility within the framework, by following a structure based on the collaborative plan developed by the administrative team (Collins, 2001, 2005). Secondly, we were spending too much time managing people. We wanted our staff members to understand and accept their responsibilities and not view their assignments as just a job. We showed significant improvements after the implementation of some professional development. This was very promising. At the end of June, approximately 15% of our classroom teachers were exhibiting a culture of discipline. By March of 2008, 50% of our staff exhibited a culture of

discipline (Collins, 2001, 2005). Fewer occurrences of absenteeism among staff were noted, and increased involvement in school-wide activities. The English Department coordinated a spelling bee focused on African American and women's history as a culminating activity for HHS9. The History Department coordinated a debate centered on the issues of presidential candidates.

A few staff members showed evidence they were practicing disciplined action by implementing the strategies presented during professional development (Collins, 2001, 2005). Mr. Manno was one of those teachers. Mr. Manno was a non-tenured teacher who we identified to receive professional development from our NUA consultant, Mr. Short. Mr. Manno, demonstrated use of Thinking Maps, how to engage students through innovated priming activities, and how to engage students in reflections for the purpose of cementing the learning. During our administrative meetings, we shared how we witnessed staff members implementing the NUA notebook, note taking, reflections, and exit ticket strategies as an ongoing tool for student organization. Seemingly, more and more staff members began to visit their colleagues' classrooms to peer poach or borrow instructional strategy, such as *The Instructional Flow Map*, which contained novel elements for student and teacher reflection on the learning, all in advance of concept confirmation and ultimately student assessment. When professional improvement was seen as a collective approach to improving instructional practices rather than individual, teachers were more likely to trust and value advice and expertise, leading to increased teacher efficacy (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Fullan, 1999).

One of the most promising moments that evidenced disciplined action: a culture of discipline and another push for the flywheel was the moment staff members began to speak out against other staff members who were identified as mistreating students (Collins, 2001, 2005).

Teachers must demonstrate sensitivity to ways in which caregivers may be most appropriately involved in schools as classroom volunteers or committee members (Cawelti, 1999; Cushman, 1996). A tenured teacher had the opportunity to connect with our student population. Instead, he chose to continually demean the students and not provide proper instruction. This was double jeopardy for the students. It was an unfortunate situation and many students suffered under his barrage of unprofessional behavior. Other teachers witnessed his mistreatment and cultural insensitivity towards students. One of the teachers went as far as to agree to expose his disgraceful epitaphs. The following narrative *Worth the Trip: A Glimpse of Sustainability* expressed the end of a very long journey in an attempt to move this individual out of the system.

**Worth the trip-A glimpse of sustainability.**

March 6, 2008...Today, my eyes are burning and my physical body is suffering from sleep deprivation; however, my mind and spirit are alert--a strong indicator I am not tired yet. I am sitting in a room downtown thinking about the eighteen months that has brought me to this place. The purpose of the gathering was to hear the facts in a case for a teacher facing tenure charges. The accusations ranged from insubordination to discrimination. I held a folder filled with memos, write-ups, and statements from students, all evidence of the inappropriate behavior of one teacher, Mr. Oturd. The room was a courtroom replete with former students, their parents or guardians, administrators, and one teacher, Mr. Manno. Everyone except one, was smiling, exchanging hugs, and engaging in small conversation to pass the time. The only person not smiling was Mr. Manno. I believe that his participation in this hearing was a relief for everyone except him. He, unlike the others, had to break the unspoken code of loyalty between colleagues and associates. He was simply going to tell what he heard countless times in his presence. Although everyone in the room played a crucial and integral part in the events leading up to this day, Mr. Manno was the most important piece to the case. Mr. Oturd had used a barrage of diversions to escape accountability for his behavior. He accused the students of lying, although evidence confirmed the truth; he accused the administrators of harassing him; this proved to be unsubstantiated, he even used his position and power to manipulate and coerce students into his desired behavior. Mr. Manno was the surprise link that I believe helped to ensure a verdict in the favor of the students. I knew he and I were sitting in a difficult space. I was there to confront some brutal realities about the staff that were providing instruction for my students on a daily basis. I was also there to seek justice for the disenfranchised and too

often marginalized children of color. Mr. Manno was there because he did not want anyone to believe that Mr. Oturd represented all teachers. He was there as a testimony to our Hedgehog Concept; ensuring a quality education for all students (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, March 7, 2008).

Mr. Manno and other teachers who came forward during this tumultuous time, are to be commended for their commitment to the hedgehog concept of HHS9; ensuring a quality education for every student, the exhibition of a culture of discipline, and their contribution for moving the flywheel one more rotation. Mr. Manno exemplified Guskey's (1986) *Model of Teacher Change*. Guskey (1986) proposes that change occurs in the following order: 1) professional development, 2) change in classroom practices, 3) change in student learning and then, 4) a change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs. The model says that significant changes in teachers' attitudes and beliefs occur primarily after they gain evidence of improvements in student learning. These improvements are usually a direct result from changes teachers have made in their instructional practice. Teachers believe it works because they have witnessed it work. It is the personal experience witnessed that shapes teachers' attitudes and beliefs. These initiatives and continuity showed evidence that the professional development activities on cultural proficiency were building momentum. We were confident this number would improve as we continued to seek and hire disciplined people with disciplined thought (Collins, 2001, 2005; Guskey & Sparks, 1996).

### **Building Greatness to Last**

Building greatness to last is the move towards sustainability of the goals set for the company regardless of who sits at the helm (Collins, 2001, 2005). The overall rating I gave HHS9 in the area of building greatness to last was a B- (Collins, 2006). Translated, it expresses that we often exemplified this trait, but we also had room for improvement. We employed the



formative and summative assessment instruments and systematically implemented a school-wide movement toward improving teaching and learning. Our efforts created the impetus for addressing the long-standing issues that had hindered improved academic performance for students at HHS9. The culture of discipline was building as we moved more of the right people on the bus with disciplined thought (Collins, 2001, 2005, 2006). Although staff did not acknowledge the implementation of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) initiative as a collaborative effort, the majority did state that they had seen a change in student progress and were more involved in trying to improve academic performance for all students. Teachers met regularly to design instructional strategies and staff development activities and borrow instructional strategies from other staff members. This was a change from the previous environment where several teachers spoke of how they were not able to interact with each other in the main campus expressing, "We never talked."

### **Freedom Writers-A Lesson in Cultural Proficiency**

There were several staff members identified by students as being culturally insensitive and not demonstrating disciplined action (Collins, 2001, 2005, 2006). Although this was not the terminology used, I believe it captured the essence of what was happening in the classroom and hindered the development of relationships between staff and students. Ms. Amber and I saw the movie *Freedom Writers* during the Holiday Recess and disciplined our thought to design a cultural proficiency professional development workshop using *Freedom Writers* as the basis for discussion (Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). I was inspired to design this workshop based on the work of my former professor and co-author of *The Culturally Proficient School*, Dr. Franklin Campbell Jones. The following journal entry and narrative describes our disciplined thought and action to establish HHHS9 as a culturally proficient environment.

October 23, 2007...It was the district-wide staff development day, and we had been scheduled for training in afternoon on the new SASI student management system, Class XP. This system allowed teachers to take attendance electronically and identify students who were cutting classes daily. However, at the proverbial eleventh hour, we were notified that we were not having the workshop and there had not been an alternative workshop prepared. As the building principal, it was my responsibility to ensure that my staff received professional development on the prescribed contractual days. Coincidentally, on the next day, Ms. Amber, one of my administrators that I had been mentoring, and I were slated to facilitate our workshop entitled, "Building Cultural Proficiency in the Classroom" using the movie, *Freedom Writers* as an instructional tool. We ceased the opportunity to present this workshop to our staff. Ms. Amber and I had several discussions about providing a series of workshops to train the staff in cultural proficiency. Although we had not planned to hold the workshop on that particular day, what appeared to the natural eye as a mishap, I now believe was an opportunity to move the issue of cultural proficiency in a climate wrought with cultural insensitivity and a break down in teacher and student relationships (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, October 24, 2007).

I went to Ms. Amber's office excited about the possibility of presenting the workshop to the staff as well as having a trial run of the workshop before the district-wide program on tomorrow. I asked the technology coordinator to set up in the cafeteria and my administrator rushed to one of my dedicated teachers to copy and put together the packet. As I entered into the cafeteria where the teachers were assembled, I was filled with trepidation because of the late hour we had to prepare for our presentation. I witnessed the teachers looking seemingly detached and worn from working a half-day schedule. By that time, the teachers had been informed that the scheduled workshop was cancelled. They suspiciously stared and waited as we continued to set up and distribute the handout materials (D. L. Marable, personal communication, October 24, 2007).

The cultural proficiency workshop was multi-purposed. It allowed our administrative team to demonstrate disciplined action by introducing the following activities:

- 1) beginning to address cultural proficiency issues that were manifesting in the classroom.
- 2) modeling using movies effectively for instruction.
- 3) introducing new instructional strategies, i.e. gallery walk, use of post-its, and chart paper to build on prior knowledge.
- 4) modeling activities that engage students in the learning process.
- 5) modeling teaching in an 80-minute block.

Each of these professional development activities were identified as areas of concern from our administrative team and teaching staff through formative assessments, summative assessments, professional improvement plans, classroom visitations, interactions with staff, and experiences documented in a reflective journal. I began the workshop by sharing my concern for the use of movies in the classroom. I informed the staff that although I did find movies a good instructional tool, there should be restrictions on its use. I explained that I

wanted to model how to use movie clips for instructional purposes (D. L. Marable, personal communication, Journal entry, October 24, 2007).

One goal of the workshop was to encourage teachers to recognize the behaviors and interactions with people that were measurable on *The Cultural Proficiency Continuum* ranging from cultural destructiveness to cultural proficiency (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). Cultural destructiveness was the lowest on the continuum. *The Continuum* provided language for describing both healthy and nonproductive policies, practices, behaviors, and comments (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003). We modified activity 3.1 from the book, *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders* (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003). This was an extremely effective portion of the workshop, where staff members were asked to reflect on comments that they had heard or said in and around the building or school district and put it on a post it. We positioned chart paper around the room and labeled each chart paper with one point on *The Continuum*. We asked the teachers to span the room and post the comments they had identified as hearing in or around the building or the district and write it on the corresponding chart paper using the gallery walk method. Teachers were surprised at how many of the comments focused on the low end of *The Continuum*, which concentrated more on cultural destructiveness and undisciplined thought and action (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). This exercise provided an eye-opening experience to the staff. The workshop was interspersed with movie clips to highlight demonstrated areas of concern. This instructional tool allowed staff to witness the possible effects some of their comments may have on the students they were serving in the classroom and move them to disciplined action. The demographics of our student population mirrored that of the students in the movie. We discussed the pervasiveness of cultural destructiveness in our district, and tied it

to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This discussion was used as a springboard for a discussion on meeting the basic human needs of our students (Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005).

## **Conclusion**

Leadership is an interactive, dynamic process by which all organization members construct a culture in which they are able to obtain their common goals (Deal & Peterson, 2003; Schein, 2004). I heard teachers planning collaboratively on thematic and cross-curricular projects without the recommendation from an administrator. One staff member went to a professional development workshop on inclusion. When she returned she was excited about turn-keying what she had learned with the rest of the staff. Our NUA consultant became a part of the team and noted staff members had begun to email him regarding clarifications on material presented during professional development activities. When our NUA consultant returned throughout the year, he noted implementation of some of the strategies that had been offered during staff development.

America's increasing diversity has put greater pressure on teachers and administrators to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully educate our students from a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. She argues that teachers continue to manifest racism and ethnic discrimination in the classroom, often unintentionally, and that a major change toward more appropriate professional development is essential for making America's teaching more culturally responsive and bridging the learning gap between black and white students (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). Teachers should experience the instructional approaches they are expected to use with their own students (Cawelti, 1999; Cushman, 1996). They should also attend workshops and courses with classroom follow up, participate in study groups, visit or watch videotapes of

high-performing classrooms, observe demonstration lessons, and receive classroom coaching. Teachers will teach as they have been taught and it is imperative that the instructional methods used with classroom educators be congruent with those they are expected to use in their classroom (Cawelti, 1999; Gall & Vojtek, 1994; Lewandowski & Moller, 1997).

Effective instruction in multicultural schools require that teachers combine a comprehensive knowledge of subject matter and use a wide repertoire of teaching strategies, knowledge about learning theories, cognition, pedagogy, curriculum, technology, and assessment (Calderon, 1997; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). Effective educators know and demonstrate appreciation for all their students. Through their attitudes and behaviors, they establish classroom environments that are emotionally and physically safe, and they communicate high expectations for academic achievement and positive relationships (Evans, 1996; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005; Sparks, 1983). Professional development activities related to these issues are key factors when educators find themselves employed by urban districts and they are teaching students whose backgrounds are significantly different from their own (Hord, 1997; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005).

Teachers' knowledge of their students is an essential ingredient of successful teaching. It is possible to have good relationships without good teaching however, it is virtually impossible to have good teaching without good relationships (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001). Staff development that helps teachers to understand the impact that social and emotional characteristics of students have on the classroom environment and provides strategies for tapping into the genius of each student is paramount (Guskey & Sparks, 1996; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). Culturally proficient professional development activities assist educators to

provide developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). It is essential in helping teachers use knowledge of their students' interests and backgrounds to assist them in planning meaningful, relevant lessons (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). Culturally proficient professional development arms educators with ways of providing lessons based on individual differences. These professional development activities allow teachers to recognize students' learning strengths and preferences and determine how to differentiate instructional activities in the realm of their classroom environment. Moreover, teachers learn ways to assess student progress based on individual differences (Calderon, 1997; Kelly, 1999; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).

Culturally proficient educators tap into the value and potential that is inherent in every student. They demonstrate understanding and respect of students' cultures and life experiences through their lessons and daily interaction with students and their families (Evans, 1996; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). Relevant, high quality staff development provides educators with opportunities to understand their own attitudes regarding cultural proficiency (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). Calderon (1997) agrees that these professional development opportunities help practitioners understand how their attitudes affect their teaching practices and expectations for student learning and behavior. In addition, culturally proficient teachers learn about the cultural backgrounds of their students and appreciate the educational opportunities that diversity brings to their classrooms to enhance students performance and increase student achievement (Calderon, 1997; Kelly, 1999; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). Staff development that equips educators with the knowledge and skills to establish safe and orderly

learning environments characterized by mutual respect is the optimal learning environment (Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005). Culturally proficient professional development activities enable teachers to develop classroom management skills that support positive interaction and nurture students' capacity for student-direct learning. It assists teachers and administrators in creating school-wide practices that model respect for students, their families, and their cultural backgrounds (Calderon, 1997; Kelly, 1999; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003; Lindsey, Roberts, et al., 2005).

Collins (2001, 2005) expresses that greatness should not be linked to one-time marketing strategies, in order to be sustained rather a great organization will stand the test of time with the passing of the baton multiple times, never losing focus of their core values—their reason for being present in the first place. The impetus for educational leaders is to create schools that work best for all children, schools that promote academic improvement for all students (Evans, 1996). In order to remain committed to our Hedgehog Concept; ensuring a quality education for all students, Cawelti (1999) stresses, that quality teaching in all classrooms necessitates skillful leadership at the community, district, school, and classroom levels. Accelerated academic performances among students require significant changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership practices. Instructional leaders recognize that quality professional development is the key strategy for supporting and sustaining quality instruction (Fink & Resnick, 2001). There is a critical link between improved instructional practices, student achievement, and the professional development of classroom teachers (Guskey & Sparks, 1996). I have the responsibility to ensure that all stakeholders understand that link. This understanding would help stakeholders serve as an advocate for continuous, high quality professional development for all staff (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2001).

The research conducted by Collins (2001, 2005) can be applied to any school system and may be the key to moving schools from *Good to Great* schools (Collins, 2001, 2005). It is about starting with the level 5 leaders, getting the right people on the right bus, and working systematically toward a common basic concept within a culture of discipline (Collins, 2001, 2005). Collins (2001, 2005, 2006) was able to use a quantifiable method to measure excellence in organizations. He began by identifying great companies and then gathering data about them. As a result, he found distinct characteristics that were identified in all of the companies that were acknowledged as *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001). The theory is that purposeful implementation of these distinct characteristics can be used to move other companies to greatness. Beginning with Level 5 leaders who, methodically implement the other six *Good to Great* characteristics and make incremental moves through each stage on the *Good to Great* continuum, schools can move from *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001, 2005). Although it was too early to determine the impact, if any, on HHS9, there was evidence of growth throughout stages I, II, and III of the *Good to Great Framework*. Assessment of the program should continue from year to year (Collins, 2001, 2005, 2006).



## Chapter 8

### Cycle V: Espoused Leadership vs. Theory-in-Use

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the emergent characteristics of my leadership from cycles I, II, III, and IV of this participatory action research (PAR) project (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Using qualitative data collection strategies, I documented my experiences from August 2006 through March 2008 at HHS9 in a reflective journal. I used this method to determine if my espoused leadership theory paralleled my leadership theory-in-use. I measured my leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), an assessment instrument developed by Bernard M. Bass (1985) and found in Northouse (2007). I chose this instrument because it:

- 1) Measured the characteristics of my espoused leadership theory which was based on the tenets of social justice, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and spiritual leadership,
- 2) Is the most widely used assessment for transformational and transactional leadership evaluation (Northouse, 2007),
- 3) Provided me an opportunity to validate my leadership, and
- 4) Allowed me to reflect on my leadership practices.

Due to the limitations of IRB approval from HPS, I only performed a self-analysis of my leadership. I used form 6S for data collection purposes because it was readily available (Northouse, 2007). I compared the results with my espoused leadership theory and my leadership theory-in-use using reflective practice. The MLQ has undergone several revisions and version 5x was the latest MLQ. I located a sample of version Leader Form 5x Short and

used it to compare my results for validity. Both of the forms are copy written and duplication was unauthorized and could not be included as an appendix.

The evidence in this chapter answers the following research question:

*How will my espoused leadership theory parallel my leadership theory-in-use while applying Collins' Good to Great Change Framework?*

### **Data Collection**

I used autoethnographic qualitative data collection strategies for cycle V. I documented events, my reactions, frustrations, perceptions of my experiences from August 2006 through March 2008 in a reflective journal. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism.

I measured my leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) an assessment instrument developed by Bernard M. Bass (1985) in Northouse (2007), I chose this instrument because it:

- a) Measured the characteristics of my espoused leadership theory which was based on the tenets of social justice, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and spiritual leadership,

- b) Is the most widely used assessment for transformational and transactional leadership evaluation,
- c) Provided me with an opportunity to validate my leadership, and
- d) Allowed me to reflect on my leadership practices.

I used Form 6S for data collection purposes because it was readily available (Northouse, 2007). The MLQ has undergone several revisions and version 5x is now the latest MLQ. I located a sample of version Leader Form 5x Short and used it to compare my results for validity.

MLQ form 6S was a survey of twenty-one questions with three items per scale, measuring seven leadership components and was considered a short form of the MLQ. Version 5x was a comprehensive survey of 45 items that measured a full range of leadership models. Version 5x consisted of 36 leadership items with four items per scale, measuring nine leadership components. On MLQ, form 6S four components were attributed to transformational leadership, (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. Based on opposing opinions of charismatic behaviors attributed to transformational leaders, the MLQ was modified and on Version 5x, idealized influence was divided into two categories, idealized attributed and idealized behavior, creating five components related to transformational leadership for Version 5x.

MLQ form 6S identified two components attributed to transactional leadership: (a) contingent rewards and (b) management by exception. The modified version 5x divided management by exception into two components: 1) active and 2) passive, creating another dimension of measurement for transactional leadership. The one non-transactional leadership component, laissez-faire, remained unchanged. The MLQ Version 5x also included three

outcome measures of leadership, 1) effectiveness, 2) extra effort, and 3) satisfaction each item had a four, three, and two items per scale respectively. These measures were not available on form 6S. Effectiveness measured perceptions of how effectively the leader leads, extra effort measured whether followers were investing more effort, and satisfaction measured how satisfied the followers are with the leader. Both versions of the MLQ used a five-point Likert scale scoring measure from 0 to 4, with 0= not at all, 1= once in a while, 2=sometimes, 3=fairly often, and 4=frequently, if not always. The MLQ had strong validity and reliability and was a strong predictor of leadership performance across a broad range of organizations, levels, and cultures.

### **Action**

I performed a self-analysis of my leadership using an assessment instrument developed by Bass (1985), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 6S and Version 5x (Northouse, 2007). My leadership theory-in-use was evident throughout the narratives created from my experiences documented in my reflective journal. My reflective journal summarized my experiences and interactions with colleagues on a weekly basis. I collected, sorted, coded, dated, and chronicled these artifacts using a manual filing system of binders, notebooks, and file drawers to organize the data. As I collected, sorted, and reviewed the data I was able to reflect on my experiences. I used composition books and legal pads for my reflective journaling, and post-it notes when the traditional form of note taking was not feasible. I noted specific events and dialogues as I documented my actions, reactions, and frustrations related to persons and events. I also formulated interpretations from interactions with human data sources, creating a qualitative primary data collection mechanism. I used reflective practice to compare emergent leadership characteristics to my espoused leadership theory.

I used the MLQ form 6S assessment a predictor of my leadership and reflected on my leadership behavior and practice. To analyze the results I manually totaled the sum of the items on the scale and divided the number of answered items that made up the scale. Using reflective practice, I reviewed my results by comparing my espoused leadership theory to my leadership theory-in-use. I used graphs for ease of discussion.

My leadership theory-in-use was evident throughout the journal entries that I used to create the autoethnographic narratives within this participatory action research project. My journal entries allowed me to reflect daily on my espoused leadership theory. I used reflective practice to compare emergent leadership characteristics to my leadership theory-in-use. My espoused leadership theory was an amalgamation of my beliefs, my attitudes, my values and my desired application of leadership practices. My leadership theory-in-use was what I actually practiced when I was in the natural work environment. There are often differences between what we espouse and what we practice. Leadership theories inform leaders of the strategies they use to achieve their objectives (Leithwood, 1992). Learning occurs whenever differences are detected and corrected. There are at least two ways to correct these differences. One way is to change my behavior. The second is to change the condition that led me the choices I made.

### **Theory-In-Use**

My espoused leadership theory was based on the tenets of social justice, transactional, transformational, and spiritual leadership. The transactional leader focuses on the managerial aspects of the organization rewarding teachers for service in an effort to coerce teachers to perform their responsibilities in the hope that success will follow and failure rates of students will decrease (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Day, 2000). The exclusive use of this leadership limits improvement in the organization or the people (Bass, 1985). According to Burns, (1978) the

transactional leader responds to the needs of the follower to complete a task, and is not necessarily concerned with the follower's perception of the leader. Transformational leaders raise followers to higher levels of performance through motivational practices (Burns, 1978). According to the MLQ assessment in cycle I, 70% of the time I exhibited transactional leadership and transformational leadership 30%. This was the period when I began my position at HHS9. I knew the building had to open on time regardless of how I had to accomplish that goal. I enlisted my knowledge of basic managerial skills and task-oriented strategies without stopping to check how the staff was doing. The custodial staff was in transition with the retirement of one supervisor and the transfer of the other. Therefore, the custodial team was reluctant to forge ahead and stay on task. Realizing the depth of work that lay before us, I had to employ a strategy that would accomplish the goal of getting the building cleaned and set up to open on the first day of school. Like the Level 5 leader in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great*, there were times when I became so laser focused that I pushed the staff too hard. One of the custodial workers, Ms. Stone insisted the building would not be ready to open for the first day of school. Albeit, it seemed like an insurmountable task but by balancing transactional leadership with transformational leadership the task was completed with time to spare. I was able to motivate staff to go beyond their own expectations and have the building ready on time.

**Transactional Leadership Theory-In-Use.** Transactional leadership, associated with scientific management, administrative principles, and bureaucracy, represents a rational perspective associated with hierarchies that assumes little interaction with the environment (Bass, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1984; Burns, 1978). I exercised transactional leadership to begin introductions to the new staff by purchasing breakfast and gave them a picture holder as a gift. In transactional leadership, followers are considered objects to be motivated only by economic

rewards (Bass, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1984; Burns, 1978). As discussed in cycle I, my staff were transferred from another site and I was identified as the outsider. They brought with them the traditions, policies, and school culture of the former organization (Schein, 2004). I had to institute new policies and procedures in order to establish HHS9 as a new environment with a new culture. Transactional leaders solve problems by creating new rules, procedures, or processes, or by restructuring the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). I developed a handbook to begin to address managerial concerns and encourage a collaborative effort to establish rules and regulations that would govern the students and staff HHS9 (Bass, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1984; Burns, 1978). It was my responsibility as the principal to set clear goals and objectives for staff and students to create a safe and nurturing environment (Bass, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1984; Burns, 1978). I analyzed the pilot study from the spring 2007 Leadership Application Fieldwork Seminar to assess student academic performance at HHS9 and made decisions on how to address concerns related to classroom instruction (Marzano, et al., 2001). In one instance, I utilized the district progressive discipline model and meticulously documented a tenured culturally insensitive, inappropriate, harassing, intimidating, and bullying staff member. I encouraged the direct supervisor to employ the same standards for all staff in order to ensure that the evidence collected would result in dismissal for teachers who breached the integrity of the classroom environment. Transactional leaders value data analysis, policies, rules and chain of command (Bass, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1984; Burns, 1978). Finally, transactional leaders tend to be systematic, analytical, and methodical in their behavior, making rational decisions based on data analysis. Leaders who operate from a transactional perspective set clear directions for people and hold them accountable for the

results. They strive for machine like efficiency and make decisions based on economic efficiency (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

**Transformational Leadership Theory-In-Use.** Transformational leadership contrasts transactional leadership and focuses on the commitments and capacities of organizational members' to increase the capacity for high performance and moral leadership, (Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 2003). Transactional leadership focuses on the process while transformational leadership encourages followers to take risks and maximize their potential (Bass, 1985). During this study, I had the opportunity to supervise five novice administrators. It was my desire to broaden their leadership capacity. I recommended that we meet weekly during non-contractual hours to address individual and collective building and management concerns, since our times during instructional hours were consumed with administrative tasks. This evolved into an opportunity for me to coach, mentor, and groom them for future administrative opportunities. I mentored them through all aspects of administration, including tools that were beyond their scope of daily responsibilities. Although there were times when some members of the team felt overwhelmed by the volumes of information disseminated, the majority of the team members appreciated the professional development and my willingness to share my experiences, discuss articles and other literature on leadership, expose them to school-based budgets, and other all-encompassing responsibilities usually privy exclusively to the principal.

Leithwood (1992) suggests that transformational leaders replace the status quo with continuous improvement and with a team approach to problem solving which leads to increased teacher and staff professionalism as well as individual problem-solving skills. Intellectual stimulation, challenges staff to question past practices and encourages them to become independent thinkers and problem solvers (Burns, 1978). I found several instances



where staff members exhibited increased professionalism and problem-solving skills. In order to minimize the fragmented, departmentalized, traditional high school experience that our staff and parents were accustomed, we restructured our Welcome Back to School Program.

Historically, parents received their child's schedule and follow that schedule for abbreviated times throughout the evening. The purpose was to give parents an opportunity to meet the staff members that would interact with their child on a daily basis and to share curriculum goals and objectives for each course. In the fall of 2007, we restructured the Back to School Night Program using interdisciplinary team presentations to parents. This model allowed teachers to offer a comprehensive presentation and elaborate on curriculum and instructional practices. The presentations varied among the groups, from the more informal to the technologically advanced PowerPoint presentations. Our parents witnessed the innovative efforts of the staff. They were provided with the teams' expectations for the students, and provided an opportunity for a question and answer session. Initially, staff members struggled with time management and coordination of efforts among team members. Their desire to exceed their own expectations forced them to rely on their innate ability to problem-solve and think the situation through to ensure success. As a result, we met our desired goal and parents were able to gain an understanding of HHS9's approach to improving instruction in the classroom in order to increase academic performance among our ninth grade students.

Transformational leaders believe that by meeting the needs of people in the organization, the group as a whole will be more effective than groups who do not operate from this mind-set (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders value feelings and relationships. They encourage and facilitate openness, participation, and empowerment. I exhibited these leadership characteristics using two of the four I's, inspirational motivation and individual

consideration. Inspirational motivation motivates teachers to take responsibility for their own professional growth. Individual consideration involves coaching, advising, and mentoring and exchanging ideas (Burns, 1978).

Transformational leaders improve school communities and foster greater teacher commitment, which will lead to improved instructional practices in the classroom and improved academic performance for students (Burns, 1978; Marzano, et al., 2001). Walkthroughs, formative and summative assessments revealed that inexperienced teachers and veteran teachers had not adapted to the ever-changing demographic population served in urban districts. I used the movie *Freedom Writers* as tool to introduce cultural differences and identify possible approaches to establish a classroom environment that was culturally proficient (Kelly, 1999; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003). I designed the workshop to provide behavioral intervention strategies to deescalate conflict in the classroom and other classroom management issues. Teachers were able to reflect on current practices, rate shared or heard responses on a cultural proficiency continuum, and reconsider instructional activities that increased levels of cultural proficiency during a gallery walk. We provided continuous professional development and feedback by providing a series of follow-up workshops with our district behavior intervention specialist and our administrative team. Our professional development workshops offered an opportunity to address cultural and generational gaps between our teachers and our diverse student population in the (Kelly, 1999; Lindsey, Robins, et al., 2003).

**Social Justice Context Theory-In-Use.** Social Justice Leaders take on high personal risk, and self-sacrifice to achieve a shared vision, demonstrating the inadequacy of traditional means, and willingly use unconventional methods to address inequities (Jacobs, 2006;

Marshall, 2004; Mezirow & Associates, 1990; Murtadha & Watts, 2005). They communicate the vision and strategies to the followers that the status quo is intolerable and the vision is much more preferable. There was a consensus among our administrative team that what happened in the classroom affected student performance. As a non-tenured principal holding true to the *Good to Great Framework* (Collins, 2001, 2005), I assessed the students' academic performance to identify areas of concern in the classroom (Marzano, et al., 2001). Formative and summative assessment tools revealed individuals who lacked the capacity to improve academic performance among students. My passion for fairness and justice to at risk students in urban districts to have access to a comparable education to their neighboring suburban counterparts drove me to eliminate nonproductive, unmotivated, and unwilling staff (Collins, 2001, 2005; Murtadha & Watts, 2005). Despite a non-tenured administrators' vulnerability to the community, teacher unions, and other political influences, I made tough decisions, keeping in mind our hedgehog concept; ensuring a quality education for all students at HHS9 (Collins, 2001, 2005). I found myself vacillating between transactional and transformational leadership to change HHS9's values to reflect a standard of fairness and justice (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). Forced to confront the brutal facts as outlined in Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great*, I know that the severity of the poor quality of instruction that existed at HHS9 compelled me to exhaust every available resource to protect the integrity of the learning environment.

### **MLQ Results**

Although leadership is difficult to measure, observe, or define, comprehensive surveys provide an economical way of identifying leader and followers perceptions of leadership (Patton, 2002). The MLQ form 6S survey questions focused on the behaviors associated with transformational and transactional leadership (Northouse, 2007). The results on the MLQ form

6S showed I exhibit high levels of transformational leadership with an overall scale score of

3.3. Individual scores for the four I's, were as follows:

1. Individualized Influence was high (11/3 or 3.7) and measured the degree I believe I acted as a role model for followers and exhibit high standards and high moral values.
2. Inspirational Motivation was high (10/3 or 3.3) and measured how I believe I communicated and demonstrated high expectations and a commitment to the goals of the organization.
3. Intellectual Stimulation was high (10/3 or 3.3) and measured how I believe I exhibited skills in developing the staff member into a problem-solver and risk taker, and allowed individuals to be creative.
4. Individual Consideration was also high (9/3 or 3) and measured my belief of my actions as a coach and advisor and the level of care I exhibited to followers.

I exhibited transformational leadership with high frequency in all four categories. I received the lowest scale score in individualized consideration. I was surprised at this score because I mentor administrators regularly. At HHS9, I mentored and coached five new administrators. I am a mentor for New Jersey Leaders 2 Leaders Program, the state approved residency program for K-12 administrators to receive New Jersey State Certification. Additionally, I mentor New Jersey EXCEL candidates, an alternate route program for supervisors and administrators certification.

### **Conclusion**

According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), an analysis of leadership style, skills and behavior could add to a principals' self-understanding of how they may be perceived by others.

Additionally, further assessment of leadership skills can result in improved understanding and clarification of a principal's strengths and weakness. This information can help facilitate a principal's ability to function well in the position and to continue to grow and develop as a leader. A principal that remains open to new ideas and seeks feedback and improvement, is a role model for teachers (Greenleaf, 2003). Greenleaf (2003) further noted that the key to leadership in an organization is how the leader connects with others. Leaders need to be attuned to the relationships that influence an organization. Leadership is about people and their perceptions of how they are being treated. Unfortunately, the higher up in the organization a leader moves, the less likely the individual is to receive feedback about their leadership skills (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

I anticipated that I would have scored higher on the transactional scale score. I received a 2.3 for contingent rewards measures that measured how I motivate staff to perform tasks, a reward in exchange for a specific behavior. My score indicated that I sometimes I exhibit this behavior. In management by exception, which measured the use of negative reinforcement as a means to correct undesirable behavior, I received a 1.7. This indicated I exhibited this behavior once in a while. I agree that I exhibit this behavior on an as needed basis. I did not receive a scale score for non-transactional or laissez-faire leadership. This did not surprise me. I believe I must be an active leader and lead by example. I cannot allow myself to ignore good or inconsistent behaviors.

When I began to review my journal entries, I realized I had underrated my transformational leadership qualities. Throughout my journaling, I noted comments from my staff such as, "Are you kidding, she is a professional," and "I never thought of it like that." My presentations during professional development were met with positive responses from typically

negative staff members. I had to acknowledge that I was a transformational leader who employed transactional methods to move my organization beyond what anyone could believe. When I reviewed the test scores of the Local District Assessment 9 in the spring 2007 Pilot study, I noted the improvement of 18% in language arts among general education students, despite the challenges we faced during the school year. I believe this is only the beginning and the ensuing year scores will surpass the previous years. I am encouraged by the comment, “I got it.” from one of my administrative team members during a discussion we had on dealing with a frustrating matter with a staff member. We began to see PLC meetings held weekly. Initially, PLCs were met with much resistance, now they were expected. Staff resisted giving honest feedback for various reasons. Some feared retribution, others were reluctant because of their own insecurities dealing with confrontation.

We were still struggling in some areas and have a long way to go. Our math department did not represent disciplined people. However, I believed that with one teacher at a time, we would begin to see some improvement. I do not give up easily as evidenced throughout the narratives and in my journal entries. One of my teacher aides commented, “You are going to make us leaders whether we like it or not.” She is no longer a teacher aide, she is a school clerk at another site and recently she called to say, “Thank you so much for pushing me, now that I am here, I realize why you pushed so hard, you wanted me to be the best I could be.” I receive phone calls regularly from people in places I have led, sharing one great story or success after another. Unfortunately, I have made some mistakes along the way. I have not been able to reach everyone whose life I have touched. There were also staff members that were moved involuntarily to other assignments. I was a great manager, and I thought that management was the basis for good leadership. I realized that management is task focused and not people

focused. I found that transactional leadership was my starting point to introduce myself to my new staff. Once I had made the introduction, I was able to employ my transformational leadership to build the staffs' trust and establish relationships. Transformational leadership is my preferred leadership.

Transformational leadership characteristics align with Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* Level 5 leader's ability to influence their followers toward a goal and seeing themselves and the environment in a new light (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders are proactive, seeking to optimize individual, group and organizational performance in an innovative way much like the Level 6 leader (Burns, 1978; Collins, 2001, 2005). Transformational leaders and Level 5 leaders do not settle for meeting the required goal, they always strive to exceed expected limits while maintaining their integrity. Transformational leaders and Level 5 leaders are change agents, developing conceptual roadmaps, breaking down old structures and establishing new ones (Burns, 1978; Collins, 2001, 2005).

## **Summary**

In summary, action research uses theory to guide change (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Sagor, 1992). The applications of theory require a deep knowledge of realities. Regardless of the design of a desired change, organizations may experience problems in implementation that block successful outcomes (Fullan, 2001). The practice of action research can help avoid or address some of these problems by allowing practitioners to define the problem, frame the research, collect and interpret the data, and adjust solutions. Action research helps an organization or system to develop its capacity to learn to change structures, culture, climate, and practices that stand in the way of successful implementation. The lessons we learn as we operate in organizations in different capacities, increase knowledge for action in many

different settings (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Sagor, 1992). I applied Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great Framework* principles to yield continual improvement in instruction by reiterating the steps of participatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). The cycles of fact-finding and the reflections on the data allowed me to consider changes in my initial plan.

Researchers agree that there is no position in education that is pulled in more directions and accountable to more people, than that of the principal (Day, 2000; Evan, 1996; Fullan, 2001). Even the best principals have difficulty serving as a catalyst for and facilitator of, change. In this age of accountability, the principal must make all decisions centered on the performance of students. At HHS9, we have more work to do in order to create an environment where academic performance will be actualized. We know it begins in the classroom (Marzano, et al., 2001). Borrowing from the narrative and autoethnographic style of writing, this participatory action research study recounted my experience as the catalyst for a second-order change initiative at HHS9. This experience provided me with valuable theoretical knowledge and skills and engendered an enduring commitment to continued application of Collins' (2001, 2005) *Good to Great* principles to improve instruction at HHS9.

My experience at HHS9 enabled me to reflect on the constraints posed on pedagogical practices by institutional factors and the need for a comprehensive organizational infrastructure to support change. Most importantly, my self-narratives highlighted the importance of reflective practice. Reflective practice led me to view my daily practice through a different lens (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). The effective principal is actively involved in all aspects of the instructional program, sets expectations for continuous improvement, establishes school culture, models desired behaviors, participates in professional development of staff, and



consistently gives priority to instructional concerns (Elmore, 2000; Leithwood, et al., 2004; Lewondowski & Moller, 1997). NCLB (2001) continues to hold principals and school districts accountable for student achievement through rigorous student assessments. Consequently, change must be rooted in disciplined people before change can take place (Collins, 2001, 2005). Core values and disciplined thought must be embedded in the disciplined culture of the organization for the process of change to permanently take root (Collins, 2001, 2005). Change as it applies to schools, is merely looking at your school and trying to determine the area that needs improvement (Fullan, 2001). I must do something to affect that improvement one-step at a time. With the ever-changing diverse population of students in urban districts, I must operate in a continuous cycle of improvement (Calderon, 1997). Reflective practice, operating in the action research cycle of reform, helped me to make a leap towards improving my leadership practice in order to improve instruction (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Sagor; 1992). This self-reflection leads me to define my leadership as a transformational leader driven by social justice, inspired by spirituality. I used the diagram in figure 5 to depict my leadership theory.

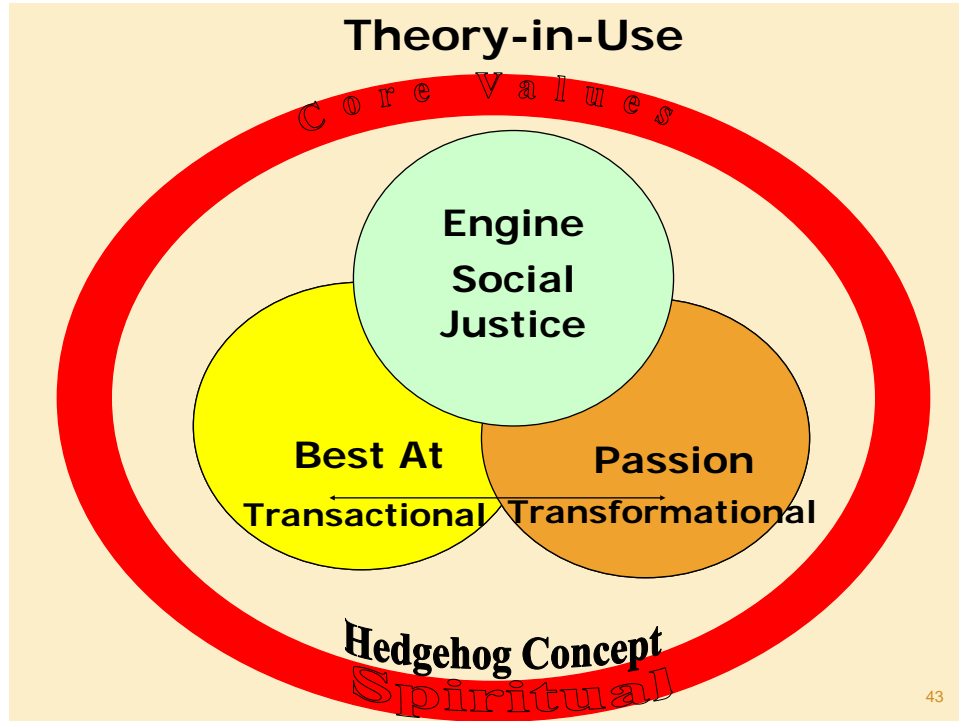


Figure 5. Donna's Leadership Theory

---

## References

- Aiken, W. M. (1942). *The story of the eight-year study*. NY: Harper & Row.
- Alston, J. A. (2005). Tempered radicals and servant leaders: Black females persevering in the superintendency. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(4), 675-688.
- Alspaugh, J. W. (1998). Achievement loss associated with the transition to middle and high school. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 92(1), 20-26.
- Alspaugh, J. W., & Harting, R. D. (1995). Transition effects of school grade-level organization on student achievement. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 28(3), 145-149.
- Anderman, E. M., & Midgely, C. (1997). Changes in achievement goal orientation, perceived academic competence, and grades across the transition to middle-level schools. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 22, 269-298.
- Atkinson, F. W. (1900). How can the public high school reach individuals? *The School Review: A Journal of Secondary Education*, 8(7), 377-387.
- Argyris, C. (1990). *Overcoming organizational defenses: Facilitating organizational learning*. MA: Harvard University.
- Arowosafe, D. S., & Irvin, J. L. (1992). Transition to a middle level school: What kids say. *Middle School Journal*, 24(2), 5-14.
- Baker, J., & Sansone, J. (1990). Ninth grade for students at risk of dropping out of high school. *The High School Journal*, 73, 218-231.
- Barone, C., Aquirre-Deandreis, A. I., & Trickett, E. J. (1991). Means-ends problem solving skills, life stress, and social support as mediators of adjustment in the normative transition to high school. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 19(2), 207-225.
- Bass, B.M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. NY: Free Press.
- Battin-Pearson, S., Newcomb, M. D., Abbott, R. D., Hill, K. G., Catalano, R. F., & Hawkins, D. (2000). Predictors of early high school dropout: A test of five theories. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(3), 568-582.
- Bean, J. P., & Metzner, B. S., (1985). A conceptual model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition. *Review of Educational Research*, 55, 485-540.
- Belinky, M. F., Clinchy, B. V., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. NY: Basic Books.

- Bernhardt, V. (1998). *Data analysis for comprehensive schoolwide improvement*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, Inc.
- Blanchard, K., & Bowles, S. (2001). *High-five: The magic of working together*. NY: Harper Collins.
- Blyth, D. A., Simmons, R. G., & Carlton-Ford, S. (1993). The adjustment of early adolescents to school transitions. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 3(1-2), 105-120.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1984). *Modern approaches to understanding and managing organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. (2003). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Boyer, E. L. (1983). *High school: A report on secondary education in America*. NY: Harper & Row.
- Boykin, A. W. (2000). The talent development model for schooling: Placing students at promise for success. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 5(1&2), 3-25.
- Bridges, E. M. (1996). Evaluation for tenure and dismissal. In J. Millman, & L. Darling-Hammond (Eds.), *The new handbook of teacher evaluation* (pp. 147-157). Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Brown, F. (2005). African Americans and school leadership: An introduction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(4), 585-590.
- Brunner, C. C. (2000). Unsettled moments in settled discourse: Women superintendents' experiences of inequality. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 36(1), 76-116.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. NY: Harper & Row.
- Burns, J. M. (2003). *Transforming leadership: A new pursuit of happiness*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Calderon, M. (1997). Staff development in multilingual multicultural schools. NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 410 368).
- Calhoun, E. (1994). *How to use action research in the self-renewing school*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Campbell, D., & Stanley, J. (1963). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

- Cawelti, G. (1999). *Handbook of research on improving student achievement, Second edition*. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service. (ERIC Documentation Service No. ED 394 629).
- Chute, E. (1999, August 24). Back to school: Ninth grade proves to be pivotal year for youths. Post-Gazette.com. Retrieved from [www.post-gazette.com/regionstate/19990824\\_ninth.asp.html](http://www.post-gazette.com/regionstate/19990824_ninth.asp.html).
- Collins, J. C. (2001). *Good to great*. NY: Harper Collins.
- Collins, J. C. (2005). *Good to great and the social sectors: Why business thinking is not the answer. A monograph to accompany good to great*. NY: Harper Collins.
- Collins, J. C. (2006). Where are you on your good to great journey: Good to great diagnostic tool version 1.0. Retrieved February 4, 2008 from: <http://www.jimcollins.com/tools/diagnostic-tool.pdf>.
- Conant, J. B. (1959). *The American high school today*. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Corcoran, T. (1995, June). *Helping teachers teach well: Transforming professional development. CPRE Policy Briefs*. Rutgers, NJ: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 69-79.
- Covey, S. (1989). *The seven habits of highly effective people*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Covey, S. (1990). *Principle-centered leadership*. New York, NY: Fireside.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cushman, K. (1996). Looking collaboratively at student work: An essential toolkit. *Horace*, 13(2), 1-12.
- Danielson, C. (1996). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Dantley, M. (2003). Purpose-Driven leadership: The spiritual imperative to guide schools beyond high-stakes testing and minimum proficiency. *Education and Urban Society*, 35(3), 273-291.
- Dantley, M. (2005). African American faith and Cornel West's notions of prophetic pragmatism: Restructuring educational leadership in American urban schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(4), 651-674.

- Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The right to learn*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Day, C. (2000). Beyond transformational leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 57(7), 56-59.
- Deal, T., & Peterson, K. (2003). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. NY: The New Press.
- Dewey, J. (1910/2008). *How we think*. Chicago: D. C. Heath & Co.
- DeWolfe, A. S., & Saunders, A. M. (1994). Stress reduction in sixth-grade students. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 63(4), 315-329.
- DuFour, R., & Berkey, T. (1995). The principal as staff developer. *Journal of Staff Development*, 16(4), 2-6.
- Dunlap, D., & Goldman, P. (1991). Rethinking power in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 27(1), 5-29.
- Eccles, J. A., Midgley, C., Wigfield, A., Buchanan, M., Reuman, D., Flanagan, C., & MacIver, D. (1993). Development during adolescence: The impact of stage environment fit on young adolescents' experience in schools and families. *American Psychologist*, 48(2), 90-101.
- Elias, M. (2001). Easing transitions with social-emotional learning. *Principal Leadership*, 20-25.
- Ellis, C., & Bouchner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute.
- Evans, R. (1996). *The human side of change: Reform resistance, and the real-life problems of innovation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fairholm, G. W. (1997). *Capturing the heart of leadership-faith and community in the new American workplace*. Westport, CT: Praeger Press.
- Fairholm, G. W. (2000). *Perspectives on leadership: From the science of management to its spiritual heart*. Westport, CT: Praeger Press.

- Felner, R., Ginter, M., & Primavera, J. (1982). Primary prevention during school transitions: Social support and environmental structure. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 10(3), 277-290.
- Fine, M. (Ed.). (1994). *Charting urban school reform: Reflections in public high schools in the midst of change*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Fink, E., & Resnick, L. (2001). Developing principals as instructional leaders. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(8), 598-606.
- Fullan, M. (1999). *Change forces: The sequel*. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Gall, M., & Vojtek, R. (1994). *Planning for effective staff development: Six research-based models*. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
- Gitlin, T. (1987). *The sixties: Years of hope, days of rage*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Gladwell, M. (2002). *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference*. NY: Back Bay Books.
- Glanz, J. (2006). *What every principal should know about operational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gooden, M. (2002). Stewardship and critical leadership: Sufficient for leadership in urban schools? *Education and Urban Society*, 35(1), 133-143.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. NY: Paulist Press.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (2003). *The servant leader within: A transformative path..* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Guskey, T. (1986). Staff development and the process of teacher change. *Educational Researcher*, 15(5), 5-12.

- Guskey, T., & Sparks, D. (1996). Exploring the relationship between staff development and improvements in student learning. *Journal of Staff Development*, 17(4), 34-38.
- Hertzog, C. J., & Morgan, P. L. (1998). Breaking the barriers between middle school and high school: Developing a transition team for student success. *National Association of Secondary School Principals*, 82(597), 94-98.
- Hertzog, C. J., & Morgan, P.L. (1999). *Transition: A process not an event*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary Principals.
- Heyboer, K.. (2008, March 2). Failures of the ninth grade success academy. *The Sunday Star Ledger*, p. 17-18.
- Hord, S. (1997). *Professional learning communities: Communities of continuous inquiry and improvement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Retrieved October 14, 1007 from <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/catalog/items/cha34.html>.
- Hunter, R. C., & Donahoo, S. (2003). The nature of urban school politics after Brown: The need for new political knowledge, leadership, and organizational skills. *Education and Urban Society*, 36(1), 3-15.
- Hunter, R. C., & Donahoo, S. (2005). All things to all people: Special circumstances influencing the performance of African American superintendents. *Education and Urban Society*, 37(4), 419-430.
- Jacobs, J. (2006). Supervision for social justice: Supporting critical reflection. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 33(4), 23-39.
- Johnson, K. (2001). *Who moved my cheese*. NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Jordan, W. J., McPartland, J. M., Letgers, N., & Balfanz, R. (2000). Creating a comprehensive school reform model: The talent development high school with career academies. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 5(1), 159-181.
- Judd, C. (1935). The historical development of secondary education in America. *The School Review*, 43(3), 173-183.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 567-605). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kennedy, M. (1999). Form and substance in mathematics and science professional development. *National Institute for Science Education Brief*, 3(2), 1-7.
- Kelly, J. (1999). Free to teach, free to learn: A model of collaborative professional development that empowers teachers to reach diverse student populations. *Journal of*



- Negro Education*, 68(3), 426-432.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2002). *The leadership challenge*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Krug, E. A. (1964). *The shaping of the American high school*. NY: Harper & Row.
- Kruse, S., Louis, K., & Bryk, A. (1994). *Building professional community in schools*. Madison, WI: Center on Organization and Restructuring Schools.
- Lee, V. E., & Smith, J. B., (1995). Effects of high school restructuring and size on gains in achievement and engagement for early secondary school students. *Sociology of Education*, 68(4), 241-270.
- Leithwood, K. A. (1992). The move toward transformational leadership. *Educational Leadership* 49(5), 8-12.
- Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S. Anderson, S., Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York: Wallace Foundation.
- Letgers, N. (1999). Teacher collaboration in restructuring urban high school (Report No. 37). Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, Johns Hopkins University. Retrieved March 9, 2007 from <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/techreports/report37.pdf.html>.
- Letgers, N., & Kerr, K. (2001). Easing the transition to high school: An investigation of reform practices to promote ninth grade success. Baltimore, MD: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University. Retrieved March 9, 2007 from <http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/dropouts/letgers.pdf.html>.
- Lewandowski, A., & Moller, G. (1997). The change that matters. *Journal of Staff Development*, 18(3), 45-49.
- Lindsay, P. (1982). The effect of high school size on student participation, satisfaction, and attendance. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 4(1), 57-65.
- Lindsey, R., Roberts, L., & CampbellJones, F. (2005). *The culturally proficient school: An implementation guide for school leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Lindsey, R., Robins, K. N., & Terrell, R. (2003). *Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Loucks-Horsley, S. (1996). *Principles of effective professional development for mathematics and science education: A synthesis of standards*. University of Wisconsin-Madison,

- Madison, WI: National Institute for Science Education, NISE Brief 1(1). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 409 201).
- Marshall, C. (2004). Social justice challenges to educational administration: Introduction to a special issue. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40(1), 3-13.
- Marzano, R., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- McPartland, J., Balfanz, R., Jordan, W., & Letgers, N. (1998). Improving climate and achievement in a troubled urban high school through the talent development model. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 3(4), 337-361.
- Mezirow, J., & Associates. (1990). *Fostering critical reflections in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The structuring of organizations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Muijs, D., Harris, A., Chapman, C., Stoll, L., & Russ, J. (2004). Improving schools in socially disadvantaged areas – a review of research evidence. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 15(2), 149-175.
- Murtadha, K., & Watts, D. M. (2005). Linking the struggle for education and social justice: Historical perspectives of African American leadership in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 4(4), 591-608.
- National Association of Secondary School Principals. (1996). *Breaking ranks: Changing an American institution*. Reston, VA.
- National Association of Secondary School Principals. (2004). *Breaking ranks II: Strategies for leading high school reform*. Reston, VA.
- New Jersey Department of Education (2004-2006). District factor grouping (DFG) for school groups. Retrieved August 2006 from: <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/finance/sf/dfg.shtml>.
- Newman, B. M., Myers, M. C., Newman, P. R., Lohman, B. J., & Smith, V. L. (2000). The transition to high school for academically promising, urban, low-income African American youth. *Adolescence*, 45(137), 45-66.
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). 2006. *The NAEP high school transcript study (HSTS)*. Retrieved April 2, 2007 from: <http://www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110. Retrieved March 5, 2007, from <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/html>.

- Northouse, P. G. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and practice*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Osterman, K. F., & Kottkamp, R. B. (2004). *Reflective practice for educators: Professional development to improve student learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Oxley, D. (2001). Organizing schools into small learning communities. *NASSP Bulletin*, 85(625), 5-16.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Perry, W. G. (1970). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme*. NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Pfeiffer, J. (1981). *Power in organizations*. Marshfield, MA: Pitman Publishing.
- Raywid, M. (1993). Finding time for collaboration. *Educational Leadership*, 51(1), 30-34.
- Raywid, M. A. (December 1997/January 1998). Small schools: A reform that works. *Educational Leadership*, 55(4), 34-39.
- Reents, J. N. (2002). Isolating ninth graders. *School Administrator*, 59(3), 14-19.
- Robinson, E. V. (1912). The reorganization of the grades and the high school. *The School Review*, 20(10), 665-688.
- Roby, D. E. (2004). Research on school attendance and student achievement: A study of Ohio schools. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 28(1), 3-14.
- Roderick, M., & Camburn, E. (1999). Risk and recovery from course failure in the early years of high school. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36(2), 303-343.
- Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (1993). *Research methods for social work*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Sagor, R. (1992). *How to conduct collaborative action research*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Sanders, Horn, & Wright. (1997). Teacher and classroom contextual effects on student achievement: Implications teacher evaluation. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 4(1), 3-7.
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schiller, K. S. (1999). Effects of feeder patterns on students' transition to high school. *Sociology of Education*, 72(4), 216-233.

- Schmoker, M. (1996). *Results: The key to continuous school improvement*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization*. NY: Currency Doubleday.
- Sergiovanni, T. (1994). *Building community in schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1999). *Rethinking leadership*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight Training and Publishing.
- Sizer, T. (1984). *Horace's compromise: The dilemma of American high school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Sizer, T. (1992). *Horace's school: Redesigning the American high school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Skrla, L. (2000). The social construction of gender in the superintendency. *Journal of Education Policy*, 15(3), 292-316.
- Sparks, G. (1983). Synthesis of research on staff development for effective teaching. *Educational Leadership*, 41(3), 65-72.
- Stigler, J., & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap: Best ideas from the world's teachers for improving education in the classroom*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Tanner, D., & Tanner, L. (1980). *Curriculum development*. NY: McMillan.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes of student attrition* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Umbach, P., & Porter, S. (2002). How do academic departments impact student satisfaction?: Understanding contextual effects of departments. *Research in Higher Education*, 43, 209-234.
- Wartenberg, T. E. (1990). *The forms of power from domination to transformation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Waters, T., Marzano, R.J., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement* [Working paper]. Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- Weiss, H. (1978). Social learning of work values in organization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 63(5), 711-718.

## Appendix A

### Teachers Who Care About Students

Teachers Who Care About Students will be able to:

- T = Take time in preparation and planning.
- E = Create appropriate evaluation tools for student assessment
- A = Maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to learning
- C = Incorporate innovative techniques to promote an integrated curriculum
- H = Portray heroic qualities that stimulate and motivate
- E = Evolve professionally through life-long learning
- R = Accept responsibility for all students left in his/her charge
- S = Continue to study new technology for implementation
  
- C = Show genuine concern for their well-being
- A = Provide assurance they will abide by our professional *Code of Ethics*
- R = Maintain a professional relationship with staff and students
- E = Encourage all to become all they can be
  
- A = Adapt to different learning styles
- B = Teach them to believe in themselves
- O = Observe everything in and around the classroom (wherewithness)
- U = Understand Maslow's hierarchy of needs and its impact on learning
- T = Present a thorough well thought out lesson on a daily basis (no winging it)
  
- S = Provide/Recommend support when needed
- T = Admonish with tender loving firmness
- U = Recognize that each student is unique
- D = Show dedication to the service of teaching
- E = Evoke enthusiasm in learning
- N = Nurture dreams and aspirations
- T = Summon temperance in challenging situations
- S = Focus on synergy (innate talent and abilities)

Donna L. Marable copyright © July 14, 2000

## Appendix B

### HPS Formative Observation Rubric Domain 1

COMPONENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>1(a) Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy</b>	Teacher lacks understanding of the subject, structure of the discipline, or of the content-related pedagogy as evidenced by content misconceptions and uncorrected errors.	Teacher has a marginal understanding of the subject, structure of the discipline, or of the content-related pedagogy as evidenced by a limited ability to respond to student questions.	Teacher demonstrates solid understanding of the subject, structure of the discipline, and of the content-related pedagogy as evidenced by the ability to make relevant connections within and across disciplines.	Teacher demonstrates an extensive understanding of the subject, structure of the discipline, and of the content-related pedagogy as evidenced by the students' ability to make relevant connections within and across disciplines.
<b>COMPONENT</b>	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>1(b) Selecting instructional objective(s)</b>	Teacher's objective is unclear, irrelevant, not developmentally appropriate, does not permit one or more methods of assessment, and/or is not aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.	Teacher's objective is clear, aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards but is not developmentally appropriate, and/or does not permit one or more methods of assessment.	Teacher's objective is clear, aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, developmentally appropriate, and permits one or more methods of assessment.	Teacher's objective reflects high-level learning (Bloom's Taxonomy), is aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, permits one or more methods of assessment, and takes into account the varying learning needs of students.
<b>COMPONENT</b>	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>1(c) Design coherent instruction</b>	The instructional design does not support the stated objective(s), nor is it stated how students will be engaged in meaningful learning. Developmentally appropriate materials and resources are not identified.	The instructional design marginally supports the stated objective(s) and somewhat engages students in meaningful learning. Developmentally appropriate materials and resources are selected, but not utilized effectively.	The instructional design clearly supports the stated objective(s) and is differentiated to address the needs of all students.	The instructional design clearly supports the stated objective(s) and is differentiated to address the needs of all students. Students participate in their development, where applicable.
<b>COMPONENT</b>	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>1(d) Assessing student learning</b>	Teacher's plan to assess student learning contains no clear criteria or standards, and does not measure the learning outcomes described in the instructional objectives. Teacher has no plans to use assessment results in designing future instruction.	Teacher's plan for student assessment includes criteria and standards that are not entirely clear and/or understood by students, but partially measures the learning outcomes described in the instructional objectives. Teacher uses the assessment to plan for future instruction for the class as a whole.	Teacher's plan for student assessment includes clear assessment criteria and standards that have been communicated to students, and effectively measure the learning outcomes described in the instructional objectives. Teacher uses the assessment to plan for groups of students and individuals.	Teacher's plan for student assessment includes clear assessment criteria and standards that are not only understood by students but also show evidence of student participation in their development. Students use the assessment to monitor their own progress in achieving the learning outcomes.

## Appendix C

### HPS Formative Observation Rubric Domain 2

COMPONENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>2(a) Environment reflects respect and rapport</b>	Classroom interactions between teacher/student and student/student interactions are inappropriate with negative overtones such as sarcasm, put-downs, or conflict.	Classroom interactions between teacher/student and student/student interactions are generally appropriate.	Classroom interactions between teacher/ student and student/ student interactions demonstrate respect and caring.	Classroom interactions between teacher/student and student/student interactions reflect a positive classroom environment. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among members of the class.
COMPONENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>2(b) Environment reflects behavior management</b>	Student behavior is poor with no clear and consistent monitoring or standards of conduct established. Response to student behavior is non-existent or inappropriate.	Standards of conduct appear to have been established, however application is inconsistent. Response to student behavior is inconsistent.	Standards of conduct have been established with consistent application. Response to student behavior is appropriate and successful.	Standards of conduct have been established with student participation. Application is evident based on students monitoring their own and peers' behavior. Response to student behavior is highly effective and sensitive to students' individual needs.
COMPONENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>2(c) Environment reflects procedural management</b>	Classroom routines and procedures are non-existent or ineffective. Available materials/resources are mishandled and result in excessive loss of instructional time.	Classroom routines and procedures are established, but not consistently implemented. Available materials/ resources are used inconsistently, resulting in some loss of instructional time.	Classroom routines and procedures are established and function effectively. Available materials/ resources are used effectively, resulting in a minimal loss of instructional time to maximize time-on-task.	Students take responsibility for much of the seamless operation of classroom routines and procedures, including the effective use of materials/resources.
COMPONENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>2(d) Environment reflects a commitment for learning</b>	Classroom environment reflects low expectations for student achievement. The teacher and/or most students convey a negative attitude towards learning. Students demonstrate no pride in their work.	Classroom environment reflects modest expectations for student achievement. The teacher communicates the importance of the content, but with only minimal buy-in from the students. Students demonstrate little pride in their work.	Classroom environment reflects high expectations for student achievement. The teacher and students convey commitment to learning and the content. Students demonstrate pride in their work.	Students assume much of the responsibility for establishing a learning environment in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates a passionate commitment to the subject.
COMPONENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>2(e) Organizing physical space</b>	Classroom is unsafe and resources are not accessible. Teacher makes poor use of the physical environment.	Classroom is safe and resources are used with limited effectiveness. Teacher makes adequate use of the physical environment.	Classroom is safe and resources are used to support learning.	Teacher encourages and cultivates student participation in maintaining a safe environment and ensuring equal access to all learning resources.

## Appendix D

### HPS formative Observation Rubric Domain 3

COMPONENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>3(a) Communicating clearly and accurately</b>	Teacher's oral and written communication contains syntactical and grammatical errors, or is unclear and inappropriate for students. Teacher's spoken language is inaudible.	Teacher's oral and written communication does not contain errors but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion.	Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students, both orally and in writing. Teacher uses content language and encourages student use.	The teacher's oral and written communication is clear and expressive anticipating possible student misconceptions. Teacher's well chosen vocabulary enriches the lesson and serves as a positive model.
<b>3(b) Using questioning and discussion techniques</b>	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques as indicated by low-level questions, limited student participation, and little discussion. Questions do not promote students' understanding of content matter.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high level questions, and moderate student participation. Some of the questioning does not promote students' understanding of content matter.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques that reflect high level questions, discussion, and broad participation. Questioning promotes students' understanding of content matter.	From the teacher's appropriate use of high level questioning and discussion techniques, the students formulate many of the high level questions and facilitate the active participation of other students in the discussion.
<b>3(c) Engaging students in learning</b>	Students are not engaged in significant learning as a result of misinformation, inappropriate activities, materials, poor presentation of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are partially engaged in significant learning due to uneven structure or pacing, inconsistent representation of content, activities, or use of materials.	Students are engaged throughout the lesson in significant learning. The structure and pacing of the lesson allows for student understanding, reflection and closure. Learning is facilitated through the use of appropriate instructional strategies and materials.	Students are highly engaged in the learning process and make significant contributions to the content of the lesson, activities, and materials.
<b>3(d) Providing feedback to students</b>	Teacher's verbal and/or written feedback to students is of poor quality and is not given in a timely manner.	Teacher's verbal and/or written feedback to students is uneven, and its timeliness and/or accuracy is inconsistent.	Teacher's verbal and/or written feedback to students is accurate, substantive, constructive, specific and timely.	Teacher's verbal and/or written feedback to students is accurate, substantive, constructive, specific and timely. Students make use of feedback from teacher and peers (if applicable) in their learning.
<b>3(e) Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness</b>	Teacher adheres to the instruction in spite of poor student understanding or of students' lack of interest. Teacher fails to respond to students' questions. Teacher does not assume responsibility of students' failure to understand.	Teacher demonstrates moderate flexibility and responsiveness to students' needs and interests during a lesson, and seeks to ensure the success of all students.	Teacher seeks ways to ensure successful learning for all students, monitoring and adjusting instructional plans as needed, and responding to students' interests and questions.	Teacher is highly responsive to students' interests and questions, making major lesson adjustments if necessary, and persists in supporting the success of all students.



Appendix E  
HPS Formative Observation Rubric Domain 4

COMPONENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<b>4a: Reflecting on Teaching</b>	Teacher does not reflect accurately on lessons nor proposes ideas as to how they may be improved.	Teacher's reflection on lessons are generally accurate, and teacher makes global suggestions as to how they might be improved.	Teacher reflects accurately on the lessons citing general characteristics and making specific suggestions about how they may be improved.	Teacher's reflection on lessons are highly accurate and perceptive citing specific examples. Teacher draws on an extensive repertoire to suggest alternative strategies.
<b>4b: Maintaining Accurate Records</b>	Teacher has no system for maintaining accurate records, resulting in errors and confusion.	Teacher's system for maintaining accurate records is rudimentary and only partially effective.	Teacher's system for maintaining accurate records is efficient and effective.	Teacher's system for maintaining accurate records is efficient and effective, as evidenced by varied examples of organized student performance artifacts to illustrate progressive growth.
<b>4c: Communicating with Families</b>	Teacher provides little or no information to families and makes no attempt to inform them of the instructional program or student progress.	Teacher complies with school procedures for communicating with families and makes an effort to inform them of the instructional program and student progress.	Teacher communicates frequently with families to inform them of the instructional program and student progress.	Teacher uses a variety of strategies and resources to engage families in the instructional program, as well as in the cognitive and affective development of the students.
<b>4d: Contributing to the School and District</b>	Teacher's relationships with colleagues are negative. Teacher makes no effort to become involved in school or district projects.	Teacher's relationships with colleagues are inconsistent. Teacher makes little effort to become involved in school or district projects.	Teacher maintains positive relationships with colleagues. Teacher participates in school or district projects.	Teacher maintains positive relationships with colleagues. Teacher assumes responsibility and/or leadership for school or district projects.
<b>4e: Growing and Developing Professionally</b>	Teacher does not participate in professional development activities, even when such activities are clearly needed for the development of teaching skills.	Teacher's participation in professional development activities is limited.	Teacher participates actively in professional development activities and contributes to the profession.	Teacher makes a substantial contribution to the profession such as mentoring new teachers, making presentations to colleagues, participating on school/district committees and actively pursuing professional development.
<b>4f: Demonstrating Professionalism</b>	Teacher's attendance is not consistent with district policy. Teacher's professional behavior is not consistent with district policy. Poor interpersonal relations are maintained with parents, colleagues and/or administrators.	Teacher's attendance is minimally consistent with district policy. Teacher's professional behavior is minimally consistent with district policy. Satisfactory interpersonal relations are maintained with parents, colleagues and/or administrators.	Teacher's attendance consistently complies with district policy standards. Teacher's professional behavior consistently complies with district policy standards. Positive interpersonal relations are maintained with parents, colleagues and administrators.	Exemplary teacher attendance exceeds district policy standards. Exemplary teacher professional behavior exceeds district policy standards. Excellent interpersonal relations are maintained with all parents, colleagues and administrators.

## Appendix F

### HPS Summative Observation Rubric

*HENDERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
ANNUAL TEACHER EVALUATION REPORT*

TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_  
 POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 TENURED: \_\_\_\_\_ NON-TENURED: \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT ID#: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ SUPERVISOR: \_\_\_\_\_

*FROM DATA GATHERED OVER THE COURSE OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR THROUGH OBSERVATIONS, TEACHER AND STUDENT ARTIFACTS, AND PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO ENTRIES, THE FOLLOWING REPORT SUMMARIZES AN EVALUATION OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE.*

DIRECTIONS: PLACE AN "X" IN THE CATEGORY THAT BEST SUMMARIZE THE TEACHER'S PERFORMANCE FOR EACH OF THE COMPONENTS IN ALL FOUR DOMAINS OF TEACHING.

SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:

DOMAIN 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

COMPONENT 1(A): DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(B): DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(C): SELECTING INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVE(S)	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(D): DESIGNING COHERENT INSTRUCTION	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(E): ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___

DOMAIN 2: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE  
 SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:

COMPONENT 1(A): DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(B): DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(C): SELECTING INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVE(S)	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(D): DESIGNING COHERENT INSTRUCTION	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(E): ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___

DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTION LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

COMPONENT 1(A): DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(B): DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(C): SELECTING INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVE(S)	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(D): DESIGNING COHERENT INSTRUCTION	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___
COMPONENT 1(E): ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUSHED ___

SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:

## Appendix G

### HPS Summative Observation Rubric

<i>HENDERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANNUAL TEACHER EVALUATION REPORT</i>													
DIRECTIONS: PLACE AN "X" IN THE CATEGORY THAT BEST SUMMARIZE THE TEACHER'S PERFORMANCE FOR EACH OF THE COMPONENTS IN ALL FOUR DOMAINS OF TEACHING.													
DOMAIN 4: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE												
SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:													
COMPONENT 4(A): REFLECTING ON TEACHING	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUISHED ___												
COMPONENT 4(B): MAINTAINING ACCURATE RECORDS	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUISHED ___												
COMPONENT 4(C): COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUISHED ___												
COMPONENT 4(D): CONTRIBUTING TO THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUISHED ___												
COMPONENT 4(E): GROWING AND DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALLY	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUISHED ___												
COMPONENT 4(F): DEMONSTRATING PROMPTNESS/ATTENDANCE	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUISHED ___												
COMPONENT 4(G): IMPLEMENTING DISTRICT POLICIES (DISCIPLINE, DRESS CODE, HOMELESSNESS, CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION, STUDENT ATTENDANCE, FIRE DRILL, PRC/504, etc.)	UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUISHED ___												
SUPERVISOR'S SUMMARY COMMENTS:													
EVALUATEE COMMENTS:													
PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: SEE ATTACHED													
SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION: (CHECK ONE)													
UNSATISFACTORY ___ BASIC ___ PROFICIENT ___ DISTINGUISHED ___													
RECOMMENDATION FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR: (CHECK ONE)													
GRANT TENURE (IF APPLICABLE) ___	CONTINUE EMPLOYMENT ___												
OTHER RECOMMENDATION: _____													
DATE OF EVALUATION CONFERENCE: _____													
SIGNATURES: <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%; text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">DATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">PRINCIPAL</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">DATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">TEACHER</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">DATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">WITNESS</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		_____	DATE	PRINCIPAL		_____	DATE	TEACHER		_____	DATE	WITNESS	
_____	DATE												
PRINCIPAL													
_____	DATE												
TEACHER													
_____	DATE												
WITNESS													