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Culture Change In A Rural High School

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CULTURE CHANGE IN A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

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CULTURE CHANGE IN A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL

Abstract

Rural high schools are most impacted by a negative organizational culture. Toxic behaviors prevail over the positive ones. Perspectives about what is possible to attain become jaded when school outcomes do not match individual expectations. If leadership does not treat sustaining a positive school culture as a priority, then the successful transition to the new demands of education is unlikely. The qualitative research was founded in the conceptual framework about change and culture in schools. A grounded theory approach was used in the methodology to examine the role collaboration and leadership play in establishing culture. Research questions addressed the role of collaboration in school culture change strategies to support a school culture, change agent qualities, and beliefs about transference. Themes regarding rural school culture, leadership and change emerged from the research. Data analysis using an open coding process generated themes of culture, collaboration, change, and leadership. Findings from the analysis of the data include: intentional collaboration techniques involvement focus; maintenance of positivity, using strong communication techniques, and application of effective change agent strategies. Leaders can support a positive school culture by having a focus on relationships, scheduling time for collaboration, intentionality, organization, and having a growth mindset. This supports implementation and sustainment of a respectful school culture focused on learning.

University of New England

Doctor of Education
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This dissertation was presented

by

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It was presented on
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Societal cultures are changing more rapidly than ever, due to advances in technologies, and the increasing accessibility of it (Robinson, 2016). Because information is immediately available, schools are no longer responsible only for passing down knowledge, but for teaching students how to think and how to learn. They must model growth mindsets and perseverance to understand and apply concepts, not merely learn them. Educators are now expected to teach critical thinking. A few leaders in that area, such as Robinson (2016) and Duckworth (2016) have spoken eloquently about those expectations in their writings and public presentations.

New information is coming quickly and students must be capable of higher-order thinking. The promotion of a growth mindset must be a part of the culture in every classroom (Beers & Probst, 2016). School leadership should promote an open-minded, growth-focused culture that focuses on growth and understanding. School cultures must embrace both tradition and innovation, which may have previously been considered at odds with each other.

Educators in today's society should ensure that they are teaching and modeling the 21st Century skills that their students are required to exhibit by the time they graduate from high school (NEASC, 2016). Such modeling cannot happen without lifelong learning and collaboration on the part of teachers, support service staff, and school administrators. That endeavor cannot happen when people refuse to change due to fear of failure. Educators must collaborate in a safe school culture that promotes the examination, refinement and innovation of school goals and expectations.

This study, which examines a public high school in rural New England, focuses on the leadership aspects in the development and sustainability of a positive school culture for teachers

in other such schools. The study evaluated the components that lead to low morale and poor retention in schools. It described the impact change has on a school culture, and how the emotions elicited by change can impact the culture of a school system. It describes how intentional steps can be taken to create a school culture that supports a safe culture of learning. The study identifies the steps needed to create and sustain a positive culture dedicated to optimal learning.

To identify the steps in sustainable culture change, one must first understand the realities and perceptions of school culture. Marzano, a leading educational researcher, has focused research on school leadership on an understanding of the value of staff perception and staff reality to improve the culture of a school (Marzano, 2003). When school leaders seek to find and establish common understanding about teaching strategies and learning supports by listening to staff perceptions and realities, they can help lay the foundation for efforts in culture improvement.

Schools with common understandings and shared visions for school-improvement processes have both administrators and teachers able to reach their goals by collaborating. Those schools use the power of collective intelligence to focus on school improvements and school culture (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Karhanek, 2004). That collaboration among various school stakeholders can help to establish a safe and caring culture of learning within a school. According to Marzano (2003), when school leaders address the perceptions from other staff members, it is important for the leaders to remember that, for those staff, those perceptions are their reality. The research and concluding results of this study reflect careful analysis of the staff realities of school culture, evaluated through qualitative measures. The study focused on staff

realities because staff perceptions trickle down to students and community, influencing a community's opinion of a school and its effectiveness.

Problem Statement

With the support of the technology boom, the United States has been moving to establish a common curriculum throughout the nation (Common Core State Standards, 2016). That effort has coincided with new national educational acts such as No Child Left Behind in the 2000s and new, and current "Every Student Succeeds Act" (Klein, 2016). Many states are now also following the Common Core standards (Common Core State Standards, 2016). Both initiatives mean a realignment of teacher expectations and roles in regards to teaching pedagogy. In some of New England's rural high schools, which were previously sheltered from the federal changes in education, failure to comply with the new legislation may have negative impacts for teachers.

Small, rural high schools are the most affected by the presence of a negative culture (Kotter & Rathgeber, 2015). The voices of those who have been in a small school for a long time are much louder than the voices of new teachers who come in with innovative ideas (Kotter & Rathgeber, 2015). That creates a culture of distrust. When staff members do not trust their administrators, the ability of administrators to lead change becomes weakened. Similarly, negative sentiments diminish strength of teachers to take educational risks to improve their teaching is much less likely to happen. In small communities, negative culture can emanate from a school. It is visible to the community and to students served. If leadership does not treat school culture as a priority, then a successful transition to the new demands of education is unlikely. Thus school leadership should seek more collaboration across disciplines so there is a team approach to accomplishing school goals. The problem to be studied is how the positive impact of culture can create, change, and sustain a culture of learning among educators and students.

The site-study school staff has been slowly but deliberately working to improve their school culture since June 2016, when a resigning staff member verbally assaulted the administration in front of all the staff at an end-of-the-year celebration. The assault illustrated the need to establish a culture of respect and life-long learning for all. The school leadership team, led by the principal and assistant principal, has worked diligently to promote a culture where learning is the focus. School leaders have not only introduced new morale builders and support interventions for staff members, but administrators have dealt with those staff members who most contributed to the toxic workplace culture prevalent at the school in previous years. According to Holloway and Kusy (2012), leaders who have a control and understanding of the culture within their workplaces are more likely to have success in mitigating toxic behaviors that prevent a workplace from moving forward in a positive fashion.

To promote a positive culture that actively removes toxic behaviors, it is important for school staff to work on creating one team working together for the shared purpose and passion of teaching and supporting the students. When toxic behaviors prevail over positive ones, and staff members start picking sides and lose a vision for learning. When there are different values and perspectives on how a school should run, it can lead to an environment in which there are divisions among staff members. In communities where the management of a school has been one in which teachers and administrators have an equal voice, it creates a culture of distrust when a change is implemented by administration, and a message of urgency regarding the change has not been established.

Often, change implemented by administration comes from state mandate or with the support of other school leaders. However, if the urgency for a change is not consistently provided to the school body, change resistors will actively fight against it (Kotter, 1995). In such

situations, veteran staff will often remember past initiatives that failed and believe that a new change will fail as well (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2017). Those more resistant to change are likely to have competing commitments to the change proposed, and a division among staff is developed. That attitude does not help anyone within the school teach effectively; neither does it help students learn. It is important for staff within the school to continue to push to support and listen to each other, thus supporting students together. When a school staff is working together, it can create a safe, respectful school culture focused on learning.

Purpose of the Study

This is a qualitative study that focuses on questions regarding themes on culture and change. The Utilitarian Theory, which focuses on how people choose to take steps to remove pain or to bring happiness, was used as a guide (Cahn, 2014). The purpose of this study was to identify, explore and analyze the leadership aspects in the development and sustainability of a positive school culture for teachers in rural public high schools.

Along with federal and state mandated change, advances in technology have created more opportunities for student learning, and for helping a school run more effectively. With those new advances, mandates, and goals, however, comes change. Change is difficult if the reasons for it are not made clear (Fullan, 2001). For teachers to engage in change, they should have time to understand and process the change so they can take ownership of it. That helps to establish a culture where change is happening in the school, instead of a culture where change is being done to the school. When staff members take ownership of change and sees it as an opportunity for growth and learning, it helps to establish a school culture that prioritizes new learning for students and staff.

That is especially true when the culture of an organization does not yet embrace change, or have a safe and school-wide culture of learning for both adults and students. When researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology dissected the brains of geniuses, they saw that those brains had an average of eleven times more neural pathways than that of an "average" brain (Lepore, 2001). People have the ability to grow more neural pathways; the best way to build more pathways is to try new things. That is true for the young and the old.

Every time someone tries something new, a new pathway is created, and that growth, along with the amount of learning that needs to happen, is why it may be stressful for people to learn new things (SEEDS, 2016). It is important that an organization can embrace change, and why it is important that individual's responses to change can be recognized. There is an urgency to create a culture that embraces lifelong learning and promotes risk-taking.

To create a safe culture focused on learning, everyone within an organization needs to be supported and be willing to take risks. Members of the organization should work together so that they can accomplish shared goals. That is what collaboration is. Research has shown that deep collaboration in schools is the most effective practice in creating successful schools (Anrig, 2013). One of the best ways to create deep collaboration is by establishing a school culture where learning is a priority for all educators within the school.

 When leaders identify mistakes as a learning opportunity, an organization has the potential to achieve anything (SEEDS, 2016). Great educators and leaders are prevalent in all schools but some people are more effective than others. The way that more people can become more effective is through the establishment of a strong culture within a school (Kohm & Nance, 2009). Educators who work in schools with strong collaborative cultures can work together, and share the responsibility to help all their students learn.

Research Questions

1.   How did team collaboration within a school influence the culture of learning in a

public school?

2.   What change agent strategies did school leaders implement to transform a culture

into being a caring community dedicated to learning?

3.   What qualities does a successful change leader possess?

4.   How can these be transferred to others?

Conceptual Framework

The American public education system is going through long-needed fundamental

changes at a faster pace than ever. There has been a clear need for educational reform for more

than 100 years. With the support of the technology boom over the past 30 years, public education

in the United States is moving quickly to establish a common curriculum throughout the nation,

which some leaders believe will ensure that all children are successful.

Those initiatives have evolved over time, but many states are now following the

Common Core curriculum standards, which may lead to a realignment of teacher expectations

and roles in some areas. In New England, at some of the more rural high schools previously

sheltered from federal changes in education, those changes are coming quickly. The change has

negative impacts for teachers if they do not comply with the new legislature (Maine Department

of Education, 2016). According to Fullan (2014), only 38 percent of teachers like their jobs; 75

percent of principals say their jobs are too complex and dissatisfying; and 42 percent of students

say they don't like school after age nine. Those statistics should change. While some schools

have cultures that actively support and promote personal growth and achievement, many do not.

If those who teach and learn in the schools are not happy with their experiences, the academic and personal growth potential for every individual in the school is not being met.

Change is hard for many people. Well-known change experts such as Fullan (2001), state that only leaders who can handle a complicated and rapidly changing environment can implement the reforms that lead to sustained change and improvement. That is because change is emotional and threatening to some. It can make people scared and defensive (Fullan, 2002). It leads people to seek out a scapegoat to protect them from feeling failure. That fear of failure is an emotional response from the potential threat of change. Change means learning how to do something new, and learning new things often comes with many failures before eventual success. Some teachers feel successful with what they have always done, that what they are doing is already good. Such teachers are not striving to become excellent, because doing so would require engagement with effective initiatives and changes. Thus, teachers must feel safe to take educational risks, seek feedback from others, and be open to constructive criticism. Promoting educational advancement and learning requires that people feel safe enough to risk failure. It takes courage to fail, and to share failure with colleagues. It is much easier to fail privately, to leave one's reputation intact. In the past, education had an "I teach my content and you teach yours" mindset. Teachers did not go into each other's classrooms regularly to learn from each other. Indeed, going into other classrooms can make the one teaching feel vulnerable to the reactions of his or her co-workers (DuFour, 2015).

Change is a phenomenon. Lewin (2004-2005), considered by some the father of social psychology, created Change Theory, which details the process of change, and how it effects groups and individuals on a social and psychological level (Kritsonis, 2004-2005). Leaders, looking for a big-picture perspective, consider the qualities of keeping the status quo versus the

qualities of changing it, which can potentially drive change. If leaders determine that changes are better than the status quo, it leads to a shift in the equilibrium for an organization (Kritsonis, 2004-2005). For those who are uneasy, or have a different perception of the changes, such situations lead to hesitancy and resistance. Even those who embrace change will experience some upheaval before the proposed outcome has been made reality. For an organization to fully complete the change process, the leaders initiating the change must first be able to analyze and predict how the implementation of the change will affect those within the organization. In education, it becomes even more complex, because public schools are impacted by mandates and reforms from federal and state levels, as well as steps taken to improve by a district or school itself (Andresen, Duerr & Furthmyre, 2016). Such changes can be difficult to conceptualize for some educators who do not understand or agree with the reasons for change.

As educators retire and others begin their careers, new conversations and school visions emerge. From these sometimes opposing visions, the evolution of two separate cultures can emerge: the veteran teachers who "have always done it this way," and new staff who are eager to embrace new pedagogy, but are reluctant to make waves. When school leaders, who must push for change to meet mandates and hold staff accountable (Kotter & Rathgeber, 2016), are added to the mix, it can result in three different viewpoints. That can create an "us versus them versus them" situation. It often fosters a culture of distrust among teachers, coaches, staff, administrators and district staff. If the actors cannot trust one another, the ability to be motivated to take on or lead change is weakened, and the willingness to take risks to improve teaching is diminished. The results can be detrimental: a negative culture among staff; a hostile work environment; a failure to implement necessary changes. Particularly in small communities, such

negative results trickle down to the community, and to the students those staff members are there to serve (Kotter, 2016).

The intended methodology is to use qualitative, categorical research, a grounded approach that guides the qualitative portion of the work. That approach is best suited for studies examining the views of participants (Creswell, 2013). Creating a respectful, collaborative culture within a school utilizes a professional's desire to teach and support students, the desire to succeed in one's career, and to promote happiness through those achievements. The goal is for the researcher to examine how the findings from this research can be transferred to cultural transformations in other schools across the nation.

Assumptions

Leaders within school systems must understand the impact of culture and change to create and sustain a school-wide culture of lifelong learning among educators and students. To do so, leaders should see that the school in question is an organic entity that changes with the culture. A poor culture leads to poor morale and lack of pride in the school. A collaborative culture leads to healthy risk taking and motivation for learning among all.

In the past, students who were successful in school learned how "to do school." Top-tier students learned how to get the grades, how to understand a teacher's expectations, and learned exactly how to meet that standard. Those students who were most successful in school were masters of reading people, and reading what their teachers wanted to read or see. That was not a measure of academic intelligence. It was instead a mastery of fulfilling others' expectations. In such situations, there is little challenge in learning. Today, however, educators must create a new culture of learning, must model how learning works, and then embrace that model.

Within organizations with low morale and poor culture, people do not feel appreciated. When someone does not feel appreciated, it promotes disengagement and reduces motivation (Fisher, Frey & Smith, 2016). One way to help people feel included is by providing small tokens of appreciation. For example, providing meals and snacks to staff members can be a morale booster. Even small gestures can help people feel emotionally safe (Hoerr, 2016).

Providing people with emotional well-being through respect and appreciation are key components of this research. The focus of this study is about changing a culture to one that promotes a safe and respectful culture of learning. It can happen when people feel engaged and appreciated, but will not occur until people can identify the results of their actions, and are held accountable for their own behaviors.

Limitations

There are many leading authors on educational change, leadership and culture including Sarason, Stoll, Kotter, Fullan, Collins, Whittaker, Darling-Hammond, and Cuban. Research from those experts is included in the literature review. But there is very little existing research focused on developing and sustaining positive culture change in small, rural school systems. Kotter and Rathgeber (2016) offer some research about creating and sustaining necessary change in small communities, but it is primarily done through a story-telling format, and does not provide a thorough, evidence-based design in the writing. There are numerous studies and books on change and school climate, especially by authors such as Whitaker, Kotter, and Fullan and Cavanaugh. There is a gap in research about how to create a positive culture in rural high schools, where the impact of change and the negativity can run deep, and throughout an entire community.

Scope

Schools are now being faced with the challenge of embracing the changes while being supportive of one another. School administrators can no longer simply be managers, and sustain a school by acting through status quo (Kotter, 2015). They must now be change agents, leaders and managers (Fullan, 2015). That is not unique to the site study but is a challenge in all American schools. In addition, schools are struggling to help students reach their full potential, which means there is an urgency to create a culture where students are taught how to learn, not just taught how to "do school."

By and large, people want to learn, but not everyone has the skills to understand how to do learn effectively (Edutopia, 2016). Some people are so fearful of making a mistake that they will not take the extra step in using their own experiences to build on the knowledge they are being taught. That is true for both children and adults. Having the skills and the confidence to embrace new learning and take healthy risks needs to be an expectation for all teachers (DuFour, 2015). To meet today's educational demands, continuous learning must become an expectation of all within a school system.

Due to technological advances, it is important to consider how intentionally creating a safe culture of learning that embraces change can be sustained and thrive with the use of technology. That means collaboration among staff members and fair evaluation of their individual contributions. School systems are fortunate because they have experts of a variety of subjects and initiatives all working under the same roof or within the same district. Collaboration with technology and academic content areas would help promote teacher skill and increase learning for students. More research needs to be conducted to identify best practices in how

collaboration among departments can promote growth and a safe culture of learning for those within (Maine Department of Education, 2016).

Significance of the Study

Just as expectations for educators are changing, the cultures within the educational systems are changing. That will not slow down, as society is moving at faster than ever due to scientific and technological advances. Difficulties in accepting change may be the reason that theories such as Lewin's Change Theory (Kritsonis, 2004-2005) from the mid-twentieth Century gained so much popularity. Lewin's theory provided a three-step process for change. It helped leaders understand the stages people go through when experiencing change: periods of defensiveness, confusion, transition and crystallization of the change (Lewin, 1947). Change has been heavily researched by experts such as: Kristonsis (2004-2005); Sarason, (1996); Fullan, (2001); and DuFour, Brady and Kotter (2016). Change has been proven to be challenging for many. If the leadership within an organization does not treat school culture as a priority, then the deterioration of new educational mandates would be likely.

Sarason (1996), wrote that changing school culture is very difficult, and needs to be done in a comprehensive way. One identified concern with school culture is that there is a divide between administration and teachers. Often, a principal feels very alone in his or her position, and teachers feel overwhelmed with the lack of time to learn new strategies (Sarason, 1996). In reality, both the principal and the teachers are all working towards the same goal: to support student learning. One way to help change a culture is to get people within a school's existing culture to understand that everyone in the school is pursuing the same goal. When educators understand they are there for the common good, it promotes a sense of collegiality and teamwork among all members of the group.

This study focuses on the evolution of the culture in a small rural high school and how change can make a negative impact on school culture. The main audiences for this study are school administrators, teacher-leaders, teachers, and other educators who primarily work in rural public high schools undergoing change, and who want to do their part in improving the culture in their school.

The study identifies the steps needed to create and sustain a positive, new school-wide culture. The study site is a rural, community-based public high school in New England. Approximately 400 students attend the high school and come from five different small towns in the area. The culture being explored would be one that encourages school staff members to take educational risks and promotes lifelong learning for staff members. The study focuses on staff perceptions of culture because those influence the students and the community, creating a whole-community based opinion of the school and its effectiveness.

Summary

To promote and sustain a culture of respect and lifelong learning, an organization needs to have strong leadership, and staff that is willing to take on short- and long-term goals, and who are willing to admit their own mistakes to continue to build trust among their colleagues, and push the organization forward. School leaders should address teacher perceptions of time constraints and deficits when discussing teachers' available planning and collaborative time. Discussions on how to maximize time and embrace a growth mindset should be included in school professional development. When stakeholders within an organization take risks and see failure as opportunity, they help to promote a culture of learning and innovation. One way to assess the success of creating a safe culture built on lifelong learning is to look at the overall achievements and deficiencies within an organization in the current state, especially when compared to baseline data collected before a culture is established.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The objectives of the literature review are to organize and review current literature on school culture and change. Information on current initiatives impacting culture within schools is included in this review. This review has been systematically organized to allow readers to understand initiatives impacting changes within education, the impact of culture on schools, and successful strategies currently available to support and sustain a positive culture. It is concise and clear so that the information is understood. Possible contributions can be made and are established in the review. The literature review will examine the impact of change collaboration on school culture. The review will analyze the role that leadership plays on establishing and sustaining a school culture.

Review of the Literature

The review examines and analyzes a multitude of topics that impact school culture. It includes topics such as change, educational reform and best practice, student development and concerns, growth mindset, school culture trends, and the development of culture. By providing a comprehensive overview of such topics, including concepts of leadership, collaboration and change in school culture have been addressed. The literature presentation provides a review of the available academic research necessary to explain the purpose of the study, explore the problem being examined and show where the study being conducted fills in the gaps in the available academic literature.

Change Initiatives Impacting Education

Numerous changes and advancements in the field of education promote change-taking place in schools. In some instances, a change may be more specific for one district, there is no doubt education is changing and those within the profession should be prepared to take on the change. Stakeholders in an organization must understand their role in any changes that are planned or in progress in their institution. Understanding and identifying the changes is the first step in implementation and sustainment of creating a strong school culture.

Rate of change in society and impact on school culture. Political, social and societal factors all impact change in the schools. As expectations have changed in public education, so have the responsibilities and burdens placed on educators. By 2018, all students in schools will have been born in the 21st Century (Beers & Probst, 2016). These students have been raised in a society with the Internet, and any knowledge or fact that interests them can be at their fingertips, with the use of smartphones, tablets, laptops and search engines. Today's students are digital natives and do not learn the same way that students learned in the past. In the past, social, technological and environmental change occurred at a much slower pace.

The older generation used to determine what was more of a priority, as the younger generation would also have some of the same challenges and opportunities. This is no longer the case. Changes in society and changes in education mirror one another and new knowledge is developing more quickly than before (Brady, 2008). It cannot be about teaching simply facts and figures or equations anymore. Students can easily access this information at any time. Now, there needs to be a focus on teaching critical thinking techniques,

Today there is a greater expectation that, if a student is not learning, the teacher needs to change how the material is being taught (Marzano, 2003). This mindset is how school systems

should approach change and culture within the school (Sarason, 1996). In order to create a culture of safe and respectful learning in a school, the shared leadership of administration and teachers should consider best practices on how to do this effectively (Marzano, 2003).

Educators are required to teach students how to learn and think. Researchers in the area of teaching students how to think and learn, such as Robinson (2016) and Duckworth (2016) have spoken eloquently about this through venues such as TED talks and by authoring books. Students today should have higher order thinking skills, so that they are able to learn how to learn, rather than just learning by rote. The promotion of a growth mindset needs to be a part of the culture in every classroom and school (Beers and Probst, 2016). Educational institutions should promote an open-minded culture that focuses on growth and understanding.

Educators today should teach and model the 21st Century skills students need to develop in high school and beyond (NEASC, 2016). For this to occur, educators and students alike must be able to examine and refine their ways of thinking. This critical thinking process will help students prepare for the future (Beers & Probst, 2016). The ability to think critically will enable students to bridge information acquired from one experience to another. This is the act of learning how to learn. If schools help students establish strong critical thinking strategies, students will be better prepared for the learning challenges presented to them by the 21st century.

In some cases, teachers are not prepared to teach students how to think critically. Education has changed from students learning information to students learning how to learn (Marzano, 2003). Putting this expectation on school staffs is relatively new and has led some staff members in schools to consider new careers as teaching is not simply about just covering the material anymore (Beers & Probst, 2016).

Standards in education. Standards-based education provides students with essential learning through multiple pathways (Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005). Teachers are expected to use differentiated instruction in every classroom as a means to help all students meet their goals and show proficiency in the standards. Assessment and data analysis should be used to help inform instruction and better meet the needs of all students. Professional learning opportunities and instructional rounds will help teachers better support their students.

Some students require alternative avenues towards learning while others will excel in a classroom with higher conceptual instruction. Whatever educational strategy best helps a student succeed and meet his or her potential is the way that should be used for that particular student. The challenge for schools is to identify what way works best for each individual student and then provide that educational way for him or her. This is where education is at and it is what will help students achieve their potential.

Differentiated instruction. There are extensive research on the positive impact of differentiated instruction on students. Many practices make differentiated instruction an effective part of classroom design. These practices include positive behavior classroom management and intentional student engagement promotion (Huebner, 2010). Another aspect of differentiated instruction is teaching to the student's zone of proximal development. This is the projected growth a student should be able to make in the class or from the lesson.

Fundamentals of differentiated instruction promote the idea of multiple pathways in the traditional classroom. Multiple pathways of learning allow students to learn in their own unique way (Huebner, 2010). The roles of teachers are to meet the students where they are in their educational journey. Teachers cannot teach one lesson and expect all students to understand the same concepts presented from this lesson (Marzano, 2003). Providing differentiated instruction

allows for student gaps in understanding to be filled. This promotes student engagement in learning, and the idea of student responsibility.

      Response to Intervention (RtI). RtI first became a part of federal law in 2004, when the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education) was last updated. The purpose of RtI is to make sure that students referred to special education experience true disabilities and not referred from the result of poor teaching (Samuels, 2016). RtI has required a change in cultures at schools where it has been implemented. State laws throughout the United States require schools at all levels to have RtI teams (Maine Department of Education, 2015). Teams should address students with low performance and to make sure that the proper intervention is taking place before a referral to special education is made. High schools have been mandated to effectively implement RtI programs. This means they must have a program in place to best meet the needs of their most at-risk students (Samuels, 2016). In many high schools, this response is becoming more of a necessity due to new graduation standards and student need. A high school that is striving to meet the needs of all students must have an RtI program (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015).

      An RtI program is focused on looking at the student comprehensively. Educators that are not able to help a student progress will track the interventional support they provide for the student and refer them to an interventionist for more intensive support. Tracking student intervention and asking for help from other educators to provide additional support is a component of the process (Samuels, 2016). It is an open-minded approach and requires those within the school to take on an inclusive mindset with teaching. Teaching in today's society is no longer an individual act, it is focused on creating school wide collaborative approaches to teaching the whole student.

The workshop model. The workshop model helps to meet the whole student by giving kids time process and examine material. It takes time, learning and collaboration (Tovani, 2011). The workshop model involves using student data, such as common assessments and formative work, to help improve student learning (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015). The focus of the workshop model is on how instruction needs to change to meet students' needs (Tovani, 2011). The workshop model meets each student where they are in a small group setting. It is a teaching strategy that can be used to help differentiate learning for students (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015). A teacher should be prepared to address the students who work fast and well (Tovani, 2011). This means more pre-planning for those students. Students cannot sit idly once they finish something; they need to have another activity that is meaningful and educational. The workshop model may also happen in small groups of students who are in similar places in their learning. A workshop model is a teaching tool in which helps teachers meet students where they are in their learning progression (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015)

As a teacher, sometimes giving feedback that is specific and clear is difficult. Clear feedback requires more time but it helps students get a better understanding of what they should do next. When looking at this process, it helps focus on the feedback and the end goal instead of the score. The role of homework in education must be considered. Presently, schools use a numerical grading system, which results in students using homework to boost grades. Homework should be about improving learning and for teachers to provide feedback to help the student progress in terms of skill acquisition. When a system has moved on to full proficiency-based education, homework can be about learning and feedback.

Homework in standards education. In the book, *Elements of Grading*, Reeves (2011) finds there has been a need for change in grading practices for nearly a century. In the early

2000s, homework carried a lot of weight in terms of a student's grade. "Good" students were responsible and did their homework, received good grades whether they understood the material or not as homework grades carried them (Trumbell & Farr, 2000). In an age of proficiency-based education, the grade comes from what the student really knows and what can be assessed.

Trumbull and Farr (2000), discuss how homework can be a safe place for students to make mistakes. Many students are afraid to make the first mistake so they never try, fearing failure. Students benefit from watching adults taking risks and trying something new. Risk-taking models courage and a growth mindset and encourages students to follow by taking their own healthy risks.

Considering how homework is looked at with standards, many New England high schools must reconsider the role homework has in education. Students who are not doing well may focus on little pieces of the grade, for example, a missing homework assignment, instead of on an upcoming exam that is summative in nature. Educators in today's world need to have a school culture that focuses more on learning and less on grades. School cultures in the present day need to help students see what they need to do to progress.

Focus on dropout prevention. Keeping students engaged will reduce dropout rates (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). High school dropouts have a huge negative impact on society. People who drop out of high school have higher rates of unemployment, mental health problems and incarceration (Bowers, Sprott, & Taff, 2013). The national dropout rate in 2011-12 was 19 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). In order to reduce dropout rates, schools need to find applicable ways to keep students engaged in school and involved in learning. Students all learn in their own way. Students' learning styles can range

from visual to auditory to kinesthetic (SEEDS, 2016). Teaching students specifically about how they best learn will help them stay focused and engaged in their own learning.

Adolescence is a critical time in someone's life when peer relationships are important to one's academic achievement (Bowers, Sprott, & Taff, 2013). During this time in someone's life, adolescents experience a need for independence as well as a need for social acceptance. Research shows that with adolescents, positive peer relationships are associated with higher academic achievement (Roseth, Johnson & Johnson, 2008). When students feel accepted, engaged and achieve success they are more likely to be successful in school.

Drop-out prevention and red flag identification. There are many red flags indicating a student may drop out (Furlong & Christenson, 2008). In a study of 110 red flags leading to drop out done across thirty-six different states showed that the most accurate red flags, among all the ones listed, were the those noting a student's low and failing grades as a predictor. Another red flag was the student's attendance records. Students who were absent frequently were less likely to be engaged in the school culture or in their classes.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for people who drop out of high school to get jobs, as most places of employment want applicants with high school diplomas (Heppen & Therriault, 2008). People who drop out of high school have a lower income and a lower life expectancy. It is for these reasons, high schools should have an accurate early warning system to help at-risk students graduate on time. Students drop out of high school because of instability both at home and at school (Bowers, Sprott, & Taff, 2013). If the school staff is proactively trying to find what students are most at risk of dropping out, then intervention can occur and an education plan that specifically meets the needs of the student can be implemented.

Engagement. Engagement is observed when students are attentive, committed, persistent, and find meaning in their learning (SEEDS, 2016). These are the four quadrants of engagement. Caring about students beyond the classroom is a priority in engagement (Furlong & Christenson, 2008). Educators must meet students where they are and go from there in the educational journey. For effective cognitive and affective engagement to occur, students must have a sense of belonging in their schools (Furlong & Christenson, 2008). Students have a sense of belonging because of their relationship to each other, peers and adults. While some students have internal motivation to be successful, others do not (SEEDS, 2016). Schools should provide support and have an on-track indicator to prevent dropout.

On- track indicators. Every school should have an on-track indicator (Heppen & Therriault, 2008). An example of an on-track indicator would be for freshmen to have at least five, half-year course credits and have one or less failing grades in a core class each semester. As a school moves towards standards-based grading, students are "on track" if they are at or above the grade level standards. The importance of establishing on-track indicators for student graduation progress helps support students before they drop out of school. Students that are provided early intervention are four times more likely to graduate from high school in the traditional four years than students not receiving early intervention (Heppen & Therriault, 2008).

Technology in dropout prevention. Technology can be a tool in dropout prevention (Maine Department of Education, 2015). In 21st Century schools, many students are equipped with one to one devices and teachers are often provided with computers. In New England, there are some learning technology initiatives that allows for all students in grades 6-12 to have access to their own individual device (Maine Department of Education, 2015). Similarly, this program provides devices to all teachers. With technology literally at people's fingertips there is an

opportunity to use it to track data and instantaneously see how students are doing in any given class. Schools are now able to track how their students are doing and what types of intervention have worked to support them (Reeves, 2016). Teachers, interventionists, and administrators must have a firm grasp on the technology at hand so they are able to easily access the sites to input data (Maine Department of Education, 2015). Shared data allows educators to work together in analyzing data (Reeves, 2016). The data shared can be seen by anyone that is working with the student in the school. Tracking student data allows educators to determine what is working for the students and what is not (Reeves, 2016). When working, it can help support the needs of students and add them as they go through high school. For educators, this means they must be proficient in technology and the software used. For some, this is a burden and requires new learning. Technology is ever changing, which means learning will never stop. Educators should have a growth mindset when considering the use of technology. To best support students, educators must stay up to date with technology. This will help them to better support their students using the same technology.

  Focus on freshmen. Success in the ninth grade is critical for the completion of high school (Habeeb, Siebert & Moore, 2008). Ninth grade is a very important time for the students. Teens face social and emotional struggles and increased academic demands of high school (Johnston & Williamson, 2011). In one study, 40 percent of ninth-graders in cities that have the highest dropout rates will repeat the ninth grade and of these, only about 10 percent go on to graduate from high school (Johnston & Williamson, 2011). Early prevention of high school drop out should start even before the first year of high school, but extra attention should occur during freshmen year (Habeeb, Siebert & Moore, 2008). Data justifies the need to provide extra attention and intervention to students in their ninth-grade year.

Students who come from backgrounds with any type of disadvantage are more likely to

fail a class (SEEDS, 2016). Looking at a student's background as a factor can help identify

students who need more intervention. These students benefit from a high school's multi- tiered

system of supports (MTSS). Pharris-Ciurej and Hirschman (2012) looked at a cohort of high

school students from 1996-1999. Of the cohort, 93 percent of the class was still present in high

school after the first semester of high school. By the end of their sophomore year, the class

consisted of 67 percent of the original. At the end of their senior year, only 46 percent graduated.

Identifying at-risk students should be an ongoing process starting in elementary school. It

is very important for there to be strong and clear communication about students of concern

during the transition time between eighth to ninth grade (Habeeb, Siebert & Moore, 2008).

Reviewing a student's early ninth-grade performance will allow for early intervention (Pharris-

Ciurej & Hirschman, 2012). A multi-tiered support program has mechanisms in place to identify

struggling students before they fail. Using these supports intentionally and systematically is a

change initiative for some schools. This type of data collection and informed decision-making is

essential, as it supports students retention in school (Habeeb, Siebert & Moore, 2008).

Freshmen support, transition and home visits. Home visits to new students the summer

before school starts is one way to help improve the culture from the student perspective (Payne,

2008). It helps to remove student and parent stigma of school in families of low income (Habeeb,

Siebert & Moore, 2008). A home visit can help to foster relationships and meet families where

they are, showing families that the school is dedicated to them.

The idea of a home visit is a relatively simple. It allows for incoming students to feel

welcomed and safe when coming to a new school. Happy students that feel safe at school help to

improve the school wide culture. Research shows that home visits are an essential tool to help

bridge the gap for students and school staff. Bridging the gap is especially important when socioeconomic divides exist. When the teachers get to know families in their homes, they gain knowledge about each student and each family, rather than creating generalities (Baeder, 2010). The purpose of home visits is to improve the school culture by welcoming all freshmen and letting them know the school really cares about them.

Case study: Creating a welcoming culture through home visits. The home visit to all freshmen is something that was first considered at this literature review's site study in the summer of 2015. The proposal was to visit all freshmen at their homes for their high school, to help ease the transition to high school for incoming freshmen. A few school stakeholders came up with excuses for why this was not a good idea. Comments like, "that's a good idea but there are too many families to visit. It can't be done in a summer," or "yes, but people don't want visitors to their home. It will make them feel uncomfortable." Both of these excuses were used to disguise the real concern, that visiting freshmen at their homes takes time and it is uncomfortable, especially for those people driving to each home and putting themselves out there, placing themselves in a vulnerable position.

Doing home visits for incoming freshmen is an invaluable tool. It allows for the school staff to reach out to the students and get a glimpse of what life is life for their students. There was a family who lived in a run-down motel, another home that looked condemned and abandoned, so much so that branches from a tree were growing inside the home. There were homes that greeted by signs stating to "beware of dog." There were million dollar homes on the water, homes with large, working farms and beautiful houses, and homes atop large hills, with gorgeous views.

Supporting students and letting them know the school cares is essential in creating a culture of learning and student growth. Students who believe that school educators "don't care" about them will be impeded in their educational growth. A freshman visit can help students understand that the school cares and that the school is invested in the student.

Outdoor learning options. In a study by the Department of Education and Skills, in the United Kingdom (2006), looked at over 500 students, aging from primary school to secondary school and how they felt about doing outdoor nature based learning and field trips. Most students were optimistic about the outing. Students like being a part of nature and being able to interact with it. It also looked at what youth wanted in nature-oriented activities. Results showed that 68 percent of those surveyed said that they wanted to be involved in the decision-making process of what they would be doing.

Students should have a say in their outdoor learning experience, but providing students with the opportunity to choose aspects of their learning is important, no matter the background. Students being involved in the decision-making process of their education is incredibly important to their investment. Data shows that allowing students to have a say in their learning can help students gain a sense of responsibility to their learning and can promote the idea that students are responsible for their learning. This can be seen in another change initiative, service learning.

Service learning. Schools should offer more service learning courses to help prevent students from dropping out. In a study by Bridgeland, DiIulio and Wulsin (2008) that researched student engagement, 64 percent of students said service learning could have a big effect on keeping potential dropouts in school. An overwhelming number of students (83 percent) said they would definitely or probably enroll in service-learning classes if they were offered at their school but only 16 percent of students said their school was offering service-learning classes

(Bridgeland, DiIulio & Wulsin, 2008). Many students reported if they felt the classes were relevant to their future then they would be more engaged and care more about the class resulting in better grades. The report argued that service learning is important to youth because it teaches leadership skills, how to be a good citizen and how to make every day, real-life decisions.

Schools should incorporate service-learning projects into the transition years, as these are such a critical time for students, especially those who may be at risk. Of the students who drop out from high school, 60 percent of them do so within their ninth- or tenth-grade year. Forty percent of students who dropout later report disengagement from school much earlier on than in the eleventh or twelfth grade. The case for more service learning classes especially in the ninth grade could be considered as a possible Tier one intervention as it is providing the students with a provisional way to learn some ninth-grade curriculum. A service learning class in the ninth grade be a tool to help keep at risk students engaged and in school. Another change initiative that has been impacting the revision of the school expectations, and ultimately the school culture, is the development and the expansion of online learning.

Online learning. A research brief provides data analysis of the online learning initiative in Illinois public schools (Picciano, Seamon, & Day, 2011). Overall, many educators have been supportive of using technology for credit recovery courses but not to gain credit for a typical class. Teachers are concerned classes will not cover the same standards the teacher would cover in the typical class setting. Data suggests that many teachers prefer not to be involved in the creation of an online course when it is specific for a local area, and most would opt for the student to use a generic online course. If a teacher does not trust the online course then they would need to individually create the online course, but many teachers choose not to do this because of lack of support in time and financial compensation.

Data shows this educational pathway is the best way for some students to learn. It is important to provide teachers with more information about online learning programs. This allows them to have a voice in the creation of the procedure in a school and is one way to promote this new pathway of learning. Providing the teachers with more professional development in online learning opportunities, and opening more dialogue in this area will help teachers have a voice in the change within the school system. Teachers play a role in change initiatives. Including them in the process of the initiation of change will help to create a culture of shared learning and promote shared leadership.

Dual enrollment. Dual enrollment is a change initiative that is slowly growing throughout the country but is a major initiative at the site study, a rural and community high school in New England. This change initiative requires a shared vision among the leadership and the teachers involved in the program. The purpose of dual enrollment is to help students not only receive college credit while in high school but to help students, to see themselves as college going and college graduates. This is true for first generation students. Supporting students in their educational goals and in achieving their potential is the basis of all change initiatives within the schools now.

Hughes and Edwards (2012) reviewed data from the dual enrollment movement, and looked at data from various sites in California. The review of data focused on how dual enrollment has impacted students from low socioeconomic (SES) households. The goal of the dual enrollment courses of these students was around various career options. The teachers of these courses were asked to look at the ways their students were struggling and then address, in a preventative fashion, these issues in the classroom setting to help the students overcome those barriers. Providing the intervention from the classroom setting was very successful.

When proactive support is in place for students, their success is more attainable. Students who come from low SES backgrounds benefit from extra support, especially if there are any unforeseen costs that pertain to the learning. Helping students overcome these costs, whether it is through grants, conversations with family or employers, or by obtaining a new library card, for example, can help the student become more resilient and more successful.

Dual enrollment leading change. The dual enrollment initiative is growing throughout the country. The proportion of students taking dual enrollment courses has increased nation-wide (Taylor, 2015). It is important to consider the impact dual enrollment has on students with low socio-economic status. Research suggests that dual enrollment has a positive effect on all students, but students with low SES were less likely to participate in dual enrollment programs. This article is supported by An (2013), who suggests that providing all students with the tools needed to be successful academically will improve the school culture and learning. If all students feel as though they can complete dual enrollment courses, no matter costs or barriers, then students will take more responsibility for their learning and have more of a voice in their education.

Behavior, Respect and Appreciation

The relationships students develop at school with both their peers and with adults are ways that help students stay engaged in school and lower the risk of dropping out. Just as with adults, when students feel valued and respected they are more likely to be engaged in their learning and work towards having the appropriate types of behavior that they should have within the classroom and within their community (Fisher, Frey & Smith, 2016). One way to support inclusiveness within the school is to include restorative practices within the educational system (Rubio, 2014). This allows for people to repair the harm they have done.

Instead of having the offender experience a punishment it would be more beneficial for both the victim and the perpetrator to sit down and discuss the action to resolve the problem. This is the intent of restorative justice. It involves having both parties sit down and discuss what happened and what has been done since then. When people feel heard and that they've had closure on the situation, they are more likely to feel safe with in the school system (Rubio, 2014). This is true for adults and for students. If students and staff feel safe then they are more likely to engage in their education or at their job (Fisher, Frey & Smith, 2016). To support productive restorative practices, it is important for people to have these conversations and allow for short follow-ups to make sure the people are still feeling safe and heard. If this can be done within the school system it will help to create a safer school culture for everyone.

Neuroscience of behavior and culture creation. One of the purposes of education is to help student develop their capacity. To do this, educators must understand that the brain is a kind of muscle (SEEDS, 2016). There are two hemispheres in the brain. The left side of the brain is believed to be significantly stronger at logic. This is considered to be the side that focuses on processes, math, science and history. Educators work to holistically develop this left side of the brain. On the right side of the brain is where creativity is believed to be. In the 1990s and 2000s, researchers discovered the right side of the brain is where the emotional intelligence takes place (Bradbury, 2009). Unfortunately, before this research was developed, the United Nations started working on what they believed to be the most beneficial for global educational practices, which led to a new culture within education (SEEDS, 2016).

The United Nations was the organization that developed the purpose and need for standardized testing. Scores would reflect students' academic outcomes across the globe and assess whether were receiving the same education. However, standardized tests generally focus

on logic and reasoning. Due to this emphasis, 73 percent of a student's classroom time is spent focusing on logic and reasoning. This meant that only 27 percent of student classroom time is focused in creativity and emotion (SEEDS, 2016). Students are leaving schools without as much challenge and practice with using emotional intelligence. As adults, people should be intentional toward developing this intelligence so they will have the skills to maintain relationships.

  The brain and culture of learning. To truly understand science of how the brain impacts the culture of learning, one must first look at how the neurology of the brain and how the brain is used and abused in the United States. From this knowledge, the urgency of lifelong learning can be established. The neural pathways connect the left side of the brain to the right side of the brain. People in the United States get more brain-based diseases than anywhere else in the world (SEEDS, 2016). The three main contributors to brain-based diseases are: pollution, obesity, and the country's health care system. Considering these well-known contributors, the United States should not have so many prevalent cases of brain disease. What the researchers learned is that the best way to address brain health is to use the body. The reason that the United States leads in brain disease is the lifestyle of Americans is more stagnant than the lifestyles of other developed countries. When the body is used, it engages the neural pathways that are the muscles of the brain. As educators, it is important for the culture at the school to promote enthusiastic and collaborative learning because this leads to movement and supports the health of one's brain.

  Data through brain research from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) show that one out of eleven babies born are at the genius level (Lepore, 2001). When researchers at (MIT) dissected the brains of geniuses, they saw that the "genius" brains have an average of eleven-times more neural pathways than that of an "average" brain (Lepore, 2001). People have the ability to grow more neural pathways and the best way to build more pathways is to try new

things. Every time someone tries something new, a new pathway is created. The amount of learning that needs to happen in times of change is one reason it is stressful for people to learn and take on new things (SEEDS, 2016). It is not only important for the development of an organization to embrace change but why it is important for people as individuals. There is an urgency to create a culture that embraces lifelong learning and promotes safe risk-taking.

Stages of learning. Educators must help students focus on learning and how to adapt to the new learning in class by first modeling this as educators. There are four stages of learning (Sage, 2015). The first stage is when are "unconsciously incompetent". In this stage, people do not know what they don't know. The second stage is when people are "consciously incompetent." This is when people understand they have a lot more learning to do. The third stage is the "conscious competence." The third stage is when a person has all the information on what they must do but now need to practice and apply their new learning. The fourth stage is "unconscious competence." This is when the learning is now "hardwired" into the brain (Sage, 2015). The fourth stage is "unconscious competence." This is when the new learning has been mastered.

Most people stop attempting to learn new things when they are in stage two, "consciously incompetent," (Sage, 2015). The learning needed is overwhelming in the second stage. People give up at this stage because they are nervous about their chance of success in mastering what they are learning (Sage, 2015). Learners fear they will not get to stage three or four. One way to help students from quitting in stage two is to provide them with deeper thinking and digestible chunks of learning along the process of learning. Having students write down what they are learning at each stage, using techniques like low stakes writing, helps students to build on their own knowledge and to reach and succeed in all four stages of learning.

Channels of learning. Identifying the channels of learning can help to promote a safe culture within an organization. Once the channels are identified by individuals within the system, it can be used as a tool to help play to people's strength. The diversity of learning styles can promote creative and deep collaboration among educators within a school (Anrig, 2013). The three learning channels, according to Markova and McArthur (2015) are: auditory, visual and kinesthetic learning. According to the research in the United States, 10 percent of people are primarily auditory learners, 30 percent of learners are visual learners and 60 percent are kinesthetic learners. Being able to identify the way people learn within an organization can help to promote a culture that encourages lifelong learning and safe risk taking.

Auditory learners do best when they are engaged one on one. These learners prefer to learn by hearing (over watching or by doing). Auditory learners tend to avoid activities that are over-stimulating (Markova & McArthur, 2015). Yelling at or verbally harassing an auditory learner will make them shut down and disengage (Markova & McArthur, 2015). This means, to promote a safe culture of learning within the organization, the language and tone used can be incredibly beneficial or detrimental.

Visual learners use eye contact (SEEDS, 2016). They learn and are engaged most when there is something to look at when being introduced to something new. This could be accomplished by teaching with a demonstration or by using a PowerPoint. To build rapport with someone who is a visual learner, educators should practice matching physiology or body language with him or her. This is the concept of using body language to communicate. Another way to help build rapport and promote a safe culture with people who are visual learners is to work with them face to face (Markova & McArthur, 2015). Negative comments about a person's appearance or invading their personal space will promote disengagement and discourage the

concept of a safe learning culture for a visual learner.

Kinesthetic learners do best when they are able to try something out and "do" something. They tend to be very social and are strong collaborators so teamwork and group activities are very beneficial for them (SEEDS, 2016). In a school organization, once way to promote a collaborative culture with the staff members is to promote project-based work that can be done in groups. People who are kinesthetic learners do best when they are able to be active while working through something, so walking and talking is a great way to promote new learning and encourage new ideas. People who are kinesthetic feel safe in a culture that allows them to talk about their feelings (Markova & McArthur, 2015). To promote a healthy culture within an organization there should be time and space to process and work together collaboratively.

A great leader can recognize the importance of learning styles and personalities to use each person's unique needs and strengths (DuFour, 2016). Doing so will help build a supportive and collaborative culture within the organization. Supportive and respectful school cultures help others take risk with the goal to improve their teaching.

Culture and Changing Contexts

Research has shown that the highest performing schools share some similar qualities. Included in these qualities is that the school culture reflects a shared commitment to continuous growth and improvement (US Department of Education, 2006). It is essential to create a school-wide culture focused on taking safe educational risks and promoting professional/educational and personal growth among the school community.

School cultures are changing throughout the country. This change reflects national educational reforms such as No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, or the new Every Student Succeeds Act (US Department of Education, 2006). According to Garvin and Roberto (2005),

the context in education has changed and this needs to be better and clearly communicated to all within the organization. Teachers must understand what they expected to do, and feel as though they have some active input in the changes that happen in their school system and in their classroom. Leaders must work with staff to identify ineffective routines and bring change (Whitaker, 2010). Unclear and inappropriate expectations can lead to the promotion of a negative culture. Those uncomfortable with the change may resist and try to wait out new mandates.

Change does not happen unless there are people who are open to learning new things. This is true in all learning including learning done through reading. Both nonfictional and fictional literature provides readers with a glimpse into the worlds of others (Fisher, Frey & Lapp, 2012). Critical thinking encourages independent thought that is based on evidence. It promotes reading and listening for understanding and to allow for the ability to gather evidence and make their own inferences in the reading. Critical thinking is considered one of the most important components in education today (Fisher, Frey & Smith, 2016). It is about the thinker taking in what they read, consider it's relationship to the world around them, and then to take it a step further so that they can make judgment and develop further thinking and questions regarding the topic that they are reading about. As change agents it is important to use the knowledge gained, and then be able to transfer that knowledge to other areas of life, so that new, effective ideas are what builds the change within an organization.

Change Leader

It takes a strong leader to create the effective change agent team (Fullan, 2014). Individuals acting alone cannot change the culture of a group or organization. It is the existing culture that needs to change so that learning is the work within a school. The learning needs to be the day-to-day value and function for the entire school community, especially of the staff and the

students (Brown, 2006). In any change it is important to include the input from the school staff and the school community (Brown, 2015). The final change plan should be transparent and should be exposed to the community and staff as often as is manageable. The plans for the program can and should change as issues are confronted to improve what has already been established (Brown, 2006). Program leaders should be flexible and open to change.

Creating urgency. According to Kotter (2012), transformational leaders seek to motivate others to "buy in" to the needed change within an organization whereas transactional leaders are looking at the big picture of the organization, and telling the followers what they need to do for that organization to be successful. Transformative leadership is about establishing the moral imperative. Moral imperative is someone's own internal beliefs and principles that compel them to act on something. Transformative educational leadership became more common in the early 2000's (Fullan, 2014). Instructional leadership is about learning leading and a manager helps to organize and successfully run initiatives. This is the design supported by educational leaders such as DuFour (2016), Marzano (2010) and Fullan (2014). Leaders need to be open-minded and aware of the school community's needs and personality. Leaders need to be able to meet their staff in the staff zone of proximity. School leaders who implement change transformation will help create a culture that emphasizes learning and growth.

Establishing a critical mass. Change requires a critical mass of stakeholders within an organization. Critical mass involves the initial supporters of change taking it on and helping to develop and facilitate the change process (Holzer & Marcel- Dekker, 2004). A clear rationale for the change that is shared regularly with the staff will help the change process be transparent and supportive (Sarason, 1996). School leaders must be able to identify the change agents who can support change in school culture.

To support a message of transparency and community within a school culture, leaders need to cultivate a critical mass of support during change. The 25-50-25 "rule" explains this concept. Following this concept, no matter what is being proposed, there will be 25 percent of who will enthusiastically embraced it, another 25 percent will enthusiastically oppose it and finally, 50 percent who will be ambivalent about the change. The 50 percent will question the change if there is a perceived threat to their independence and choice (Holzer & Marcel- Dekker, 2004). Leaders must identify and work with the 25 percent of the stakeholders whom enthusiastically embrace change, as these will be the change agents. Change agents support the facilitation of change through a proactive stance of strategic design that counters the barriers to change, taking into consideration a school's culture is essential to overall school improvement steps (Holzer & Marcel- Dekker, 2004).

Competency leading change. A research brief by Sturgis (2012), discusses the competencies needed by educators to teach students content to meet the standards for graduation. The author acknowledges the underlying need for schools to have a culture change to promote these new ways of teaching. For these strategies to work, the school needs to create powerful cultures of learning.

The leadership in the promotion of change and a change culture needs to come from the school leaders, as they are able to pass on the positive aspects of the change to the stakeholders. Leaders need to have a transparent decision-making process in place that invites input for the school staff in the development and implementation of changes. While leaders are the ones responsible for the decisions, transparency leading up to the decision can help staff feel heard and a part of the process (Blagescu, de Las Casas & Lloyd, 2005). Schools must show appreciation for professional learning and encourage constant improvement and consistent

innovation. Staff should embrace the idea of being lifelong learners and being open to change. Respect should be shown for all members of the organization (Kuh, 2008). Staff should be able to think about the big picture. This type of culture can create strong and effective learning opportunities for all students.

Planning and Collaboration

Planning and collaboration time is critical when leaders are initiating changes within a school. Dufour and Dufour (2012) identified Common Planning Time (CPT) as a critical element in developing a collaborative and growth-focused culture. Time available for planning and professional development work should be adequate and shared with the stakeholders to help create accurate perceptions of the time allotted for supporting the teachers in lifelong learning. When teachers see that the school is providing equivalent time (or more) than that of the educationally highest performing countries, they will have clarity about the realities of appropriated time, and how it compares to those national and international statistics (DuFour, 2016).

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2014), teachers in the United States spend between 1050 and 1100 hours a year teaching (in the classroom), much more than in almost every other OECD developed country. The OECD average for the time teachers in other countries spend on teaching (in the classroom) is 658 hours for secondary schools (OECD, 2014). The highest performing countries report that teachers have 15-20 hours a week gathering and analyzing data or evidence, collaborating with other teachers, meeting with and intervening with students (DuFour, 2016). According to Dufour, (2016) at least 25 percent of the teacher's time should be used for planning or collaborating with colleagues.

Ethical leadership in change. In a school setting, the viewpoint of the teachers' union may not be the viewpoint of the administration (Lynch, 2015). Unions are required to serve the teachers' best interests, which sometimes conflict with the best interests of the students and the school district. The perspective of the administration is to look at the big picture and what is best for the students. What is best for the students may not be best for the teachers' personal or professional interests.

It is easy for one person to yell and be mean at another person when the person yelling thinks they are sticking up for another (Lynch, 2015). This makes the person yelling, whether that is right or wrong, feel as though they are virtuous and sticking up for what they think is right. There are often two sides to every story and most people are only aware of one side of the story. People make up assumptions to shadow others and justify poor behaviors and acts against another person (Whitaker, 2010). When disrespectful behavior is perceived by others to be "good and true" then assumptions lead to negativity in the culture.

Integrity

It is easy to get wrapped up in doing what is right, or even to look and fixate on the external situations that can drive decisions (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). While the leader must consider these external influences, and acknowledge the way the decisions will be handled, the ethical leader must show professional courage and integrity each and every day. School leaders must do what they think is right for the school and the students. It is very easy to get caught up in the politics and the stress of a school setting. Leaders must not look for the easy way out of situations, but the right way. Instead, they must make decisions based on what is best after considering the school's mission statement, the big picture, and the angles from all the ethical paradigms. To be a strong ethical school leader, the leader must show constant integrity,

compassion and reason (Shapiro & Gross, 2013). The leader needs to be aware of the moral theories, see where they most align and then have their own philosophy that they live by.

Moral integrity in change. The majority of school leaders work extremely hard to maintain high moral and ethical behavior. Over the years, most school leaders have strived to maintain the highest ethical values (DuFour, 2015). The behavior of a good administrator and school leader is one that advocates first for the students and then for the entirety of the school building. School leaders are challenged in the light of the educational reform happening in the United States today.

School leaders must make tough decisions that are best for students but can create turbulence in the school community. Being a strong leader in education today means the leader considers all the facets of ethics while maintaining their integrity in the face of adversity. Leaders must be willing to stand ground on decisions made while considering the other options, to weigh in those are in better interest of the students (Whitaker, 2010). In short, to be a strong ethical school leader, the leader must show constant integrity, compassion and reason.

Moral integrity and professional courage is the most important attribute of a school leader. It is hard to stand up for what is right in a place where people are not willing to change because change is considered more work and more work is considered bad. Change may result in efficiencies that ultimately lead to less work. The leader needs to remember that there are two stories to everything and that the leader should be able to at least seek to understand the opposing viewpoints. According to Cahn (2014), the utility in Utility Theory is about being purposeful and beneficial. In leadership practice, the leader needs to listen to both sides, take an objective stance, and make decisions on what is right.

School leaders that want to be transformative, instructional and compassionate need to do what is right and seek to understand. Those leaders that are able to do this follow Aristotle's model in the Nature of Virtue. The Nature of Virtue states, "to live well is to live in accordance with virtue" (Aristotle, cited in Cahn, 2014, p. 135). Doing this not only helps the leaders to have strong moral character but it can bring happiness.

Moral compass in change. The majority of school leaders work extremely hard to maintain high moral and ethical behavior. A good administrator and school leader is one that advocates first for the students and then for the entirety of the school (Whitaker, 2010). School leaders are challenged in the light of the educational reform happening in the United States today. Being a strong leader in education today means the leader considers all the facets of ethics while maintaining their integrity in the face of adversity (Fullan, 2014). Leaders must be willing to stand their ground on decisions made while considering other options, and to weigh in those are in better interest of the students. In short, to be a strong ethical school leader, the leader must show constant integrity, compassion and reason.

Following vision in the change process. The vision for change must to be clear, and transparent to promote change and support a healthy culture. People should understand the why and what that led to conflicts, as well as the impact the conflict has had on a culture. It is important for people to understand what has changed or evolved from the conflict (McGarry, 2016). History often revolves around the negative times and not big achievements, unless the achievements are a result of a negative event (McGarry, 2016). This is because those who bring about positive change from a negative event are those who are the strongest. These people can overcome the barriers and turn the negative into a vehicle for positive change. Understanding these barriers and helping to overcome them is the role of the facilitative leader.

Strategies and Theories to Lead Change

Identifying past strategies that are proven to support change and improve the culture of a school is a critical section of this literature review. The ideas that evolve from them promote healthy change and to support a culture that prioritizes a respectful culture of learning.

Kurt Lewin's Change Theory. Lewin is considered the father of social psychology (Kritsonis, 2004-2005). His Change Theory focuses on the reasons behind and the process of change as well as describing leaders who have considered the qualities of keeping the status quo and the qualities of changing something. When it is determined by those with power that the changes are better than the status quo, there is a shift in the equilibrium for an organization (Kritsonis, 2004-2005). For those who are uneasy or with a different perception of the changes, these changes lead to hesitancy and resistance. Those who engage in the change will often still experience some upheaval, as change leads to uncertainty as the final outcome has been hypothesized but not yet realized.

There are three stages of change. These are: Unfreezing, Movement, and Refreezing (Kritsonis, 2004-2005). Unfreezing, is the process of finding ways of letting go of past patterns that were less effective. Movement is when people's mindsets change to align more with the changes about to occur. Refreezing occurs when the changes have become a habit and are embedded. This is when the change has become a part of the culture. In order for an organization to fully complete the change process, leaders implementing the change must first be able to analyze and predict the Unfreezing process, so that the change is effective and the morale of the organization does not suffer in the process.

Ely's Eight Conditions of Change. There are conditions for change which of been studied extensively as change is an ongoing struggle in organizations including schools. Ely's

Conditions of Change (1990) are well known for guiding implementation of school-wide

initiatives. Ely's conditions of change are identified through eight traits. The first condition is for

those within the organization to have dissatisfaction with the status quo. The second condition is

when stakeholders have sufficient knowledge and skills to implement change. The third

condition is to ensure the availability of resources. Resources necessary to implement change

must be available. Otherwise, the change will seem impossible and will not be initiated. The

fourth condition is the availability of time. Leaders implementing change must provide time for

stakeholders to learn, apply and collaborate. The presence of reward and incentives is the fifth

condition. Leaders need to support others in the change process by helping them to find

motivation to take on the change. This motivation may need to be intrinsic or extrinsic.

Participation is the sixth condition. It is important that anyone affected by the change is able to

have a voice and input in the change. The seventh condition is to gain commitment: Leaders

must believe in the change and act as a role model in their commitment to the change. The eighth

and final condition is for leaders must understand the impact change can have and be able to

provide encouragement and support for those they lead (Ely, 1990).

These conditions for change are essential when implementing change at school. If any

one of the steps is not followed there is a greater likelihood that the change will not be fully

implemented (Ely, 1990). Ely's (1990) conditions express the need for leaders to understand the

emotions that revolve around change. Empathy and clear and intentional communication will

help those within the organization feel valued in a part of the community these attributes support

a safe culture of learning.

Well-known change strategies. Whitaker (2010) offers a guide to help school leaders

make positive change in a school, and doing so with the support of the staff. Gaining the support

of all staff can be challenging to do because change is hard, and challenges people to try new things, and for staff to not be afraid of new tasks. The nine strategies that Whitaker (2010) goes through within this book are to identify changes required, make sure the first exposure to the change is strong and positive, determine common priorities in the change process, find acceptable entry points, and actively strive to reduce resistance from others. Once this is achieved, the next steps are to acknowledge the emotion attached to the change, use the emotion to harness power and take action. When the action starts, the leader's job is to reinforce the changed behaviors and help others see how it all fits together (Whitaker, 2010).

These strategies are useful when trying to create a strong school culture while leading change. Unless a leader is intentional and organized through the process it will most likely be unsuccessful. Leaders need to take change seriously and use strategies to help establish a set of norms and expectations that can help to promote the change and support other stakeholders through it.

Some district leaders choose to engage an outside facilitator. If they are not skilled, the group process may end up suffering more than if they never had a facilitator at all. There is value from the time and stability that is put on providing a group with good facilitation (Schwarz, 2006). Devoting time to improve a group, or to invest and develop a group can makes the difference in the overall outcomes of the group. Goal setting is important as goals contribute to and improve the group, then the group engagement would be stronger and the group would be more consistent and collaborative with each other.

Facilitator support in change strategy. The role of the coach and of the facilitator is critical to the improvement of a group. A coach can help those in the organization attain their individual goals, which may positively impact the organizational goals. The coach helps the

organization to gain a greater sense of clarity and insight over what they are working on (Morgan, Harkins & Goldsmith, 2006). The coach is able to help individuals improve their practice and make them more effective. Utilizing someone to help coach teachers and the school community through change initiatives, both formally and informally, has been a very beneficial strategy to improving skills as a professional educator (DuFour, 2016).

Deeply rooted culture. Challenging and changing a deeply rooted school culture can be difficult to do, especially when a majority of those within the school fear change and do not want things to change from the ways they were in the past (Kotter, 2012). Changing a culture must be a well thought-out and evidence-based process because having good intentions is not enough to establish and sustain cultural changes within a school. Using a combination of proven practices and strategies can help a staff through the culture transformation (Gruent & Whitaker, 2015).

School culture in leading and learning. Gruert and Whitaker (2015), found that for a school to improve their culture, the leaders need to understand why certain actions and behaviors are entrenched in the traditions and the culture of the school. Cultural reworking within a school is critical because of all the negativity around education and educational reform. To really improve a culture, the school system needs to have strong leaders supporting and leading the changes. The leader needs to help guide the staff have a shared vision, mission, collective commitments and goals (DuFour, 2016). The goal of the leader should be to create a positive culture that is lasting and sustainable that meets the mission and vision of the organization.

Cultural Theories

There are cultural theories evaluated in this literature review. Three theories that help explain the evolution of culture and social behavior within culture include: Functionalism, Conflict Theory, and Symbolic Interactional Theory. All are described below.

Functionalism: Functionalism is about looking at the macro view of what creates sociological topics. Functionalists like Herbert Spencer believe that everything is connected (Carl, 2010). Society is created on the smaller components and building society as an organic process (Carl, 2010).

Conflict Theory: Conflict theory is based on the concept of multiple groups trying to gain power. The powerful sets norms that benefit themselves (Carl, 2010). Societal actions do not always match the whole of the society. Power should not be in the hands of only the most powerful. The past influences the present and there is a history of social unrest from the unequal distribution of power and wealth.

Symbolic Interactional Theory: Symbolic Interaction followers are known for asking the question, "why are some in power over others?" They look at how people impact areas differently, depending on the area's particular setting (Carl, 2010). Power seems to be heavily influenced by social class, due to the opportunities provided to those with more wealth.

Understanding these theories is important when trying to understand the phenomenon of culture. Throughout history, there have been those who believe the current society to be broken (Carl, 2010). Society is a construct of individual's beliefs, so what may feel broken could be something society takes pride in at a later time. Societal norms are based on subjective opinions of people (Carl, 2010). Understanding how social norms are created and why some have powers over others can help to frame the restructuring of a culture. When these constructs are understood, it is easier to work within it, or to bring awareness to those in the organization for why things happen and develop organically among informal groups helping to create, sometimes unintentionally, culture within the organization.

Cultural Indoctrination

Culture is a social indoctrination of the unwritten expectations that people learn and adjust to as they work to fit in a particular group (Schein, 1992). In many school systems throughout the nation, and at the site study of this literature review, the culture has been deeply imbedded. Over the 40 years that the site study has existed, a pride in school reflects past successes of the school. There is some fear of new people coming into the school and passing any type of judgment. The culture now needs to be critically reexamined and changed to be open and welcoming. It needs to become a purposeful culture that is working on student success and a place of lifelong learning.

Culture as a phenomenon. Culture is unique and people are a part of many cultures. People are part of a larger culture that includes people from all different professions, but may all be from the same geographical location. People are involved in numerous subcultures. One of these subcultures includes the culture that is created at a place of work. Hofstede (1997) suggested that, when an individual moves to a new location or a new job, that individual strives to take on the new culture. When an entire organization is moved or faced with any type of change, some in the group will strive to keep the past culture alive. The role of the leader is to overcome this barrier to help improve the school's culture.

Improving school culture. School culture is one of the most important concepts in education. When considering school improvement, a school's culture is one of the most neglected (Schein, 1985). A school's culture is a set of basic assumptions and beliefs that school staff shares. These assumptions and beliefs lead the school's actions and operations unconsciously, so taking into consideration a school's culture is essential to overall school improvement steps.

Strong leadership is critical to a school culture. In the transactional leadership style, the leader assumes that people are motivated by the rewards that they receive for their good behavior and for the punishment they receive for their poor behavior (Bass, 2008). Within this organization, the leader believes that this person makes the final decision. The organization is structured in a way that is about completing the needed tasks and about following the clear expectations and goals of the leader. This kind of leader needs to be clear on what they need from the followers. The transactional leader is well-known and respected as the boss. This person is the one that lays out the expectations for the individual followers. The followers know what they need to do and what they will get if they do the job right or wrong. It is very much like a quid pro quo. If the follower does what they are supposed to then the leader will reward them (Bass, 2008).

Educational Change and Culture

In order to be an effective educator, one must be on top of the change. This type of attitude embraces change should be a part of the school culture. Embracing change implies a staff members have a growth mindset because they can consider change to improve teaching. When school leaders initiate the change within a school, they will need to be able incorporate the process of the change to fit into the intended culture of the school (Sarason, 1996). Change in education philosophy and policy is consistently challenged (Sarason, 1996). Now, it is not about how much someone can remember, but how well students work together, and how successful students are in persevering. These two things are what determine future success. School culture needs to be undoubtedly a culture of learning.

When people feel that their learning is successful then they become more motivated to continue learning. Creating a culture of learning means including ways that everyone, including

faculty and staff see himself or herself as an active learner (Plunkett, 2016). One way to help do this in a high school setting would be to encourage camaraderie in and collaboration in learning (Gruent & Whittaker, 2010). Teachers should not only be teaching their students, they should all be teaching each other. Staff meetings or professional development should include best practices segments from successful teachers. A culture of learning can be contagious, and setting up a school of learning will change the dialogue in the teacher's room from complaints to a dialogue of academic pedagogy (Shields, 2010). There are three tenets for transformation: balancing critique and promise, creating new knowledge frameworks, and effecting deep and equitable change (Shields, 2010). The goal is to transform the school culture and to creating a culture of learning and of respect that is sustainable and deep.

To create an improved culture within a school, one first must be able to collaborate with others within the school and identify what the culture is at the current time (Shields, 2010). Whittaker (2015), found that there are 6 types of cultures. A toxic culture is when a large number of teachers focus on the negative aspects of the school's activities and staff, using whatever flaws as a justification for any poor performance. A fragmented culture is when teachers act as individuals and the doors within the classrooms are closed and teachers value their own territories. A balkanized culture is one where collaboration only happens among those who are like-minded. Stronger groups often bully others. A contrived-collegial culture is when the leadership structures activity where collaboration is pushed. Leaders have the expectation for teachers to meet and discuss students and document their work. Sometimes this contrived collaboration is needed, as a starting point for change but ownership in meeting should be something the leadership establishes. A comfortable-collaborative culture is when staff value cooperation, courtesy, and compliance. However, in this culture some staff will hesitate to voice

disagreement with one another because they are afraid of how the other person will take what they say. A collaborative school culture is when all staff in the organization have similar educational values, work together as learners to improve their work (Whittaker, 2015).

School culture should be based around the school community with common goals as identified by the leader. Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia is known nationally for having a strong community. They are known for their hawk mascot and the saying, "the hawk never dies." One of the reasons that they are so successful in building a strong school culture is because they live what they say (Murphy, 2016). Being true and living transparently within the school helps to sustain a strong school culture.

Everything the school encompasses goes back to the idea that everything that is done at St. Joseph's is done for the greater good. They are very prideful in their school and encourage school pride amongst faculty, staff and students. To promote community, sometimes the admissions office will personally hand out acceptance letters (Murphy, 2016). Having these activities, such as the common language, and the welcoming support from the beginning is what has helped them to create a strong school culture. These attributes are possible to recreate in other settings and produce a strong culture in school systems.

In order to improve a culture, stakeholders within the culture must first acknowledge what aspects of the culture need improvement. Similarly, stakeholders need to be able to identify the conflict. People think the conflict is personal because it can be perceived as rude (Gallows, 2015) can be rude. In reality, there are two types of conflict: process conflict and task conflict. A task conflict is about a disagreement over a goal. A process conflict is when people share the goal but the steps to get there are in conflict among people (Gallows, 2015). The most common kinds of conflict in an organization are task conflict and the process conflict.

Respectful engagement eliminates negativity and parking lot thinking so that the focus is on the goal and not the emotion (Bowen, 2007). Making requests over making demands can play a strong role in a culture, but only when there is an option for the person in the task. If there is not a choice in what the person does, then the task should be told in a respectful manner, with support offered. Providing the person with choices is going to help the overall relationship (Whittaker, 2015).

Social behavior creates the culture and the culture is what activates or deactivates the motivation of an organization (Bowen, 2007). People look to see how their co-workers react to something, and then form their opinion. This is very similar to how many people will wait to hear the political commentary about a speech before making their opinion of the speech. We are a "social species" meaning leaders that can spend their energies focusing on creating respect and positive momentum are going to have the best work environment and the most productivity from staff members. There should be a culture created that promotes healthy risk-taking within the school (DuFour, 2016). People should not be afraid to take on something new, possibly fail, but only to improve later.

Complaining is an behavior in most organizations (Bowen, 2007). It keeps people focused on the problem instead of coming up with the solution. Instead of talking about the problem, members of the organizations should talk about how it will be when the problem is resolved. Leaders dealing with concerns need to start with the end in mind to solve the problem. Leaders must think about what they want fixed and what that will look like (Bowen, 2007) Stakeholders play a role and should take responsibility for any negativity they bring to the culture. Those who think miserably will have a miserable reality (Bowen, 2007). Creating a

culture that devalues complaining and values positivity and collaboration should be the goal of cultural improvement.

Attitudinal barriers that people have when they fear change or are in a negative culture, make the new learning fall flat (Dillion, 2015). Adult learners must learn new things as well as identify barriers to try and overcome them (SEEDS, 2016). "New information needs to shift thinking, whether through change, growth, or reinforcing ideas, but unless new information makes us think differently, it will most likely be pushed aside" (Dillon, 2015, n.p.). As adult learners, it is important to continue to learn new concepts and skills, through different professional development, and to use these professional developments to change the ways we do things, to help us become even more effective. Not sharing information impedes learning. In order to help everyone learn and try new things, teachers should collaborate and strive to learn from each other (Dillion, 2015). Incorporating collaboration and sharing into school wide professional development can ensure all students get the new, innovative ideas from a variety of teachers.

In order to create a new school culture that is focused on student learning and growth, over traditions and conformity takes time. The school leader needs to be able to establish the urgency and rationale for the change. Teachers will ask why there needs to be a change in the culture. Leaders should share ideas to engage teachers. If the reason is explained and can be supported with data and statistical evidence, then the staff is more likely to support the change (Dillion, 2015). One way to help a staff member to be supportive in changing a culture to being one that is focused on student growth and learning is to help staff learn how to become assessment literate. Staff members who are assessment literate can see the purpose of the assessments that students take and value the information that results from this data.

When data is being used to inform instruction then the data will have the most value to the school community (Neville, 2016). Data should be collected from assessments to add value to teachers' decisions about how to support their students' learning goals. The culture of the school becomes one that focuses on and is purposefully designed for student achievement. The assessment process is used to help students learn and not just to measure progress. The assessment process is used to make decisions about instruction (Stiggins, 2016). The data needs to be used in a transparent manner so it can help guide curriculum and instruction. Data should allow teachers to identify where their students are and where they need to go next (Stiggins, 2016). In a culture where student learning and growth is the priority, the student is a part of their educational plan and participatory in understanding where they are and where they are going in their learning (Stiggins, 2016).

The adaptive tests that are available for students can bring much added value for the teacher. These tests help to pinpoint specific objectives and domains that students need more instruction on (Neville, 2016). Assessments should be used to provide information for how to narrow student gaps and to promote student learning (Stiggins, 2016). Using assessments in this way helps to promote student achievement and a culture of learning for the entire school community.

The use of learning targets and scales helps to promote a classroom culture focused on learning. This is a primary objective of the research being done at the site study. Learning targets are another resource to help all of us become more efficient and effective in designing and delivering instruction. Learning targets are another resource to students focus on their learning. The purpose of a learning target is to help students understand what they should be doing in class and what they are going to learn (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015). Some learning targets may be

used for multiple days because it may take more than one class to make sure the students have met that learning target.

The goals for scales are for students to take ownership in what they are learning and knowing what they need to do next and for teachers to be able to assess where their class in relation to the standard/unit/ target, to help inform them with their instruction (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015). Using a scale provides useful information for you and your students- the scale helps achieve what the teacher is hoping to accomplish (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015). Scales are directly linked to what the teacher is focus on accomplishing in a lesson and what they want the students to learn. For example, if there is a unit goal then have a unit scale. Ultimately, scales may take many different forms.

The use of an exit ticket, along with the scale and the learning target can give the teacher concrete information it gives evidence (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015). Sometimes students will tell teachers they understand the lesson but when there is a test of understanding it is identified that they are missing some parts of the learning. The scale helps students take on more accountability with their learning but the exit ticket makes sure that what they are saying on/about the scale is accurate (Moore, Garst & Marzano, 2015). All of these are tools that help create a culture of continuous learning for students. It helps to make an intentional culture of education and learning focused classrooms.

Emotional Courage from Leaders

Looking at data in an enthusiastic way promotes collaboration, instructional growth and satisfaction. It cannot be done without school leaders looking at initiatives such as creating a data informed culture that embraces this mindset. The school leaders must be energetic and motivational to help support a positive culture. However, the idea of showing emotion is not

gender neutral (Mukunda & Petriglieri, 2016). If a female leader shows emotion, the woman fits the stereotype that women are too emotional. If a man does it, he looks genuine and empathic. Similarly, if a female leader gets angry then she is considered strong and tough. If a male leader gets angry, they are considered stubborn and rude (Mukunda & Petriglieri, 2016). Still, these stereotypes should not change the fact that work and leaders have more passion, now more than ever.

Leaders need to understand that work is now full of intense ups and downs. This makes sense especially because people spend more time at work than at home. Knowing the constructs around modern work, including hours, passion and empathy, it can help us understand how leaders should be prepared to handle our emotions at work and how we can create an empathetic and passionate place to work (Mukunda & Petriglieri, 2016). Emotions can be seen as intelligence or disturbance within a workplace culture. Leaders need to be able to show emotion skillfully so that the emotions displayed help the workplace move forward. This can help to establish emotional value within the school culture.

It is dangerous to set policies but not to reinforce them. It sends a message that there is no formal structure in which one must follow because nothing is being reinforced. Expectations must be set and reinforced with consequences when are broken. This will help bring about a culture that is clear with expectations from one another (Kusy & Halloway, 2009). Values that relate to respectful engagement within an organization not only need to be set, but they need to be clearly and intentionally communicated to everyone within the organization. Respectful engagement is the idea that we need to have mutual respect with each other and need to treat each other professionally and fairly, not matter personal indifferences.

Set values need to be revisited from time to time. Everyone within the school should know the values because they are the foundation of the working environment of the school. When designing the values with a group of stakeholders it is important to identify all the values rather than only ones written (Kusy & Halloway, 2009). The unwritten values are the ones that are most likely followed (Parker, 2006). A leader needs to help others see how some of the values are negative and must be removed from the culture. They should point out positives within some of the unwritten values (Kusy & Halloway, 2009). When a leader helps to establish a culture with clear priorities and values they are able to provide those within the school with a consistent culture and shared values.

Leaders should act as role models, hold themselves professionally accountable and take steps to make sure this is visible to staff. Leaders should behave ethically in all situations, especially in those instances when a staff member is not respectful, disagrees or has some other issue (Kusy & Halloway, 2009). The leader should address the behavior, figure out what the reason for the disrespect really is and come up with a solution to that, while making it clear the disrespect is not a means to a solution and it cannot and will not be tolerated (Bowen, 2007).

Sustaining a recently and intentionally redesigned culture is important. Just like a bad habit, if the new culture does not stay as a priority, then it could easily go back to previously destructive habits from a past culture (Duhigg, 2012). School and organizational leaders need to intentionally focus on culture building activities to promote the culture that was created. Sustaining the culture can happen in many ways.

To sustain a culture within an organization, the leaders need to ensure that the groups within the organization are effective and strong. There are twelve components that make up an effective team. These are: clear sense of purpose, informal climate, participation, listening,

civilized disagreement, open communication, clear roles and work assignments, external relations, style diversity, self-assessment, consensus and shared leadership (Parker, 2006). All of these components are incredibly valuable and play a role in the success of the group. Open communication is founded in trust. Members of a team need to feel safe and confident to speak freely (Parker, 2006). Open and respectful groups trust each other and work hard to do what is right and in line with the school's mission. The group can speak openly with each other and listen to each other to understand the other group member reasons.

Other groups may not be as open and respectful. There may be group members who either focus too much on themselves or those who are manipulative and have many outside, negative "parking lot" conversations that lead to hostile group work sessions (Kotter, 2012). These parking lot conversations are often targeted against one group member. The goal of the manipulative person is to build a type of alliance against one other person in the group. These people, known as "snakes" by Kotter (2012) are in many organizations and being aware of them and not ignoring the power of negativity is important as ignoring this behavior creates a weak group and ultimately a poor culture.

Engagement levels in workplaces are very low (DuFour, 2016). This is challenging when a majority of an adult's life is at work. In order to increase engagement, Godfrey and Jones (2015) suggest an organization on the authenticity of their organization. The task for leaders is to build sustainable cultures that are successful and strong (Godfrey & Jones, 2015). Leaders must to show authenticity to the stakeholders within the organization.

There are six characteristics of a strong organization. The first is to see the difference beyond diversity. Those within the organization should feel comfortable with who they are. The second is for leaders to have radical honesty. They should tell the truth no matter how difficult

this is. The third is for leaders to help others see value in work. The fourth is for the leader to demonstrate authenticity. Leaders must be true and genuine. The fifth is for the leader to provide opportunities for workers to find meaning in the work. The sixth requirement is for leadership to establish agreed upon rules and organizational norms (Godfrey & Jones, 2015). The six characteristics above are needed by the organization's leadership to create a good culture (Godfrey & Jones, 2015). All of those characteristics can be said in two words; leaders need to be honest and authentic to promote a strong culture, and create an organization where people want to work.

Rural schools face unique challenges that are not as prevalent in urban or suburban schools such as: technology shortages, teacher and administrative shortages, and retention of staff. These are problems faced by many educational leaders working rural school systems (Kotter & Rathgeber, 2015). Rural schools typically pay teachers and staff members less and have smaller operating budgets. Those who work within the school system do more than one would expect from the "average" teacher or administrator in an urban school (Andresen, Duerr & Furthmyre, 2016). Educational leaders within the school need to think outside of the box to best meet the needs of the students while hiring and retaining high quality teachers. The culture within a rural school needs to be safe, respectful, and a place of learning that embraces a growth mindset (Kotter & Rathgeber, 2015). The culture needs to be set so that teachers are not only provided the same technological resources as available in other school systems, but that the priority and the main focus of the school is on student learning and opportunity. With this focus, teachers and administrators can work toward the same goals.

To keep a person motivated, there must be a long-term goal with check-ins and short-term goals in between. To encourage motivation and integrity in the organization, there needs to

be an intentional effort to allow for healthy risk taking (SEEDS, 2016). If everyone within an

organization can continually make short-term goals. Long-term goals develop as habits are

formed. When a habit of motivation is developed, the higher end goals will be set (Duhigg,

2012). If an organization has a culture of learning that is supported by motivated staff, there will

be a safe culture that embraces professional risk-taking. One way to help achieve a positive and

motivating culture is to help people in the organization to make and obtain goals. The major

reason that goals are not successful is that they are not engrained in the person's mind and they

are not specific enough for the brain to attach to (SEEDS, 2016). To make goals achievable, they

should have a specific deadline of when they must be accomplished.

When setting goals, the obstacles that may interfere with the goal should be identified

ahead of time to help overcome this obstacle when the time comes. There are both external

obstacles--what others do to prevent the goal from being achieved, and internal--what the goal

setter does to prevent the accomplishment of the goal they had set for themselves (SEEDS,

2016). If one of the overarching goals is to promote the development of goal setting and

establishment of goals, then the people within the organization must commit to supporting other

educators in accomplishing their goals (SEEDS, 2016). One way to accomplish this is the use of

mentoring programs or with professional learning communities (PLC) (DuFour, 2016). The use

of PLC's can provide the goal setter with the "who and what" will assist them with their goals

(SEEDS, 2016).

To create a goal and expect it to be achievable, it should be broken into steps. These

short-term goals are more achievable and help gauge the progress of the long-term goal (SEEDS,

2016). The planning toward the goal should be accomplished by working backwards from the

overall goal. The idea of working backwards from the goal originally came as a result of the

accident with NASA and the Christa McAuliffe spacecraft explosion. In the creation of this spacecraft, the goal of creating the spacecraft was done by planning start to end and the engineers forgot to test a small part of the machine for temperature impacts. Since then, the engineers have practiced planning backwards as this helps to anticipate potential mistakes and oversights (SEEDS, 2016). When people make the practice of backwards planning, they are more likely to come up with successful plans.

In order to support the school culture in sustaining the identity of being life-long learners who make an achieve goals, it is important to identify that goal setting and action work should happen intentionally every day. This helps to make this a habit for the organization (SEEDS, 2016). Doing this everyday will feel cumbersome at first when the focus is just about being intentional on the goal setting and action. However, it will become a part of each person's day when it becomes a habit for him or her. It is important for people to reflect on their goals and the obstacles or mistakes that are made along the goal achievement process.

A strategic approach to promote achievement of the goal when a mistake is made, is for the person to reflect on a few aspects of the goal. The person should reflect on the facts that led to this mistake or obstacle. Reflection can address the feeling the person has since making this mistake or confronting the obstacle. The person should consider his or her findings and what can be learned from the mistake or obstacle. Finally, the person should think about the future and how they can learn from the confronted obstacle or mistake so that it does not happen again (SEEDS, 2016). This strategy helps people keep their goals in mind and make sure that the work to accomplish the goal continues to happen. This approach keeps everyone within the organization focused on their goals and motivated to promote a culture of lifelong learning.

Conceptual Framework

The review has identified key aspects of education that support students. It described the impact of change within education and within a culture. It examined the phenomenon of culture and culture development. A culture is based on creating a shared identity within it. When people know they are working towards the same goal, they are more likely to be successful in building a respectful culture. Organizations have the ability to create and change habits within people through the structures that the leadership sets up (Kotter & Rathgeber, 2015). When an organization focuses on one priority, the entirety of the organization will improve because the habits of the organization focuses on the needs of the shared priority instead of on personal needs (Duhigg, 2012). The purpose of this study is to analyze the leadership aspects in the development and sustainability of school culture for teachers in rural schools. This study focuses on the leadership aspects in the development and sustainability of school culture for teachers in rural public education. This can be accomplished by having one focus: student learning and opportunities and creating a culture that supports this priority.

Conclusion

All of these articles, briefs, and reports provide evidence about the importance of culture in an organization. Cultures in schools are changing because education in the United States is in the middle of a transformation. In the present world of education there needs to be multiple opportunities for students to learn. School cultures must embrace learning, perseverance and motivation (DuFour, 2016). If a school culture is negative then the education of the students will be impacted. If educators can meet the unique needs of each student, student engagement increases. Students must feel as though they are a part of and hold responsibility for their education. They should feel as though they have the support and ability to do it. This engagement

will help them find pride in their education and provide them with more reasons to work through the difficult times that risk one's completion of school. This can only happen if the school culture promotes health risk-taking, is motivated to take on new challenges, and supports a culture of lifelong learning (Kotter & Rathgeber, 2015).

A negative culture may occur if school leaders do not treat culture as a priority. The leaders must focus on a school culture that celebrates success, promotes perseverance and focuses on individual learning successes (DuFour, 2016). The school community must have a growth mindset (Dweck, 2012). Leaders and the school should share a common vision and mission. There are numerous reports, research projects and books about school culture and change. The purpose of this study will be to look at how to create and establish a positive culture, based on learning, at a traditions-based, rural high school.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to identify what aspects of leadership create a respectful and collaborative culture of learning. The case was a rural high school in New England. The high school serves approximately 400 students and has roughly 40 professional staff members, with additional educational technicians and various other support staff. To create this collaborative culture and identify what is needed to create it, one must have a firm understanding of the Utilitarian Theory. The Utilitarian Theory is the ethic that the best action to take is one that maximizes one's utility (Cahn, 2014). This theory was used to guide the study.

Another guiding theory was Lewin's Change Theory which identifies three stages of change: (1) Unfreezing, (2) Movement, and (3) Refreezing (Kritsonis, 2004-2005). The first step in the change process is challenging the status quo and promoting a growth mindset (Dweck, 2007). The second stage is when those within the organization embrace the change and have a growth mindset to take steps for the change to become a reality. The final step is when the changes have become a part of the culture within the organization. When considering the focus of this research, it was important to identify how leaders have been able to analyze and predict the barriers and emotional impact of the changes. A utilitarian approach makes the change effective without compromising the morale of members of the organization in the process.

Grounded Theory was used to guide the qualitative, categorical portion of research. The Grounded Theory approach is best suited for studies examining the beliefs of participants (Creswell, 2013). Creating a respectful, collaborative culture within a school is based on the professional's desire to teach and support students, to succeed in one's career, and to promote happiness through these achievements. Through the research, answers regarding collaboration

and culture, change agent strategies and commitment to an organization was interpreted and described. The researcher will present the findings from this research to benefit cultural transformation in other schools across the nation.

Setting

The high school is located about four hours outside of Boston in the rural Northeast. It provides the public secondary education to residents of five small sending towns. The district has a free and reduced lunch rate of 39 percent, which is up from 24 percent in 2010 (Conway, 2015). The school has gone through a great amount of administrative change over the past two years. Starting in 2014, the new administrative team and the learning leaders from departments examined the systems and resources the school had in place and identifying ways to maximize them. The result was positive, focusing directly on supporting students. The perceived increased workload for some of the teachers was not as positive, creating a weaker overall culture of learning within the site.

All professional staff members have scheduled teacher-planning time and Common Planning Time is available to them five times a week. This prep time is equivalent to the international average, according to DuFour (2015). Even while staff members have time, they still feel pressured and overwhelmed with their workload. This response may be due to the phenomenon of "negative contagion" that can happen (O'Neil, 2016) within cultures.

Over the three years preceding the study, the high school has gone from offering 4 credits of dual enrollment in 2013-14 to 99 credits with an approved Associate's Degree pathway for the 2016-2017 school year. The school district is known throughout New England for its robust dual enrollment program. In 2016, two students graduated with their Associate's Degree from a regional college before graduating from the high school. In 2017, an additional three students are

expected to graduate with their Associate's Degree in Liberal Studies from the same college, and for that number to rise as the program becomes more established. All French students have the opportunity to earn a certificate in French, the equivalent of minor from the regional state university during their four years at the high school.

Over the past two years, the high school has added a full-time literacy interventionist and a full-time math interventionist to the staff as well as making a previously part-time support position into a full-time position. A Response to Invention (RtI) program has been instituted, where students receive support during study halls and the interventionist co-teaches with content area teachers for part of their schedule. The RtI plan is one of the few in the state that includes full-time high school math and literacy interventionists. The staff chose to add a flexible response to an intervention period in the middle of the day called Focus Time. During this time, teachers work with identified students to help them with any standards in which they are deficient, as the school is now following the Common Core Standards. The high school has a credit recovery program, established in 2013-2014, where students can make up the essential learning as identified by the teacher. Before this program, many students would fail a course by only a few points and have to make up that course from the beginning; this would lead to another academic failure and poor behavior.

The school has added a Habits of Work (HOW) rubric, on which all students are assessed bi-weekly. The rubric was created two years ago by the high school leadership team with input from the staff. Since that time, the HOW has been refined to include the state's Guiding Principles, on which students are required to show competence, and are consistently evaluated so students can receive timely feedback (Maine Department of Education, 2016). In 2013-2014, a team of teachers and administrators redesigned the alternative education program that now

focuses on service and hands on learning. This was a long process that included several site visits to other schools, input from staff and much research. The alternative program was previously a place where students worked individually on packets to earn credits. Now students leave the program with college credits and life skills to help them beyond high school.

School staff and administration worked diligently to institute more restorative practices into the student discipline procedure. The restorative approach fits naturally into the school's robust and well-known advisor program. Restorative Justice helps to reduce risk factors in a student's education by keeping the student engaged in relationships, school, and community. Restorative Justice practices promote self-understanding, responsibility, and accountability, Students learn from their mistakes, both behaviorally and academically by putting an emphasis on repairing the harmed relationships caused by the disciplined behavior (Rubio, 2014). The Restorative Justice approach promotes student empowerment and school engagement that enhances student-learning outcomes. Now, for in-school suspensions, students will complete a restorative justice form and process the incident with at least one adult.

As a way of recognizing students for good academic and behavioral achievement, the school has created a study nook where students can sign out from study hall to go to. The nook is furnished with comfortable furniture and in general has a more laid-back feel than the traditional study hall. The goal of the high school administrators has been to meet district and state needs while increasing student support resources throughout the school. Many changes have occurred in the high school to implement these new initiatives.

With all the change, the culture and feel of the school has changed dramatically through the hard work of the staff by creating higher expectations for students with greater supports. However, these new expectations have made it difficult for many staff members to stay positive

as a staff. The school is working hard during the 2016-2017 school year to establish a growth mindset and to help the staff realize that change is a continuous process. This dissertation will focus on the roles that leadership has on creating and sustaining a culture. Specially, the dissertation is on what aspects of leadership help to create a respectful and collaborative culture of learning in a rural public school system.

Applicable Theories

The researcher used Utilitarian Theory to frame the study. The Utilitarian Theory is about how humans seek pleasure and how they find happiness when there is avoidance of pain (Cahn, 2014). Humans are all striving to find happiness and act in ways that people believe will help us to achieve happiness. The overall focus of the utilitarian approach is about the steps taken for personal happiness. Sometimes happiness comes in the form of pride, accomplishment, laughter or love. Other times, happiness is something people seek and depend on it coming from other people. If people seek happiness by striving to create a specific reputation for themselves, and this reputation is never set, then the happiness one may want will never come to fruition. Instead, that person will feel emotional pain, which, according to Mill, is the opposite of happiness (Cahn, 2014). The negative culture that has been created at the site study is perceived by the researcher to have been caused by some staff members who are afraid of the changes being imposed, and see the change as a form of pain. This is dramatized because the school leadership team did not previously take responsibility for the changes that were implemented. This made some staff feel alone and vulnerable to the changes they were responsible for. The goal was to help all staff see change as a positive, motivating opportunity instead of as a negative force that they have no control over.

The Grounded Theory approach was used to organize the qualitative portion of the research. In Grounded Theory, the researcher focuses on the research process as it is seen over time. From this, the researcher is attempting to develop an idea or theory to explain the research (Creswell, 2013). Grounded Theory approaches should be, "grounded in the data from the field, especially in the actions, interactions and social processes of the people" (Creswell, 2013, p. 84). This is really the goal of the Grounded Theory approach. The purpose of this approach was for the researcher to come up with a theory that was grounded in the data found from the research study (Merriam, 2009).

Grounded Theory studies use multiple approaches to gather data. Common ways include interviews, observations, and documentary materials (Merriam, 2009). This type of approach was very beneficial for this study because the mode of data collection will include the analysis of historical survey data points from staff and students, to help generate a comprehensive perspective of the school's history and culture. It included a staff survey and a staff interview conducted by the primary researcher to get a clear picture on the perspectives of staff on the major impacts of culture, which include leadership, collaboration and change strategies.

Research Questions

The study sought to clarify the role of the change agents in the culture transformation process. Describing the role of collaboration in supporting a respectful culture of learning was a focus of this research. Finally, specific leadership attributes that work in this specific case study were identified. The purpose of identifying these attributes was to share the results with others in the field of leadership, education and culture, so that others can transfer these results to other educational institutions in need of a cultural transformation. Below are the specific questions the researcher is expecting to answer as a result of the research.

1. How did team collaboration within a school create the culture of learning in a public school?

2. What change agent strategies did school leaders implement to transform a culture into being a caring community dedicated to learning?

3. What qualities does a successful change leader possess?

4. How can these be transferred to others?

Participants and Sample

All participants in the survey specific to the dissertation research are adults. This research was conducted to identify the aspects of leadership that created a respectful and collaborative culture of learning in a rural high school system. Participation included a survey and interview. The survey was about attitudes and beliefs around high school culture and climate, and what leadership aspects help to promote a safe, respectful and collaborative culture. The initial survey took approximately 15 minutes and was completed anywhere the participant felt comfortable as it was online. The survey was provided through secure school email and an online survey program. The anonymous answers from the survey were analyzed and using to guide the follow-up interviews. The follow-up interview took approximately 20 minutes. The follow up interview was about the participant's view of culture and leadership aspects of supporting a positive culture. Participants of both the survey and the interview had a total time commitment of about 30 minutes.

The post-survey interview was held at a time convenient for the participant, at the high school, and administrated by the principal researcher. It took approximately 20 minutes. The interview included follow up questions from the cumulative survey results previously completed.

All questions were semi-structured (open ended) and were about attitudes and beliefs around high school culture and climate.

Approximately 20 staff members to participated in the study. The survey was filled out and completed anonymously. For those participating in the follow up interview, privacy and anonymity were protected. The participant set the time and place. Anonymity was supported by the use of a coding system; secure storage, using summary data from a whole group and use of pseudonyms for direct quotes. Participants work in the rural high school and are over 18 years of age. Most participants were teachers, but all are some form of educator who works within the school system. The number of adult staff participating is 20 members. There are no vulnerable populations completing the survey or the follow up interview.

Data Collection Procedures

The methodology used includes qualitative measures to collect, categorize, and find themes within the data. Public staff and student data from various surveys was coded after the data had become public. Volunteer staff members were given a survey between January 2017 through April 2017. This was used as formative data regarding staff views on the school culture. The data was grounded in the research collected at the site study, through compilation of public and private data. The findings of this study reflect interactions, ideas and opinions gathered from the private data.

The data from an integrated youth health survey that is put out biannually by the Department of Health and Human Services, was analyzed. This vetted survey was used for analysis of the school culture. The results of the survey helped provide an illustration of the student culture at the high school. Not all of the public data from this survey was used, only the

data on student culture and atmosphere that is a result of the school. This information provided some baseline data about the climate and culture at the site study.

Other survey with student data used was the public survey from the fall and spring Teen Issues pre- and post-surveys. The purpose of the Teen Issues Pre Survey is to identify what the current student perceptions are on the school climate to inform school stakeholders (community members, students, teachers and administration). The survey results are public so that they can be used for a variety purposes that focus on the school climate and culture.

Finally, a survey by the organization, Boys to Men, that professionally trains students on their Reducing Sexism and Violence Project (RSVP), was administered. The data was compiled and summary of the results of the survey was made public so findings may be used to help guide the training. It was used for this dissertation to help identify strengths and weaknesses about the school-wide culture that students notice.

 Baseline data from surveys staff members took about the school culture in 2015-16 was evaluated. Retention rates from 2014-2017 have been considered and compared to other area school retention percentages. Semi structured interviews with 2 to 4 randomly chosen staff members, who completed the surveys, will be conducted. The interviews will take place in the winter of 2016-17 as well as in the spring of the 2016-17 school year. Below are tables outlining the data collection process. Table 1 represents student data. Table 2 represents public staff data. Table 3 represents dissertation staff data.

Table 1

Student Data Timeframe and Purpose

Dates/ Purpose	Description
December 2014	Students and guardians received notice regarding the MIYHS survey. This provided information regarding what kind of questions would be in the survey and the purpose of it.
MIYHS Purpose	The data from integrated youth health survey, put out biannually by the Department of Health and Human Services, was analyzed. This vetted survey was used for analysis of the school culture. The results of the survey are to help provide an illustration of the student culture at the high school. However, not all of the public data from this survey was used, only the data on student culture and atmosphere that is a result of the school. This information will provide some baseline data to explore the climate and culture at the site study.
February, 2015	Voluntary students took the survey.
November 21, 2016	Students and guardians received notice of the voluntary and anonymous Teen Issues Pre Survey on climate.
School Inclusivity Survey Purpose	The purpose of the Teen Issues Pre Survey is to identify what the current student perceptions are on the school climate in order to inform school stakeholders. The survey results are public so that they can be used for a variety purposes as long as the aim is to focus on the school climate and culture.

Table 1 (continued)

November 29, 2016	Students and guardians (for students participating in the Reducing Sexism and Violence "RSVP" Training) received notice of the voluntary and anonymous survey.
RSVP Survey Purpose	The cumulative, compiled and summary of the results of the survey are public so that they may be used to support the overall school. It was used for this dissertation to help identify strengths and weaknesses that students notice about the school-wide culture.
November 30, 2016	Voluntary students anonymously completed the Teen Issues Pre Survey.
December 1, 2016	Students and guardians received notice of the voluntary and anonymous Teen Issues Post Survey on Teen Issues Day and relationships students have within the school.
December 7, 2016	The results of the School Inclusivity Survey made public by outside and nationally known researcher, Stan Davis.
December 2016	Voluntary students anonymously completed the Teen Issues Post Survey. Data collected through online program.
December 6, 2016	The results of the Teen Issues Post Survey made public.
Teen Issues Post Survey Purpose	The purpose of the Teen Issues Post Survey was to identify what student perception show how well students have been able to establish healthy relationships with peers and adults, within the school, in order to inform school stakeholders. The survey results are public so that they can be used for a variety purposes as long as the aim is to focus on the school climate and culture.

Table 1 (continued)

December 21, 2016	Students participating in the RSVP Training complete their pre-survey.
RSVP Survey Purpose	The cumulative, compiled and summary of the results of the survey was made public so that they may be used to support the overall school, and to help guide the training and to aid in school climate improvements.

Notes:	This public data will support in the comprehensive analysis and coding for theme generation using Grounded Theory approach.

Table 2

Public Staff Data

Date/ Purpose	Description
March 2016	Survey sent out to members of the school staff by the RSU's Educators Association. Data was collected and compiled by the organization
November 2016	The association's survey data presented to the RSU school board and made public.
Purpose	According to the president of the union, the purpose of the results shared to was to send a message to the community that many staff in the RSU feel changes in curriculum, proficiency based system are not going smoothly- express frustration and concerns over low morale. After hearing teachers in the area schools express concern over the changes in both how they do their work and what their requirements are in light of new state mandates, the [School] Area Staff Association selected staff. The number of educators was never made clear to the public.
	According to the president, a staff member at the high school, who has voiced many complaints (made personally) about the principal. The survey results found major concerns, particularly at the high school level where 77 percent reported feeling frustrated in their work and 61 percent felt unappreciated by school leadership. This data is important to share because it shows where this selected staff members were at, at the time of the survey.
Notes:	This public data will support in the comprehensive analysis and coding for theme generation using Grounded Theory approach.

Table 3

Dissertation Staff Data

Dates/ Purpose	Description
January 2017	Script for Dissertation Survey Participation sent out to staff at the site study. Full script available in Appendix C.
January 2017	Staff survey to be conducted. It will take approximately 15 minutes. If staffs agree to participate in a follow-up interview, it took approximately 20 minutes. The follow up interview was about views of culture, change and leadership aspects in supporting a positive culture. See Appendix I for survey questions.
Jan.- Feb. 2017	Survey results initially coded by researcher and follow up, semi-structured (open- ended questions) developed for those participating in the follow up interview.
February 2017	Semi structured interviews with approximately 4-6 staff members, who completed the surveys, was conducted. The interviews were made anonymous for the research.
Feb.- Mar. 2017	All data collected, transcribed, and coded by researcher
Purpose	The purpose of this research is to help in identifying the aspects of leadership create a respectful and collaborative culture of learning in a rural high school system.
Notes:	This dissertation data was coded using open coding and line-by- line coding, following a Grounded Theory approach in order generate themes regarding school culture.

Staff Survey and Interview

      Survey. Located in Appendix I are the questions for the staff survey questions. These questions were used to identify how staff members perceive the culture at their school. The post-survey interview was held at a time convenient for the participant, at the high school, and administrated by the principal researcher. It took approximately 20 minutes.

      Interview. The follow up interview was about the participant's view of culture and leadership aspects in supporting a positive culture. The interview included follow up questions from the survey previously completed. These questions can be found in Appendix J. All questions were semi-structured (open-ended) and were about the attitudes and beliefs around high school culture and climate and focused on collaboration, change and leadership styles. A key component of these interviews was to identify what leadership aspects promote a safe, respectful and collaborative culture.

Participant Rights

      In order to protect participant rights, in accordance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB), a consent form was created to inform participants of their rights. A Consent for Research Participation and Confidentiality Agreement was used and shared with all participants in the study so that they were aware of the researcher's abilities, scope of the study, and limitations. Please refer to the Appendix A for the Consent for Research Participation and Appendix B for the Confidentiality Agreement. Additionally, a script, notice or letter, specific to each research method used was provided to the potential participants.

Data Analysis

Data was collected and coded. The first step, open coding, was used to identify major themes in the research. In the transcription of the interviews, line-by-line coding was used. This approach is very time-consuming but it helps to build the conceptual data into specific, categorized themes (Creswell, 2013). The third step was to create the tables that explain the results. Data was organized into spreadsheets, charts and graphs for analysis and to provide visuals about the perceptions and results from the culture changing efforts.

The researcher looked for themes and described the information in themes exclusive to the participant sample (Merriam, 2009). The themes generated illustrate the trends in the data from cultural perceptions and realities of students and staff members. Use of tables, pie charts and/or bar graph summarize the data that was collected from each survey. Applicable tables, charts, and graphs were included in Chapter 4. A detailed analysis of publically available data was conducted as another way to assess how students feel in regards to school safety, community, inclusion and culture. The timeframe of this public data can be found in Tables 1, 2 and 3. Percentages provide numerical illustrations of the data and were compiled into various tables to help illustrate findings and trends.

Following the framework of Grounded Theory for the qualitative research, collected data from interviews and surveys were coded via open coding. The collected data was used to formulate the results from the research (Creswell, 2013). Grounded Theory uses the constant comparative method of data analysis. The difference for this type of data analysis is that it results in a substantive theory (Merriam, 2009). This theory was based on core concepts regarding culture and leadership that are discovered through the research.

Limitations

The study was held at a rural community high school in Rural New England. It is a case study, as it only reflects on the change and cultural process at this site. Other school staffs and students may have different experiences regarding the change process. The results from this research are by no means exclusive. The results present only a sample of how leadership can impact change in culture in one small, rural high school.

Biases and Perceptions

This researcher has some biases regarding this research. One of the major drivers of change in education at the site is the use of the Common Core and Marzano's ideology on education. There are educators who disagree with these ideals. For example, a popular article from US News was published in 2014 called, "Who is Fighting Against the Common Core" (Williams, 2014). This article discusses how groups of people ranging from billionaires to middle-class families to some educators have found a common ground of fighting against the Common Core and standardized testing (Jackson, 2015). The dislike of the Common Core has led some to critique those who support the work of the Common Core and other school initiatives.

Each person is responsible for one's own actions and how he or she will interpret something. Negativity was exhibited by some staff at the site in response to new educational initiatives. These initiatives are not just unique to just the site study. It is the direction of education of which many people across the United States have opinions. Magazines from US News & World Report to Business Insider have commented on some of the initiatives (Jackson, 2015; Williams, 2014). A poor attitude about some initiatives has produced a contagion of

negativity among some educators. However, some believe that this negativity can be transformed to a positive change if done intentionally and with collaboration.

Collaboration is one approach to gain a common understanding of a word, phrase, or concept. Education is changing so rapidly and new terms come out on a regular basis. It is even more important for educators to engage in group processes to understand a change. Participation in the process helps students and adults think independently, draw conclusions based from evidence, while talking through and collaborating with peers (Roberts and Billings, 2008). Activities where people collaborate and go through a process together create a more cohesive culture. Group processes make a better culture and promote positive morale in the school. People have the opportunity to understand why something is the way it is even if they don't necessarily agree. Educators have to look at the process and not just the product. This is especially true when implementing a new initiative in a school system. When people can understand the purpose and the reasons why something is a particular way, they are more likely to engage the work.

Assumptions

There is an assumption that professional educators should not pick and choose who they will respect, and who they will criticize behind the scenes. If professionals in a school are unprofessional, then the habits of those educators should change. Research shows that behaviors can be changed through intentional intervention. It has happened in major organizations and businesses such as the military or Starbucks Coffee (Duhigg, 2012). If it can happen in these organizations, it can happen in a school system. The intent of this research is to identify what aspects of leadership are required to create a caring culture where everyone in the school community is dedicated to learning and who are supportive of each other.

Summary

Qualitative research has been conducted by the collection of data through public historical data, staff survey data and staff interview transcriptions at the site study. Through the collection and coding process of data collection there has been new, emerging thoughts regarding culture in in rule school systems. Rural school systems often have a close-knit community culture. This culture is often threatened by school reform changes, leadership styles, and the use of collaboration within the school system. Through the analysis and examination of the data collected for this study, insight and emerging theories regarding on the effects that collaboration leadership and change have on the school culture have emerged. The research will deepen the understanding about what initiatives and processes can be put in place to support a respectful school culture that is safe and focused on learning.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Cultures evolve every day, sometimes at a very slow pace and sometimes very quickly. No matter how a culture is developed, changing a culture is not easy. In fact, it is challenging and requires persistence (Fullan, 2014). Attempting to change a school culture means challenging the professional philosophy of others in the organization. The future will always be influenced by the past, but if people want to learn from the past and make the future better, they must be willing and open to reflection and improvement (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2017). Rural, public high schools are vulnerable to a negative culture because small school systems are often in a community setting with a predetermined vision. It has been proven by many studies as a common tendency of sheltered and isolated organizations and even within larger organizations (Kotter, 2008). Many people in these rural schools stay in the school for long periods of time, allowing those voices to be much louder than the voices of the few new teachers or administrators who bring in innovative, evidence based ideas and strategies (Kotter & Rathgeber, 2015). The newer staff's motivation can be defeated when resistance is made clear from others.

When staff members do not trust others, including their administrators, then the capacity of the administrator to lead and sustain change is limited. Rather, it often means an administrator will work until the defeat is too much, and then they will move on to another school (Duhigg, 2015). The resistance to change or and the hesitation to champion new ideas, diminishes the strength of others to take educational risks to improve their teaching is much less likely to happen. Taking a risk to improve anything is difficult especially when it is an educator's passion that is feeling threatened (Dweck, 2006). This negative culture of resistance and distrust trickles

down to everyone who is a part of the school. It must be a priority to support a safe and respectful culture of learning for all those within the organization.

The results of the data analysis are presented in this chapter. The purpose of this study was to examine how to create a respectful, collaborative culture within a school that utilizes desire to teach and support students, desire to succeed in one's career, and to promote happiness through these achievements. Results were examined to respond to the research questions. The data were collected and analyzed in response to the problems posed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. There were four research questions that drove the subsequent data analysis.

Methodology Review

The qualitative research was founded in the Grounded Theory approach. Grounded theory was the research method chosen because it supports in the discovery of the emerging patterns collected through the research data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher identified patterns and structures regarding rural school culture and change through a compilation of public and site-based data. Ideas and opinions gathered from the individual data collected was coded into themes around school culture, collaboration, change, and leadership.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis involves the collection of descriptive data and a careful examination and analysis of it (Merriam, 2009). The data were compiled and analyzed through the process of open coding. Open coding includes labeling identified concepts then developing the categories based on their relationship to each other. The first step in open coding is to build concepts by examining all of the data and closely comparing topics and finding similarities and dissimilarities. As data was broken down into distinct ideas and concepts, they were labeled and illustrated through tables found in Chapter 4 and in Chapter 5.

Research Questions

Through the research and data analysis, the research questions for this dissertation have been answered. The results of this dissertation research effectively identified successful strategies on how to create a respectful, collaborative culture within a school that utilizes the desire to teach and support students. Data suggested the importance of an educator's desire to succeed in their career and the drive promote happiness through these achievements. Below is the list of research questions that will be addressed when discussing the data:

1. How did team collaboration within a school create the culture of learning in a public school?

2. What change agent strategies did school leaders implement to transform a culture into being a caring community dedicated to learning?

3. What qualities does a successful change leader possess?

4. How can these be transferred to others?

As a leader hoping to instill a safe and respectful culture of learning within a school it is important to consider the organic reality of culture. To promote a culture where people feel respected and encouraged to take on new learning requires the leaders within the school to understand the emotions that are involved in school system processes (Dweck, 2000). Schools undergo much change and collaboration is a necessity in the school system. A school leader needs to treat culture, collaboration and the impact of change as priorities within a school system to support a safe culture of learning (Kotter, 2008).

Schools strive to promote learning in their students. In order to best support this philosophy, the educators within the school must feel comfortable and safe in role modeling what life-long learning looks like. This is one of the reasons that a school culture focused on

learning is so important for the 21st Century school system. This research has thoroughly

examined the concepts of culture and the conditions that impact a culture. Those this

examination the researcher strived to cross-examine the data collected with other, vetted and

published research to support the claims of the dissertation data. The researcher examined how

the findings from this research can be transferred to cultural transformations in other schools

across the nation.

Data Collection and Discussion

Multiple sources of data were used to provide a comprehensive analysis of school culture.

The data collected provided evidence to generate and support the major themes that emerged

from this research. Table 4 provides an overview of the data collection. Further discussion

related to each source of data collection is included in Table 4.

Table 4

Dissertation Research Data Collection

Data Collection 1: Public Student Data	Data Collection 1: Student Data: Rationale
1. Teen Issues Post survey 2. High School Inclusivity survey 3. Youth Integrated Health Survey	All student data is to establish a clear illustration for student morale and culture within the school. The focus of this research is on the culture and morale of the staff, but it is not comprehensive if data regarding student perception on the culture was not considered.
Data Collection 2: Public Staff Data 1. Rural New England Educator's Association Survey	Data Collection 2: Public Staff Data: Rationale The purpose of the use of this public data is to examine the realities of the selected and volunteer staff members who chose to take the Educator's Association survey. This data has provided a more complete illustration of the past culture and environment as perceived by the staff that took this survey.
Data Collection 3: Dissertation Survey 1. Dissertation Survey (see Appendix for complete survey)	Data Collection 3: Dissertation Survey: Rationale The purpose of the surveys was to provide data regarding staff views on the school culture. Once this data was collected, the results of the survey were analyzed, examined and coded to create the semi structured interview questions.
Data Collection 4: Dissertation Interviews 1. Dissertation Interview (see Appendix for interview questions)	Data Collection 4: Dissertation Interviews: Rationale The purpose of the interviews was to provide data regarding staff views on the school culture. Once this was transcribed and coded, themes emerged to answer the research questions.

Notes: All data collection has been used to provide a comprehensive examination of school culture.

Public Data

The use of public surveys completed by students was one means of data collection. This information was gathered to make the research results more comprehensive, as the focus is on school culture in a rural public school. The culture of teachers and staff in the school are a part of the overall school culture. The impact of the teacher and staff culture impacts the students culture as it is interconnected within the overall school culture. The public data from the student survey has been used to provide a better illustration of the overall school climate and culture. The public data from the MEA staff survey is not a full picture of how some staff members, as not every staff member took the survey and the sample chosen is not clear. The survey does provide some insight about some staff perceptions about the school and their job.

Data Collection I: Public Student Survey Collection

All student data was used to establish a clear illustration for the student morale and culture within the school. The survey for this data was distributed and collected by outside sources to provide data to raise awareness and inform next steps to improve the school. The focus of this research is on the culture and morale of the staff.

The purpose of using this data was to identify student perceptions regarding the school culture and morale is at the site. Everyone within a school system is impacted on some level by the school culture and this includes the students (Duhigg, 2015). The data is used to illustrate how well students have been able to establish healthy relationships with peers and adults to inform school stakeholders. The stakeholders include community members, students, teachers and administration. The survey results are public and they can be used for a variety of purposes that focus on the school climate and culture.

Teen Issues post survey. The survey was taken by 137 students during December 2016. This survey was conducted by the site study's Teen Issues Committee and collected through a separate online database program. The purpose of the Teen Issues Survey is to identify what the current student perceptions are on the school climate to inform school stakeholders. The results of this survey have been very beneficial to inform staff about the school culture as perceived by students within the site.

High School Inclusivity survey. The inclusivity survey was conducted in December 2016. There was a representative sample of five students and the purpose of this data was to gain their perspective on the inclusivity of the school. The survey was conducted and collected by the organization, Boys to Men, located in the state.

The survey respondents were five students at the high school that volunteered to complete this survey during a free period in their school day. The Boys to Men group worked with five students as they were trying to develop a snapshot of where the students perceived the school to be. It included a representative population, with students of various genders, sexes, socio-economic status and academic success levels. The results of this survey were not substantiated, and should only be considered as another perspective to consider for the purpose of this research as the sample size was small.

Youth Integrated Health Survey. The survey was taken in February 2015 and is the oldest piece of data included in this research. There were 395 students who completed this survey. The purpose of the survey is to identify what the current student perceptions show about how students have established healthy relationships with peers and adults within the school. The stakeholders of this information include community members, students, teachers and administration.

Data Collection II: Educator Association Public Staff Survey

The purpose of the use of this public data is to examine the realities of the selected and volunteer staff members who chose to take the Educator's Association survey. This data provide a more complete illustration of the past culture, from the 2015- 2016 school year, and current environment as perceived by the staff members in the district who took this survey. Thorough analysis of this survey has not been conducted, as there is some concern about the validity of the survey as a biased party conducted, collected, analyzed and published the survey. However, the perceptions expressed by those who completed the survey should be considered with the understanding that the population completing or collecting the data may have had a bias when completing the survey.

The MEA survey was given to selected and volunteer staff members throughout the site study's district in March of 2016. It was reported that 37 staff members took this survey. The collection and delivery of the survey is unclear. The results of the survey were made public in November 2016, when selected survey results were presented to the school board.

Data Collection III: School Culture and Collaboration Survey

The purpose of the surveys was to provide formative data regarding staff views on the school culture. Once this data was collected, the results of the survey were analyzed, examined and preliminarily coded to create the semi structured interview questions. The staff members completed the dissertation survey in January 2017. A group of staff members was identified through systematic sampling. There were 18 staff members who completed the survey. The

survey data was collected anonymously through an online, secure program in order to protect the rights of the participants, as outlined in the IRB proposal.

Data Collection IV: Semi Structured Interview

The purpose of the interviews was to provide formative data regarding staff views on the school culture. Once this data was collected, transcribed and coded, themes regarding the guiding research emerged to answer the research questions. The post-survey interview questions were created after analysis of the dissertation survey results and vetted through support of the faculty advisor. The questions used in the interview were based around the guiding themes from the staff survey. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in February 2017. There were six staff members who completed the surveys who also completed the interviews. These interviews were audio recorded. The audio recording was only used for transcription purposes. The recordings were destroyed once the interviews were transcribed, to protect anonymity of the participants. The questions can be found in the Appendix J.

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

Data Collection I: Public Student Survey Collection

According to work from Richman (2015), there are specific ways to promote respect and citizenship within a school community. It is important for leaders to look at difficult situations with a broad perspective, a big picture mindset and for the leaders to act as "bridge builders" that create a sense of inclusive work from within the school community. This means that the school community is one that is built on openness and trust. The data from this survey suggest advisory programs, engagement and student support are three priorities that school leaders should consider when promoting a positive school environment.

Advisory programs. The Teen Issues Post Survey, a public, anonymous survey, filled out by 140 students. Through a free response comment section of the survey, students identified the importance of relationships and inclusivity in the school. Student responses stated that relationships and inclusivity gives people "motivation to be positive," and "help to provide an anchor in life," (Teen Issues Post Survey, 2016). Additionally, 97.1 percent of the students felt as though they had an adult in the school that they trusted and feel supported by. A major focus within the school is the advisor program, which is considered one of the foundations of the school.

The Advisor System at the site study was developed by the original staff as one of the founding principles of site. It is a comprehensive support system for students, parents and staff. Each student is assigned to an advisee group by grade level. Efforts are continually made to make each group as diverse as possible, considering such factors as towns of residence, gender, interests, needs and strengths. There is evidence that advisory programs in schools promote student engagement and connectedness to the school community (McClure, Yonezawa & Jones, 2010). As evidenced by the Teen Issues survey, there is a strong relationship among staff members and students. While there may be other contributing factors that should not be ruled out, there is clearly a need for students to have a staff member they trust. The evidence from the Teen Issues survey suggests that trust and the ability to rely on someone helps to promote a safe culture of learning.

Engagement. A total of 140 students out of a possible 330 completed this survey. This is a 42.4 percent response rate. The rate is low and leads to questions about student engagement within the school. Further research should be conducted to specify the engagement levels within the school. However, the response rate from this survey does warrant further discussion

regarding engagement and school culture. Research indicates that engagement levels in both workplaces, for adults and in schools, for students, are at a national low (Godfrey and Jones, 2015). This lack of engagement is a problem when a majority of one's life is in these locations. Low engagement is considered a red flag for student dropout (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Wulsin, 2008). If a school strives to have a respectful culture of learning then engagement levels should be addressed.

In education, the level of intensity measures engagement, curiosity and critical thinking students make in regards to their learning. Over the last 20 years, research about the concept of student engagement has increased, providing a more detailed understanding of the role that specific intellectual emotional and social factors play in learning and in a child's social development. There is a connection between cognitive factors; skill acquisition and academic performance, and non-cognitive factors; determination and perseverance, when relating to a student academic and educational success (Blad, 2014). Engagement needs be a priority in the development and vision of a school culture. It one of the more observable behaviors and red flags when considering student at risk for dropping out of high school.

Students who are engaged in school are more likely to have a connection and have a sense of ownership and citizenship in the school (Blad, 2014). The site study has continued to have a four-year high school graduation rate above the 90th percentile. While there are certainly other conditions that lead to graduation rates at 90 percent or above, it is important to consider the impact of having a school culture with a focus on student engagement may have played. A Gallup Education poll from 2014 supports this claim as the results of this poll showed that engaged students were 30 times more likely to be academically successful (Blad, 2014). The site study's student survey results indicate that the site study has a great amount of student

engagement that aids in their graduation rates. Student engagement helps to promote a school culture focused on student learning and inclusivity.

Student support. The data from the Teen Issues survey illustrates how the overall focus of the school is students. The role of the leader is to show the school community examples of such focus. Leaders must recognize that the culture within a school needs to represent, on a daily basis, the importance of supporting students. Such a leader can to act as a "bridge builder" in many ways (Richman, 2015). This helps the stakeholders within the school (teachers, administrators, and counselors) remember the goal and the vision of the school. Staff within current organizations should have a high aptitude to show respect to people of all genders, ages and races (Kuh, 2008). Advisory programs support this initiative. It should be treated as a behavioral expectation to ensure all students feel supported. Creating this type of culture can lead to strong and effective learning opportunities for all students. This supports the development and establishement of a school culture focused on respect and learning.

Data Collection II: Educator Association Public Staff Survey

According to the president of the union, the purpose of conducting and publishing the Educator Association survey to was to send a message to the community that many staff in the RSU feel changes in curriculum, proficiency based system are not going smoothly and to express frustration and concerns over low morale. After hearing many teachers from the region express concern over the changes in both how they do their work and what their requirements are in light of new state mandates, the Staff Association selected staff to complete a survey created and scored by them. The number of educators from each school that took the survey was never made clear to the public. This data is being considered because it describes how these selected staff

were feeling about school issues at the time of the survey. Some of the stated "key questions" and responses are illustrated in Table 5, below.

Table 5

MEA Survey Data

Key question	Disagree or strongly disagree
Have you been able to keep up with your work and also meet your responsibilities regarding proficiency based implementation?	86%
Do you feel morale is greater in the past two years since the district implement new changes?	85%
Do you feel appreciated by school leadership?	61%
	Agree or strongly agree
Do you feel frustrated in your work?	77%

Notes: Number of staff that took the survey was not released. Survey was conducted, collected and published by the district's teacher's union president.

The survey was not sent out to all staff members and the results were collected and published by a biased party, however, it is important to consider the feelings and perceptions of these results as remedying some of the concerns noted can support in the establishment of a safe culture. Some of the MEA survey results found respondents were: frustrated and stressed, changes being implementing were overwhelming. These emotions may create resistance to change, and lead some to feel unappreciated. These concepts are important to address when considering the development of a school culture that is focused on respect and learning from all.

The survey results reported that 77 percent of survey participants felt frustrated in their work. The results of the survey indicate at least some staff members were stressed with changes

happening in the high school. These changes, such as Proficiency Based Education and a new teacher evaluation system, were primarily mandated from the state government. Due to the gravity and accountability of these change angst among some, presumably because the school had not made any notable changes for 30 years. When change interrupts the ways things "have been," it is natural for frustration and even fear of the change, and those implementing it, to occur.

When change happens, the status quo is interrupted, and many people go through feelings of loss, anger and separation. The negative feelings are often directed at the leader implementing a change (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Concerning the results of the MEA survey, the researcher presumed that many of the participants of the survey are jaded towards administration. At the site, it was and has been the school and district administration leading much of the change within the school. This change, while best for students, and most often required by state mandate, is still a change in the status quo. Therefore, it leads to fear and skepticism by those resisting change. Change, in itself, will impact someone's life and thus will elicit an emotional response.

As a change agent within a school, it is important to understand the skeptical responses of staff when change is happening. The leader should acknowledge the loss resulting from the change. Doing so allows constituents to feel and appreciate empathy that is being presented. When the leader acknowledges the loss, he or she should speak to the fears that arose from the change as well as describe how the change is expected to bring about hope. This communication should be done with clear and specific evidence. The evidence may help to engage naysayers who have voiced skepticism regarding what the change may bring (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Acknowledgement of the feelings and clear communication regarding the change has the power to neutralize resistance while validating the change.

As suggested above, an evidentiary question elicited from the MEA data would be about how school leaders should deal with change resisters. As illustrated in Table 5, the survey asked, "Do you feel morale is greater in the past two years since the district implement new changes?" Of the responses, 85 percent strongly disagreed or disagreed with this question. Change requires new learning, uncertainty and perseverance. For some, change means new expectations and a change in a vision of how someone sees himself or herself. The reasons for resistance are known as Competing Commitments. These are a form of self- protection (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). These commitments arise because of self-doubt and long-held beliefs people hold. Sometimes, the competing commitment is a deep-seeded insecurity. In essence, the competing commitments are perceptions about another's beliefs and actions. There is a natural, humanistic fear to challenge change when challenges personal perceptions.

School leaders should listen to the reason the person resists change and try to better support them. Data from the leadership survey support this claim. When a leader can listen, a leader can create and sustain change. A leader who is able to reflect on the process, examine where things are and listen to others is better able to identify what is really going on and move the organization forward.

Sometimes, organizations will have resistors that, because of a competing commitment, are unable to change and are unwilling to consider the change. These resistors are unable to reflect, articulate concerns and be solution-focused. They are detrimental to the change process. In order for a resistor to embrace change they first should have an open-mind and a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). Leadership attempts to appease those unwilling to consider change can lead to melancholy and negativity. This may have been the case at the study site, considering the percentage of MEA survey participants who reported on negativity, low morale, and frustration.

Referenced in Table 5, the MEA survey data stated that 61 percent of participants did not feel appreciated by school leadership. Feeling unappreciated is a common perception in organizations experiencing kinds of chaotic change and new expectations that can result in low morale. Not feeling appreciated leads to disengagement and a lack of motivation (Fisher, Frey & Smith, 2016). A way to help staff members feel included is by providing small token of appreciation. For example, when school leaders bring food for staff members to show they care, this can be a morale booster. Small acts of kindness can help people feel emotionally safe (Hoerr, 2016). However, it is important to make sure these are seen as token of appreciation and not something the principal or leadership is doing for any other reason.

In some schools when the principal has tokens of appreciation that happen consistently, it can lead to a sense of entitlement among the staff. Instead of being appreciative when the principal brings lunch for everyone, for example, the staff become argumentative and make statements like "I don't understand why the principal didn't bring something else for lunch." This example noted above is exactly what happened at the site study in the winter of 2015-2016. Staff, who had become entitled to getting small tokens of appreciation from leadership, started to see this as something that they expected to get and not as something that they should be appreciate. The principal and the leadership staff at the site study must consider other ways of showing appreciation that don't lead to a sense of entitled reward. Staff members need to feel appreciated just as students must feel appreciated. What is important is to remember and identify the culture within a school and what will help someone feel appreciated within that school system.

Providing timely and specific feedback helps people feel appreciated (Blattner & Walter, 2015). Intentional feedback allows for improvement that can be measured and followed up on. When the feedback is clear there is less confusion on the next steps thus allowing for more

individual growth. School leaders must appreciate the emotional stress that accompanies the role of a teacher. They should show appreciation and provide specific, thoughtful feedback to teachers as one strategy to support teacher morale and culture of the school.

Data Collection III: School Culture and Collaboration Survey

The results of the School Culture and Collaboration survey provided the principal researcher with emergent themes on culture and collaboration in the educational setting. Through the interpretation of the survey, it was evident that transparency, clear communication and collaboration all play a major role in the development and establishment of a safe and respectful culture focused on learning. Below is a summary of the survey results as well as the evidence to support the prominent themes of the survey, which led to the creation of the semi-structured interview questions. Please refer to the Appendix for a copy of the survey.

Respondent demographics. Demographically, the respondents ranged in years of experience in education, as can be seen in the table below. The majority (55.6 percent) of the staff members participating in the dissertation survey had worked in education for 5-10 years. There were 33.3 percent of staff members who had worked in education for 15-20 years and 11.1 percent who had been in education for 10-15 years. Table 6 below describes this.

Table 6

Staff Survey Demographics

Years worked	Responses (%)
5-10 years	55.6
10-15 years	11.1
15-20 years	33.3

Note: Demographics of staff survey participants, in regards to their years in education.

Culture and collaboration. Respondents primarily identified the culture within the school as being "Contrived-Collegial" (44.4 percent). Additionally, 22.2 percent identified the culture as being either "Balkanized" or "Comfortable- Collaboration." These two culture descriptions, when placed on a continuum, are on either side of "Contrived-Collegial," as illustrated below, in Table 7. Definitions of each culture, adapter from Whitaker (2015) are found in Table 8, below.

Table 7

Culture Descriptor Continuum and Survey Results Distribution

Descriptor	Toxic	Fragmented	Balkanized	Contrived-Collegial	Comfortable-Collaboration	Collaborative School
Percentage (%) of Respondents Identification	0%	11.1%	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	0%

Note: Culture Continuum and participant perceptions

Table 8

Culture Descriptors

Culture title	Culture description
Toxic	A toxic culture is when a large number of teachers focus on the negative aspects of the school's activities and staff, using whatever flaws as a justification for any poor performance.
Fragmented	A fragmented culture is when teachers act as individuals with and the doors within the classrooms are closed and teachers believe they have their own territories and they value this.
Balkanized	A balkanized culture is one where collaboration only happens among those who are like-minded. Stronger groups often bully others.
Contrived-Collegial	A contrived-collegial culture is when the leadership creates a contrived collegiality when collaboration is pushed. Leaders have the expectation for teachers to meet and discuss students, and take notes on this. Sometimes this contrived collaboration is needed, as a starting point for change but ownership should be something the leadership establishes.
Comfortable-Collaboration	A comfortable- collaborative culture is when staff value cooperation, courtesy, and compliance. However, in this culture some staff will hesitate to voice disagreement with one another because they are afraid about how the other person will take what they say.
Collaborative School	A collaborative school culture is when all staff in the organization have similar educational values, work together for lifelong learning to improve their work

Note: Collaboration styles (Whitaker, 2015)

When considering the descriptor of a contrived-collegial culture, at the time of the survey, a majority of respondents felt as though collaboration was being pushed by the leadership, but with an expectation that the staff members would eventually take ownership in

their own collaborative efforts. This led to questions surrounding Research Question 1 regarding

the role collaboration played in the creation of a safe, respectful culture of learning.

On the staff survey, Question 6 asked, "What role does collaboration play in creating

culture?" According to the responses, 94.4 percent stated that culture and collaboration were

interconnected. Of the responses, statements such as, "collaboration is what culture supports" "if

you do not have collaboration you will not have a positive culture" and "collaboration is of

utmost importance. An ideal culture is one that works together to achieve the same goals."

Respectively, 33.3 percent of the answers cautioned against collaboration that did not appear

purposeful or with a clear direction. To summarize responses of this nature, it was stated that, "if

the collaboration is not purposeful, the positive intent backfires," and "(when the purpose of

collaboration is not transparent) any attempt at creating a positive culture collaboratively is

automatically judged with a skeptical eye." This perception foreshadows further survey themes

on transparency and communication, which will be reviewed in the following paragraphs. These

responses did establish the need for further investigatory research, through the semi-structured

interview; to gain a greater understanding on the role collaboration has on culture.

Additional information on the perceptions of culture and collaboration were identified

through Question 7 that asked what kind of collaboration best fit the site. Over half (55.6

percent) of respondents perceived the collaboration at the site study to be one of community

collaboration, when there is a shared vision. The goal is more focused on learning rather than on

the task. Those involved share and build knowledge instead of focus on task completion. Table 9

describes collaboration descriptors, adapted from Callahan, Schenk and White (2009). Table 10

represents participant perception of culture at the site study.

Table 9

Collaboration Descriptors

Type	Descriptor
Network Collaboration	This starts with individual action and self-interest, which then accrues to the network as individuals contribute or seek something from the network. Membership and time-lines are open and unbounded. There are no explicit roles. Members most likely do not know all the other members. Power is distributed.
Community Collaboration	There is a shared domain or area of interest, but the goal is more often focused on learning rather than on task. People share and build knowledge rather than complete projects. Members may go to their communities to help solve their problems by asking questions and getting advice, then taking that advice back home to implement in their teams.
Team Collaboration	The members of the group are known; there are clear task interdependencies, expected reciprocity, and explicit time-lines and goals. To achieve the goal, members must fulfill their interdependent tasks within the stated time. Team collaboration often suggests that, while there is explicit leadership, the participants cooperate on an equal footing and will receive equal recognition.

Note: Collaboration descriptors, adapted from Callahan, Schenk and White (2009).

Table 10

Collaborative Perception at Site Study

Collaboration Descriptor	Percentage (%) of respondents identified
Network collaboration	33.3
Community collaboration	55.6
Team collaboration	11.1

Note: This represents participant perception of culture at the site study.

Teachers should not only be teaching their students, they should all be teaching each other. Staff meetings should include best practices segments from successful teachers. A culture of learning can be contagious, and setting up a school of learning will change the dialogue in the teacher's room from complaints to a dialogue of academic learning. When people feel empowered by new learning they are energized and motivated. A culture of learning means including ways that everyone is an active learner (Plunkett, 2016). One way to do this in a high school would be to encourage camaraderie in and collaboration.

The survey asked about the role strong leadership plays in establishing culture. The response for this question was done in the form of a narrative answer so themes from the research were generated and are illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11

Attributes of Leadership in Sustainable Change

Attribute	Percentage (%) of respondents identified
Transparency	77.8
Courage	33.3
Creating a feeling of value	27.8
Clear communicator	88.9
Creating ownership	38.9
Fairness	16.7
Good listener	72.2
Positive Attitude	22.2

Note: successful leadership attributes identified by participants

Transparency and clear communication were the top leadership qualities the respondents valued, with 77.8 percent identifying transparency and 88.9 percent identifying clear

communication. The similarity in these two characteristics has led experts to defining a communication style that embodies both of these traits, called *transparent communication* (Zumeta, 2017). This kind of communication provides stakeholders with the information needed to understand what is going on and the reasons for it. In essence, it provides the "why" to the initiative or change. This model provides follow-up for concerns that are raised and is consistent both with the content and the process (Zumeta, 2017). In analysis of this data, the theme of transparent communication needs to be identified as a primary agent in creating positive change leadership.

Data Collection IV: Semi- Structured Interview

The staff semi-structured interview questions were built upon the themes generated from the staff surveys. These themes were: effective collaboration methods; respectful culture of learning; change agent strategies; and leadership and transference.

For a complete list of questions asked, please refer to Appendix J. The themes align with the dissertation's Research Questions: Theme 1 focused on Research Question 1; Theme 2 focused on Research Question 2; and Theme 3 focused on Research Questions 3 and 4. Considering this alignment, the results of interpretation for the staff interviews will revolve around the data interpretation and coding that arose from the themes listed above.

When people can see the reason and the need for collaboration, the effectiveness and benefits are well known. In fact, four of the six (66.7 percent) respondents clearly identified that the benefit of collaboration is the ability to talk, plan, respond and react. The benefits of collaboration were relatively clear for the respondents to identify, however the methods in which to promote collaboration were not as transparent.

When participants explained how to best implement collaboration there were two guiding themes: the collaboration needs to be intentional and there needs to be buy-in from those collaborating for it to be effective. The results are available in Table 12 below and will be discussed thereafter.

Table 12

Successful Implementation Techniques for Collaboration

Collaboration	Responses (out of 6)	%
Intentional	2	33.3
Scheduling time	3	50
People need to have the desire to collaborate	1	16.7
Benefit is the ability to talk, plan, respond and react	4	66.7
Trick people into doing them	2	33.3
People need to be able to separate a complaint over an idea	3	50
School-wide norms to focus the meetings.	3	50
Involving more to take part in the process	4	66.7

Note: Participant identified collaboration techniques.

The idea of collaboration needing to be intentional was clear. According to one response, "time to meet together is important but unless it is productive and has a purpose then it has the opposite effect. The focus of a meeting must be clear. The focus on it being intentional: well planned out and with small goals and an overall purpose is clear. The goal in collaborating is to

support learning, growth and professional development of the participants. It is expected to help transform school culture and to creating a culture of learning and of respect that is sustainable and deep. To create an improved culture within a school, one first must be able to collaborate with others within the school.

Educators are adult learners who can model learning and what they learn should be shared, as it is applicable to others. New information has potential to shift thinking, whether through change or through reinforcing ideas. However, without collaboration, this new information is unlikely to be processed and shared by groups and the potential of the information is missed (Dillon, 2015). No matter what the age, it is important to continue to learn. Providing purposeful professional development allows for new learning that supports teachers in their educational philosophy and pedagogy.

Another way to implement intentional collaboration is through the use of data. To create a school culture focused on learning, it is important to think about the role data and collaboration can play in the development of this. Schools where data is digested in collaboration and then used to to better support teaching and students are more successful. Through data analysis and collaboration, teachers have evidence to make decisions.

While the responses from the interviews were clear that there needed to be staff "buy-in" in the implementation of collaboration efforts, the methods in how to do this were not clear. In fact, two (33.3 percent) of respondents identified "tricking people into collaborating" as an effective means of doing this. Others (three participants, 50 percent) stated that time should be scheduled within the day to promote collaboration. According to work by Fullan (2007), collaboration develops in a school when the "re-culturing" focuses on school improvement as a school wide goal. When a school culture is one that celebrates collaboration and change efforts,

engagement in a collaborative change process is more likely to happen. When the culture is built around a respectful culture of lifelong learning, the staff members are more likely to see the need and benefits of collaboration.

The perceptions from the interviews about sustaining and creating more collaboration within the school align with Fullan's (2007) work. When the focus is having a respectful culture of learning, it not only creates a safe and welcoming environment, but through collaboration and learning, school improvement and individual growth is likely to occur. From the results, three participants (50 percent) explained that the purpose of collaboration needed to focus on the problem/ purpose of the collaborating, with a solution-focused attitude, and to be careful about those who would use the collaboration time to complain and not to generate possible solutions as a team. The team approach allows for staff buy-in when collaborating. The school improvement strategies most have collaborative efforts addressed at some level.

Another way to help support a respectful culture that promotes positivity would be to establish school-wide norms for the staff members. When many within the organization commonly complain and have a negative tone, it has a ripple effect. The negativity from these staff members may cause others to join in the negativity or makes them feel uncomfortable, causing their overall experience at school to be negative (Kusy & Holloway, 2009). This toxic culture will often have a deeper impact on the school leader, who strives to run a high functioning, supportive school.

When there are school-wide norms, it sets explicit expectations on how others treat each other. Staff participating in the interview acknowledged setting expectations as a successful strategy to support a positive respectful environment, as three participants (50 percent) identified school-wide norms as a successful way to support collaboration. At the site, a set of school wide

norms were established for the 2016-17 school year as a way to support a more respectful culture.

Culture is a social indoctrination of the unwritten expectations that people learn and adjust to as they work to fit in a particular group (Schein, 1992). Norms and cultural values can lead to explicit expectations. Everyone should know them because they are the foundation of the working environment of the school. When designing the norms with a group of stakeholders, it is important to identify all of them (Kusy & Halloway, 2009). Challenging a deeply-rooted school culture is extremely difficult to do, especially when a majority of those within the school may fear change and do not want to change the ways of the past.

Changing a culture should be a well thought-out, evidence-based process because having good intentions is not enough to establish and sustain cultural changes within a school. Using a combination of proven practices and strategies can help a school through the culture transformation. Using school-wide norms is one way to do this. School-wide norms are an evidenced-based strategy to support a school culture. This has been established at the site. At a retreat over the summer of 2016, school leaders worked to identify two major goals for the upcoming school year, focusing on culture and proficiency-based education as the top priorities. As a result, the leadership team initiated the following efforts to support staff: a staff resource guide, clearly identified roles in the decision-making ladder, and the use of consistent norms at all meetings. The school- wide norms established at the site study, that have successfully implemented are listed in Table 13.

Table 13

School-wide Norms

Norm	Description
Follow an agenda.	Start on time and end on time, be sensitive to the time constraints of others.
Respect the facilitator.	The facilitation position is difficult. Show respect those taking it on.
Respect and trust that members are dedicated to our students.	We are all in it together; we are all in the same boat. If you have concerns, then we will have courage to talk to that particular person and not to others.
Be present.	Listen well; give the speaker your full attention and do not engage in side tasks or conversations. If you have not understood a colleague, repeat what you heard or ask a question to clarify your understanding before responding. Electronic devices are closed unless called for.
Be willing to take risks.	Ensure that it is safe for participants to explore new ideas or go out on a limb when presenting ideas without feeling criticized.
Reflect on the group's process.	Reflection ensures meetings are productive and respectful.
Maintain confidentiality.	Anything sensitive or confidential that is said in the meeting will stay in the meeting.
Decision-making will be done by consensus with school wide focus.	For items brought to the staff: consensus is considered 2/3 of the staff present, at the time of the vote.
Use 'I' statements.	Express opinions and experiences of department and avoid generalizations.
Courageous honesty.	Don't be afraid to face the difficult and be honest.
Be tough on issues not on people.	Focus on the issue and not on the deficit of another.
Have fun.	Smile and add humor.

Celebrate success.	Celebrating together is important. We are in this together and should celebrate together.

Notes: School-wide norms and descriptions, created by site study leadership team.

One of the interview participants explained that the norms created lay the groundwork for how people are supposed to treat one another, "they say need to be respectful and professional. Having them helps us all remember that." The norms provide staff members with behavioral expectations that support a respectful culture.

The involvement of staff creates more ownership and support in these efforts. Four (66.7 percent) of the participants identified involvement to promote a respectful culture that could embrace change. One participant stated, "the more ownership they take the more likely they are to buy into the change." Collaboration, when done effectively, promotes change either on a large or small scale. When those impacted by the change take ownership in it, there is more likely to be less resistance of the change.

When participants were asked about their perceptions on how to implement and sustain change effectively in a school setting, the predominant themes included: providing the why, and allowing for discussion thus, permitting voices to be heard.

Results of the data are illustrated in Table 14 below.

Table 14

Change Agent Strategies

Strategies	Responses (out of 6)	%
Providing the why	5	83.3
Role model the change	3	50
Discussion and feedback from teachers promotes change	6	100

Give people a voice in the change process	4	66.7
Giving people the reason why explains how it is in interest for the students		
	5	83.3

Note: Successful change agent strategies.

Of the interview responses, five (83.3 percent) explicitly stated the best way to implement change is to first explain the reason why. Participants stated, "this removes the idea of changing for the sake of change," and that it will "identify the problem and how the proposed change will help that problem." Work from Sinek (2010) supports the notion in the power of why. According to Sinek, the why provides people for the reason they do what they do. The "why" allows for people to understand what is happening. In relation to this concept, five (83.3 percent) of the participants completing the interview stated that giving people the reason why explains how it is in the interest of students. In school systems where the mission and vision statement is focused on students, the clarity of why the change is good for students helps people to take on the change. If it is good for students then it fits the mission and vision statement and will generate buy- in from staff.

As illustrated in the interview results, the impact of allowing for discussion where all voices are heard in regards to the change, was incredibly important. All participants completing the interview believed that discussion and feedback from teachers promotes change. Four (66.7 percent) of the participant noted the importance of allowing staff members to have a voice in the change. One respondent stated, "sometimes giving them a voice can cause people to no longer resist change," and ultimately participate in the sustainability of the change.

Hough (2016) stated that the number one key to inviting parents' connection to school is making them feel welcome and staff treating them with respect. Hough's research indicates that

family engagement improves student success at school. Research from the staff interview suggests this same reasoning to be true with the school culture for staff members: according to this data, staff that feel welcomed and feel respected are more likely to be fully engaged in their career and more likely to promote a respectful culture of learning within their school building.

Leadership and transference are some of the essential key change agent strategies to cultivating a respectful culture of learning within a school. When participants were asked questions in regards to the role of a leader in change and culture, the primary perceptions were that the leader needed to be able to: 1) listen; 2) be direct; and 3) be positive. The results are illustrated in Table 15 below. When a leader is able to model effective listening strategies and exhibit positivity, the perception was that the culture within the school would be more respectful and motivating to be a part of.

Table 15

Leadership and Transference Techniques

Technique	Responses (out of 6)	%
Listening	5	83.3
Being positive	3	50
Look for potential in others	2	33.3
Be direct	4	66.7
Need to be very careful how things are said to avoid miscommunication	4	66.7
The challenge is that some people will not believe it is open and honest communication	2	33.3

Note: Leadership and transference techniques

As noted in the table, listening was overwhelmingly noted as important in the creation and sustainability of a school culture focused on learning. Of the responses to the semi-structured questions, five of the participants (83.3 percent) identified listening as a key component to the school culture. As stated by one respondent, when a leader listens well, they can, "hear those ideas and then draw out more feedback about those ideas." In essence, the more a leader listens, the more the school culture can be structured in a way to promote overall school improvement efforts.

The role of listening among school leaders can be more demanding than it is in other professions. School leaders are expected not only to listen, but to model listening, teach it, evaluate it, and appreciate and acknowledge it when seen in others. One respondent stated, "leaders can support the staff by listening to them-by keep bringing back the change ideas and continually bring it back-it is all formative feedback." According to Bregman (2012), to promote a culture exhibiting effective listening, the leader should be able to hear the information, organize it, and then integrate the information with other known knowledge.

Listening is not an easy task. To truly listen, someone needs to have an open mind, listen fully, and then reflect on the information before responding. In a world that moves at such a fast pace, this can be a challenge. School leaders that want to model effective listening skills should consider the information, process it, then decide what the next steps are (Zumeta, 2017). School leaders should not dismiss feedback before they take time to impartially consider the information presented and brainstorm possible applications from the feedback. One participant stated that a school leader will demonstrate active listening when "the information is discussed and the valuable aspects of the information are used" to support the information being given. The

response from the leader, whether it comes immediately or after some thought, promotes the concept of listening as it ensures the other person will feel heard.

The staff interviews identified that when staff members can take ownership or personalize their work they are more likely to be motivated to do the work successfully. School leaders who want to promote a safe and respectful culture of learning should focus on ways to allow staff to have a voice in decisions that impact them, promote collaboration (social construction and co creation) within the development of these decisions, and provide processing time to develop and grow from decisions and changes happening. The four attributes of personalization are: voice, co-creation, social construction, and self-discovery (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017).

Results from the interview indicated that leaders who were direct were perceived as more transparent and identified as being better communicators. Of those surveyed, 66.7 percent (four out of six) identified being direct as a way for leaders to promote clear communication within the school. One participant stated, "communication needs to be pointed and specific." Clear communication is credited for building trust (Beslin, Reddin & Reddin, 2004). When the information is communicated clearly and with explanation of why, it allows for those within the school to understand and ultimately trust the leader. When information is direct, it removes excuses and promotes understanding.

According to the interview results, when leaders are positive, the school culture and the changes occurring within the school are more likely to be supported. Out of the six participants, three identified that leadership positivity was crucial to school culture. The role of a leader, however, is not always easy. According to one study, 70 percent of high school principals leave within five years (Fuller & Young, 2009). This data illustrates the difficulty of the school

leadership position. However, being positive as a school leader will not only help the school culture but will support the school leader. Work by Rubin (2009) addresses the value of challenge in promoting happiness, which are often some reasons (among many others) that people take on leadership roles. However, without any achievement or applicable development, the challenge becomes a burden and ultimately defeat. Some leaders are naturally positive, however others may need more strategies in changing an attitude exemplifying negativity or indifference.

Summary of Findings

The data collected for the purpose of this study includes: public survey data from students; public survey day from the staff association's perception on culture; staff survey conducted by the principal investigator; and semi structured interview data, conducted by the principal investigator. The interview data has been shared in the form of coded themes, organized and quantified, as well as selected verbatim quotes. The data collected has led to themes in regards to school culture.

A positive school culture keeps the staff and students engaged, promotes or limits learning, and allows for people to choose whether taking a risk is appropriate. The school culture reflects perceptions, relationships, behaviors, and written and unwritten norms that shape and influence how the school functions and what the staff and students are capable of accomplishing. When a school has a toxic culture, it limits learning and maintains an unsafe environment. School leaders should focus on the school culture to create a safe place when learning and healthy risk-taking are respected and embraced.

School systems that have strong advisory programs and focus on the relationships within the school are more likely to have students who feel safe and connected to the school. This is

true with the adults within the school. Adults that feel connected to the school are more likely to have investment in the school and be more engaged in the school's mission and vision. However, not all adults are going to embrace change initiatives, and change needs to be an expectation. Changes are coming at school systems from within, from their communities, and from state and federal mandates. School leaders are going to have some staff members that actively work against the change. School leaders must listen to the reasons for the resistance. If the reasons are valid, then the leader and the staff member can collaboratively investigate ways to overcome those reasons.

Collaboration is a process that allows people to see different aspects of a problem. It allows constructive exploration and analysis of solutions that are comprised of the many voices included in the collaborative effort. As noted in the data, collaboration tends to be pushed first by school leaders before teachers will participate (Kotter, 2008). However, once people can engage with ideas, the school will benefit by the generation of respectful inquiry, new ideas and new learning.

Respect within schools is incredibly important when establishing a safe culture focused on life-long learning. Schools that have a set of norms to which everyone commits are more likely to promote respect and support positive attitudes and solution-focused efforts when challenges and change initiatives arise. Respectful school leaders focus on solutions and promote positivity have a growth mindset and are direct and transparent regarding school initiatives. These behaviors, attributes and strategies outlined above support a culture of respect and learning within a school culture.

There are many ways for a school leader to promote a safe culture dedicated to learning. Some ways identified through this study include: focus on relationships, have a comprehensive

advisory program, push engagement, acknowledge change resisters, embrace collaboration, listen to stakeholders, have established school-wide norms, the power of positivity, and to be direct and transparent. Key components identified for supporting a caring and respectful culture of learning have been addressed and described throughout this chapter. Chapter 5 will elaborate on the overall themes identified through the research, explain how the data will contribute to the field of educational leadership, and conclude the dissertation research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify, explore and analyze the leadership aspects in the development and sustainability of a positive school culture for teachers in rural public high schools. This includes the impact of collaboration and of change in school culture. Rural high schools that are smaller in size are the most impacted by the negative culture. Work from Kotter and Rathgeber (2015) has identified how the voices of those who have been in a place for a long time are louder than the voices of the few new staff that come in with innovative ideas. This behavior limits innovation and is proven to create a culture of distrust. Such an environment impacts the role of a school leader and diminishes the power of others to share ideas that could improve pedagogy or school-wide initiatives (Kotter, 2008). If school leaders do not treat school culture as a priority, then the successful transition to the new educational mandates is unlikely. The research from this study suggests leaders' behaviors impact the culture and influence change to create and sustain a culture of learning among educators and students.

The research questions will be listed below, along with the findings and themes generated that support the question discussed. After each question has been discussed thoroughly, with the accompanying evidence included, a summary of conclusions will be addressed. The final section will review the contribution this research will apply to the field of school leadership and culture. The data collected compasses different perspectives and ideas regarding school culture. From the data, results will be used to examine how it contributes to answering the dissertation's research questions.

Review of Research Questions and Summary of Responses

This research was focused around four guiding questions. The questions dealt with the role of 1. collaboration in school culture, 2. change agent strategies to support the school culture focused on learning, 3. successful change agent qualities, and 4. transference suggestions on how to promote a respectful culture focused on learning in rural public schools. The research questions are listed below.

1. How did team collaboration within a school influence the culture of learning in a public school?

2. What change agent strategies did school leaders implement to transform a culture into being a caring community dedicated to learning?

3. What qualities does a successful change leader possess?

4. How can these be transferred to others?

Through the analysis of data collected from public surveys and the study's staff survey and interviews, common themes emerged. Those themes are: Collaboration, Purposeful Intention, and Engagement.

Collaboration

The data illustrated that collaboration within the school system is important. When teachers are able to collaborate, they build a safe community amongst each other and engage in quality professional development. They have a voice in the school system. Collaboration may be seem forced at first, it is important for the leader to allow organic collaboration to take hold. The best way a leader can do this is by scheduling time in the school day for teachers to collaborate.

Staff members completing the survey and the interview encourage leaders to be intentional and purposeful not only with collaboration but when implementing change. If a

school is going to have a safe culture focused on learning that sustains change then the change needs to be purposeful and intentional. Well-conceived and thoroughly designed innovations are essential to school improvement (Thomas, 2002). Those who participated in the interview noted this concept. Please refer to Table 11 in Chapter 4 for an illustration of this concept.

Purposeful Intention

Being intentional is one of the essential qualities of leaders. Leaders must be intentional about how they introduce change, how they organize a teacher's school day, and in how they communicate. Open communication includes active listening and allowing for others voices to be heard. When people feel as though their voice is heard it makes him feel more appreciated and promotes engagement. Present day public education has more disengagement from teachers than it has historically. Data from the 2014 Gallup Education Poll noted that teachers are less engaged now than they were 20 years ago (Blad, 2014). Data collected both publicly and through the study's survey and interviews supports this concern. Schools should promote engagement for students, teachers and school leaders.

Engagement

One way to support engagement within a school culture is for the school leader to promote positivity. School staffs will always face barriers and challenges. School leaders must have a courageous attitude that is solution-focused and collaboratively seek input on school improvement. Being positive is not always easy. Someone with a positive attitude that is solution focused is able to acknowledge challenge and collaborate with others to persevere.

Response Summary

Much of the data collected provide strategies and qualities that leaders can take to support the school culture focused on learning. It is important for school leaders to be aware of these

noted successful strategies and traits. School leaders immersed in a negative school culture that is challenged by change may use these findings to support in the transformation of the school culture. These strategies and qualities can support a culture into becoming one that is respectful and focused on learning.

Interpretation and Alignment of Findings

As noted in the Methodology, a limitation of this research is that all the data was collected from one small rural community high school. Case studies carry this limitation, and the findings have been carefully coded and substantiated with literature. Findings from this research indicate that much of the perception staff had regarding school culture and change is consistent with best practices noted by change and educational leadership experts including Fullan, Kotter, Hargreaves, and Dufour. In alignment with the research questions, findings and supporting literature are analyzed and discussed below.

Research Question 1: Influence of Collaboration

The optimal situation for schools to aspire to is one that is a collaborative school culture. This culture does not come naturally; often teachers are reluctant to ask peers for help, which dissuades collaboration (Gruenert &Whitaker, 2017). The collaborative culture does not encourage autonomy; rather it supports and promotes interdependence among educators. As noted in the study's survey and interviews, collaboration needs to be established by school leaders before teachers can engage with each other. The school leader role is to structure ways for teachers to collaborate and find meaningful ways to work together.

When collaboration is a part of a school culture, especially one that is struggling, the level of trust among staff increases (Goddard, Goddard & Tschannen-Moran, 2007). While collaboration may be systematically forced at first, it is important for the leader to trust in the

process as studies show that collaboration develops organically when the structure is in place (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). Research suggests that school leaders need to foster a sense of shared responsibility and engagement when introducing and implementing collaboration within the school system. This allows for other change agents, not just the school leader, to support the rationale and significance of collaboration in the school system.

While team collaboration does support the creation of a safe, respectful culture of learning, it does not guarantee it. Results from the staff survey identified that the majority of respondents believed the collaboration within the school fit under the contrived collegial collaboration style, or "forced" collaboration. The leaders have the expectations for staff to meet and discuss educational topics. Sometimes contrived collaboration is needed as a starting point but that staff ownership should be something the leadership encourages. As described by participants of the staff interview, when collaboration is successful in the school, people benefit from processing, reacting and learning with colleagues. Collaboration is one method to create a safe, respectful culture of learning in a public school. School leaders should: intentionally collaborate, schedule time for collaboration, and embrace failure a way to support new learning.

Intentionally collaborate. Leaders must plan collaboration well with an intentional purpose that is communicated. it supports the learning of those involved in the collaboration. When done intentionally, staff sees the reason for the collaboration and they are encouraged to be fully engaged in it. Professional collaboration needs to be intentional with clear value attached to it. This makes the collaborative time feel well worth the effort as work done in the collaborative time has merit and quality.

The quality of the collaborative meeting time should be high. When a meeting is seen as an opportunity then the likelihood of it being productive and successful increases (Parker-

Boudett & City, 2014). In a school setting that is dedicated to learning, meetings must be reframed as a learning opportunity.

To support high quality meetings, they be planned thoroughly. Educators often talk about how they never have enough time. This was affirmed in the interviews. If collaboration is to succeed, the time set aside for collaboration needs to be well planned and activities of high-quality. The most effective meetings are ones that have a focused agenda; hold people accountable for their role on the team; and provide time for feedback (Parker-Boudett & City, 2014). When these are present within the agenda and followed through with during the meeting, they promote active engagement within the group and people feel productive.

Focused agenda. A focused agenda is one that is established with support from group members prior to the meeting. This agenda should be organized in a way that identifies the priority topics with clear timeframes for each topic.

Accountability. Holding people accountable on an agenda can be through the "next steps" portion of the agenda. This is where team members will sign up for different tasks that result from the meeting. The next steps are included on the agenda and allows for everyone to take a role. It promotes ownership in the collaborative efforts both during the meeting and in between meetings.

Feedback. The collaboration time must allow for participants to provide feedback about the meeting. Some groups call this feedback "Plus/Delta" (Parker-Boudett & City, 2014). This is essentially the role of process observation. When group members provide feedback regarding how the group did during a meeting, everyone can reflect and the group can improve. The group can become higher functioning from the improvement that should follow. The Plus/ Delta feedback should be debriefed at the end of every meeting and shared once more at start the

following meeting. Sharing the feedback at the start of every meeting gives group members a reminder on ways that can make the meeting time more valuable. It allows for group members to see and feel that their feedback has been heard and informs the very next meeting.

Productive and engaged meetings promote the success of collaborative groups because people feel as though the time taken for the meeting is time well used (Parker-Boudett & City, 2014). The time taken for the meeting allows for the members to take ownership with group objectives provides time for collaboration with peers and gives people a voice. This helps to create a respectful school culture focused on learning.

Schedule collaboration time. For educators, time is key. People should have time scheduled to meet and the facilitator needs to keep the meeting productive. Time is the issue in school for many teachers, as was described by interview participants. There is a focus on getting things done, and checking things off, instead of allowing for time to process, think and engage in the topic. Sometimes the objective will look different and the result will not be perfect, but it is the process and the learning that matters. In a school, everyone is a learner: staff and students.

When considering the culture within a school, it is clear from the results that collaboration is one way to support a culture of learning. Research by Dufour and Dufour (2012) has identified Common Planning Time (CPT) as a critical element in developing and sustaining collaboration and growth within the culture. The time available for planning and professional development work needs to be adequate. The amount of time should be shared with the school community to create accurate perceptions of the time allotted in supporting the teachers in their own lifelong learning. The school should provide teachers with equivalent time (or more) than that of the highest academically performing countries. This way, the school is actively

supporting the professional development and growth of all of those within the school: staff and students, thus promoting a school dedicated on learning.

The value in collaboration helps staff members to see their peers as lifelong learners with a growth mindset. It supports professional development for each member and allows for cooperative teamwork to overcome educational challenges. Collaboration within the school system, when done effectively through the use of careful, scheduled time, organized and intentional purposes, is perceived to support a school culture focused on learning. When people can collaborate on school goals, pedagogy and professional development, it helps give them ownership and a voice in professional development and school improvement. Without clear intent, discussion and collaboration among the stakeholders, most organizations fail at changing (Kotter, 2008). School leaders who want to promote growth and innovation, essentially establishing a culture of learning, should have time for intentional collaboration.

Embrace failure. When people are in the process of change, they are learning and are juggling with new ideas and skills that must be processed and practiced (SEEDS, 2016). To support in the learning process, schools should provide collaborative time for educators to work with their peers. Most people, when first trying out something new, will experience a time of trial and error. This can be difficult and scary. The fear of failure is a real thing. To take a risk is to move out of comfort zones, especially for those used to success (Dweck, 2000). In school systems such as this site, when more accountability has been placed on staff through the Proficiency Based Education movement and state accredited evaluation systems, more judgement occurs. The threat of being perceived by leadership as a developing teacher rather than an innovative teacher is present. A quote from one of the staff conceptualizes this thought:

In a school, teachers want to do well at their job but they can focus too much on evaluation. There's a fear of not being able to perform well which might keep them from trying something new. If the culture doesn't allow for staff to branch out and try something new even if it doesn't work then people don't progress. The fear of failure can definitely create a negative culture but it can be countered by creating an environment that not only makes it okay to fail but encourages it. Educators tell students that failure is an opportunity to grow but that doesn't always translate to the staff.

People see making mistakes or needing to improve on something as failure. When a school culture characterizes risk and failure as a learning experience, staff are more likely to collaboratively work together to overcome the "failure" through a team-supported approach (Pounder, 1998). People want to keep them a secret and when others find out, it makes them feel as though they are weaker than others. This kind of attitude prevents people from taking healthy risks and from learning from their mistakes. If people feel ashamed when they make a mistake, there won't be very much learning. The culture within the school and the classroom should be one where the risk taking and failure are embraced and not punished (Dweck, 2006). To struggle means to work through something. If people are not allowed to try something new and be able to struggle, they are most likely not going to learn or grow.

Utilitarian Theory is about moving towards things that make someone feel good and to move away from things that make them feel bad. This is the idea behind a fixed mindset. Anything new involves some form of new thought, new learning, or new behavior (Dweck, 2006). When considering a growth mindset in the realm of a school culture, there needs to be habitual changes in people's perceptions about risk and failure. People should intentionally embrace challenges instead of hiding from it (Duhigg, 2017). Collaboration helps to embrace

risk and new learning, it promotes and can lead to contribution in one's field and promotes a culture of continuous learning.

Research Question 2: Change Agent Strategies

Participants noted that the change agent strategies were effective behavioral attributes for school leaders. The closeness in strategies for change and the behaviors identified for strong school leaders suggests that strong school leaders are effective agents of change. Work from Hargreaves (2000), Fullan (2007) and DuFour (2016) support this finding. Some of the most effective change strategies identified in the data collected were to:

1. Provide reason for change.

2. Create urgency.

3. Establish a critical mass.

4. Overcome change resistors.

5. Promote involvement.

6. Prioritize engagement.

7. Use multiple means of communication.

These seven strategies will be discussed in depth in the following paragraphs to explain identified change agent strategies that school leaders should implement to transform a culture into being a caring community dedicated to learning.

Provide reason for change. According to the results of the staff survey, five out of six (83.3 percent) of the participants identified this as an effective strategy when implementing change in a school as it gives them the "why" behind it. Notable experts on the power of why, such as Sinek (2009), support this perception. In the case of school change, providing the why, and exploring how it is good for students supports the change. Five out of 6 (83.3 percent) of the

participants voiced the importance of knowing why. Change can be supported when it fits in with a school's mission and vision statement. These statements are aligned to the students' learning and support students' development.

Create urgency. The best way to establish change is create the need for urgency (Kotter, 2008). Stating urgency for change makes people see that change is the most important and relevant task or objective on which they should focus. They focus on the goal and are more productive towards making that change. Time is valuable. Busywork burns people out and things are done without a sense of purpose (Duhigg, 2016). A sense of urgency allows people to understand why change must happen and supports systematic implementation of the change. Work required for the initiative is likely to be done in a smart and productive way (Duhigg, 2016). Ultimately, the urgency of the goal and intentional collaboration allow people to work harder, smarter and more productively.

Tipping point leadership. Tipping point leadership is another way to describe how leaders can establish urgency. Tipping point leadership is about creating rapid dramatic and lasting change within an organization. This kind of leadership focuses on overcoming the cognitive and emotional hurdles associated with change, mobilizing key players, silencing naysayers, and taking action (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003).

First, the cognitive hurdles must to be addressed. The leader needs to be very intentional about how they begin the process of change. There needs to be a collaborative effort to implement the change efforts. Key people associated with the change should experience the behaviors that will allow the change (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003). Those stakeholders can then embrace the need and helps others take responsibility.

Second, the leader needs to refocus time and energy of those implementing the change. It is often heard, especially in education, that there is never enough time. According to Tipping Point Leadership, when priorities are not specified people spend too much time on activities of little impact and not enough on the true priorities (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003). Leaders are charged to establish priorities, and do this by looking at data and evidence, collaboratively, to reorganize the structure of work so the priorities can be a focus without being a burden.

Third, the leader should look at the outside influencers that could potentially damage the change process. These people should be sent a clear message on why change is happening, including facts and data to support this change (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003). This is an effective means of silencing the naysayers who are against the change without a rational reason.

Finally, the leader should listen to those influencers, to hear what their thoughts and concerns are (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003). The leader needs to remember that there are at least two sides to everything and he or she should at least seek to understand the opposing viewpoints. School leaders should listen to both sides, take an objective stance, and make their own decisions on what is right. This is the utility in the Utilitarian Theory (Cahn, 2014). By listening, the leader should be able to allow for everyone to feel heard while motivating everyone to take action. Participants of both the survey and interview have noted the importance of listening to understand as a way to support individuals within the organization.

Establish a critical mass. Even when there are strategies such as creating urgency and demonstrating Tipping Point Leadership, schools staffs should strategize how to establish a critical mass in the change process. Change requires a critical mass of people to take it on. A critical mass is a necessary condition for success of the change process. It consists of supporters who enthusiastically set out to make the change idea a reality (Holzer & Marcel-Dekker, 2004).

This group will consist of the change agents within the school that are able to see and share a common vision. They must stay on message regarding the change. Having change agents within school to share the leadership in implementing and processing the change is essential. They are able to communicate a consistent message. Those interviewed considered this a necessary condition of change. A clear rationale for the change that is shared regularly with the staff will help the change process is to be transparent and supportive. It is important for school leaders to identify the change agents who can support the change process in the school culture.

25-50-25 Rule. School leaders should cultivate a critical mass of support during change. The 25-50-25 Rule explains that, no matter what is being proposed, 25 percent of the stakeholders will enthusiastically embrace it, another 25 percent will enthusiastically oppose it, and the other 50 percent will be ambivalent about the change. This 50 percent will come to embrace the change idea if it does not threaten how they see themselves and their role in the school (Holzer & Marcel-Dekker, 2004). Change leaders must identify and work with the 25 percent of the stakeholders that enthusiastically embrace change.

The intent is for these change agents is to ensure the "big picture" is implemented in ways that are true to the vision of the school and compatible with school culture. These team members can help to develop connections regarding resources and can facilitate a redesign of past structural mechanisms that are no longer compatible. These change agents become catalysts of change at the school. They can support in the facilitation of change by having a proactive stance on designing strategies that address barriers to change. Finally, the use of change agents enhances empowerment and accountability in the school. Using enthusiastic staff members who embrace change as the change agents helps promote sense of community, and demonstrates commitment to innovation within the school.

Overcome change resistors. Having a critical mass of change agents supports the process of change that is critical as data proves there are change resistors to most initiatives (Holzer & Marcel-Dekker, 2004). School leaders should help their staff challenge assumptions question long-held beliefs. Adults should refocus and reevaluate how they see themselves and how they fit into the world on a regular basis, just as how children do (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). People may resist change because of something else going on under the surface. It is important, as the leader implementing the change, to understand these influences. If a leader attempts to appease those unwilling to consider change, it can lead to melancholy and negativity.

Leaders experiencing these kinds of resistors are faced with numerous burdens that can impact the school morale. For instance, when school leaders try to make these resisters happy, while continuing to expect them to change, it creates an unhealthy relationship. It is natural for administrators to try and win over those who resist change, however study after study shows that this approach is fruitless (Kotter, 2008). Closed-minded, active resisters will damage the change process and make it difficult and hostile for those implementing the changes. As a leader, it is important to support those who can learn and try change closed-minded resisters. Ultimately, this approach will help the school move forward and in a positive direction.

Promote involvement. Data from the staff survey and interview indicate teachers appreciate involvement in the school system and its processes. Steps that are made towards systemic change should start with intentional designing to create readiness through enhancing the school's culture (Sarason, 1996). Incentives to promote innovation and life-long learning in the culture includes: emotional acknowledgement; strategic design; and a voice in the change process. Participants suggested that expressions of specific and intentional feedback have been described as successful steps and recognition helps to promote a positive culture. When teachers

understand what is expected of them it takes away some of the uncertainty that accompanies change.

Emotional acknowledgement. Successful change management practices in schools should account for unpredictability and unforeseen emotional baggage that can arise from any kind of change but especially in more chaotic circumstances (Karl & Helf, 2008). To create a safe culture that is able to withstand change, leaders must see change as an emotion in order to understand the resistance. According to the staff interview responses, one respondent stated, "when talking about those who resist change: if someone is really trying to work with someone on why they are resisting, that is important. Sometimes giving them a voice can cause them to no longer resist." This sentiment was shared by 4 of 6 interview respondents. While not everyone will support a change, one way to generate engagement is through listening to the concerns people have in regards to the change.

Strategic design. Steps that are made towards systemic change should start with intentional designing to create readiness through enhancing the school's culture for change (Sarason, 1996). According to Ely's Conditions of Change model, well known for use in schools, there are eight conditions that are suitable for change in schools. These conditions described more thoroughly in Chapter 2 are: dissatisfaction with the status quo, sufficient knowledge and skills, availability of resources, availability of time, reward, participation, commitment, and leadership (Ely, 1990). These conditions provide a framework for change agents to address likely barriers in the change process and promote successful change management.

Participants expressed the need for some of Ely's conditions as successful steps. Specific conditions noted include: availability of resources; availability of time; reward; participation; and leadership. Some participants expressed that specific and intentional feedback and recognition

help to promote change. When stakeholders understand what is expected of them it takes away some of the uncertainty that accompanies change. Intentional and specific feedback allow for improvement from individuals that can be measured and followed. When the feedback is clear there is less frustration and confusion on the next steps, allowing for more growth for individuals.

Voice in change. Taking the example of a teacher making changes in his or her classroom: the role of the new, 21st Century teacher is to engage students in independent thinking and the power to make decisions supported with evidence. If teachers exclude their students from decisions that involve them then they will pass up on authentic opportunities to grapple with hard questions and take ownership of the choices (Lander, 2016). Considering the data from public student data, staff surveys and staff interviews, the best way to implement change while contributing to a positive school culture is to allow stakeholders to have a voice in the change and for leaders to listen and explain the change. If leaders within schools include teachers in the decisions that involve them, greater ownership in the change will create a cohesive culture in the school.

Stakeholders appreciate involvement in the process of change. These people can be used as change team members to help support change movement by helping the 50 percent understand and embrace the change (Holzer & Marcel- Dekker, 2004). School change is challenging but when there is a team approach to the process, there is a greater chance of success in the implementation and sustainment of the change while protecting the culture of the school.

Prioritize engagement. Positive school cultures strive to have complete engagement from students, staff and community members. Engagement is observed when there is attentiveness, commitment, persistence, and observations of finding meaning. These are the four

quadrants of engagement (Furlong & Christenson, 2008). School leaders should strive to build a

sustainable culture that promotes engagement at all levels. A successful strategy in promoting

engagement is for an organization to focus on the authenticity within (Godfrey & Jones, 2015).

In a school system, the leaders are fortunate because there are leaders at different levels that can

help build school-wide engagement. A way to help improve overall engagement is for school

leaders to recognize the power of habits of mind and demonstrate authenticity to the school

climate and community.

Embracing habitual behaviors. When the culture of the school is a priority, there will be

more engagement within the organization (Blattner & Walter, 2015). Instilling a safe culture

focused on learning can be challenging, as it requires changing how people think about the

school itself and requires some to change past behaviors. According to the interview responses, it

is important to establish habitual ways that a school does some things so long as it encourages

innovation. One respondent stated, "there needs to be some sort of routine or habit for the

delivery of new information." This notion was acknowledged by 4 of 6 (66.7) percent of the

interview respondents. Establishing a new habit when going through the change process eases

some of the uncertainty of change. Leaders who are authentic in their efforts demonstrate

sincerity towards the school's mission, negating some of the uncertainty of change as the leader

is a role model in the change efforts.

Authenticity. This implies that leaders have a "be here now" attitude and present themes

in a genuine way. Commitment means positively communicating and representing the school

both with those in the school and with the community. Leaders should expect to communicate

something and present positive statements a minimum of three times more than they would think

necessary in order for others to appreciate it (Sirkin, Keenan & Jackson, 2005). Engagement in

education refers to the interest, energy and passion that people show when they are learning as well as the extent of motivation needed to implement new change initiatives. These attributes support a school culture that is focused on learning that can withstand change.

Use multiple means of communication. As a leader, it is beneficial to consider how the information regarding the change is communicated. Strong communication keeps people engaged in the school community. As identified in the staff survey, clear communication is essential not only in change but in supporting a respectful culture of learning within a school. Life is busy and people misunderstand and sometimes even forget how things have been communicated.

This concept is supported by work by Collins (2010) and Kotter and Rathgeber (2015) as it helps to support clear, direct and transparent communication. When change agents focus on listening to the stakeholders affected by the change, it provides those people a voice in the change and helps them to take ownership. All (6 of 6) of the staff interviewed noted that when discussion and feedback from teachers is encouraged, it promotes productive change and a positive culture. Leaders must be effective listeners. All ideas should be heard and processed. Work from Kallick and Zmuda (2017) supports this belief. Listening establishes personal connections. It promotes ease of interaction and encourages the belief that messages are being processed completely. Listening helps develop better communication that supports a respectful school culture that embraces learning.

Research Question 3: Leadership Qualities

When school leaders determine that change is better than the status quo, it leads to a shift in the equilibrium for an organization. Change Theory supports this work, which is the process of change and how it affects groups and individuals on a social as well as psychological

level (Kritsonis, 2004-2005). For those who are uneasy or have a different perception of the changes, these changes lead to hesitancy and resistance. As suggested by the staff survey data, when leaders can explain the purpose and potential value of the change it, it create engagement. This is important to acknowledge, as change in public education should be expected. In public education, change does not only come from best practice initiatives but is impacted by mandates and reforms from federal and state levels as well as steps taken to improve the school from within the district or school itself (Andresen, Duerr & Furthmyre, 2016).

As vocalized by staff survey and interview participants, school leaders who can handle a changing environment can implement the reforms that lead to sustained change and improvement. This is supported by work from Fullan (2001). Change is emotional and can induce stress, especially when the reasons behind the change are not clear to stakeholders. Change involves learning how to do something novel and success may require time, collaboration and hard work. In education, those who feel successful in what they are currently doing, struggle to take on change unless they accept the rationale and goal of the change. This finding is supported with the research data and work from Sinek (2009).

The role of a change leader involves being clear and direct, demonstrating positivity, and encouraging open communication. The leader is often responsible for implementing and sustaining the change initiatives. They are charged to support the staff and culture with the expectation to keep morale high. As identified by themes from the data, a leader initiating change needs to be clear and direct, positive, and a good listener. Experts describe these traits on educational leader and change, such as DuFour (2016), Evans (2010) and Fullan (2002). Throughout this section, each trait will be addressed and discussed.

Clear and direct. When the leader communicates in a clear and direct manner, he or she builds trust (Beslin, Reddin & Reddin, 2004). Results from the staff interview indicated that leaders who were direct were perceived as more transparent. When the information is communicated directly and with explanation, it encourages understanding and trust of the school leader. Leaders should seek trust and trust within their organization. This means communication needs to be direct, clear and transparent.

According to results from the staff survey, transparency and clear communication were the top qualities the respondents valued in school leadership. Transparent communication provides its stakeholders with the information needed to understand what is going on and the reasons behind it (Zumeta, 2017). This means that transparent communication provides the reason, or the "why" for the change. As noted in Research Question 2, providing the *why* is perceived as essential in supporting change. The school leader needs to provide the reason with clear, direct transparent communication helps people to understand school initiatives and gain staff support. It is important to communicate about change often. Reminders are required to help others acknowledge they have been informed previously. Participants throughout the staff interviews acknowledged this concept. People are busy and forget things. When something is communicated often it helps people to remember and continue to receive a consistent message. The message needs to be shared often, consistently and with a clear and direct message to prevent misunderstanding.

Positivity. The position of school leadership is difficult. According to Evans (2010), trends in recent years have been hard for leaders in education. People are not seeking out roles in school leadership as much as previously. Rural school systems typically pay less and have smaller operating budgets. These means that those that work within the school system, including

the school leaders, do more than one would expect from the "average" administrator in an urban school (Andresen, Duerr & Furthmyre, 2016). The position of school leader is a difficult one. It requires the school administrator to be a transformational leader as well as an effective school manager.

It is understandable that school leaders may appear somber or even unhappy in their roles at times. However, as identified in the staff survey and interview, the impact of being positive is beneficial to school moral and culture. This does not mean that school leaders should ignore the negative things that happen. Instead, school leaders should be model solution-focused strategies when dealing with challenges and barriers to overcome them. Instead, the leader presents positively and deals with any expected or unexpected challenges with a solution-focused attitude.

The Positive Principle, created by Norman Peale (2003), is a theory of thought focused on how to be actively positive and solution-focused. It is the idea that there is always a right and true answer (sometimes more than one right and true answer) and that positive thinking through a sound, evidence based, intellectual process will help to clarify that answer (Peale, 2003). In relation to the role of school leaders being positive, possibility has more to do with the energy and motivation it takes to find and do the right thing. When a leader is positive, he or she is actively seeking to do what is right. In the case of school leadership, the right reason is often, if not always, connected to doing what is right for students. When a staff is doing something because it is clear that it will help students, the impact on the school culture is positive.

Establish norms. One way to support positivity in the workplace, which has been successfully implemented at the site, is to establish school-wide norms. Aligned with the idea of developing effective school habits within a culture, described in the discussion of Research

Question 2, the leader needs to be able to address growth with consistent and clear expectations. As a staff interview respondent noted, when describing the role of a leader in change and culture:

> As the captain of the ship, the leader needs to stay on direction and keep others from jumping off the boat. Everyone needs to be on the same page. The leader is the driver and everyone else needs to stay on the bus.

Being a leader is not an easy task but when there are expectations about how information is presented and how others can process the information, the culture is more likely feel safe. This is why the role of norms and a culture focused on intentional learning and respect has been noted to be important in this research. When norms are created and implemented, there is a foundation of clear behavioral expectations of staff members (Kusy & Holloway, 2009). Well-developed norms can support a safe culture focused on learning within the school system.

Cultural norms and expectations that show the school's personality and clearly identify the vision support staff to execute new initiatives and follow through on strategy; teachers are more likely to maintain a healthy external focus on the students they teach rather than on internal politics and issues (Meehan, Rigby, & Rogers, 2008). Having a normed culture that promotes respect and growth establishes a safe place for learning. Norms promote respect and professionalism when they are followed (Kusy & Holloway, 2009). Staff members have anecdotally noted this as a successful strategy. When the focus is on students, all staff can work towards the same goal.

Open communication. Another identified support in promoting positivity is through genuineness and encouraging open communication. Open communication is founded in trust. Open and clear communication promotes positivity in the organization. Comparatively, studies show that employees distrust administrators that alternate between being nourishing and

cutthroat (Nohria & Beer, 2000). This is because the employee is not sure how to act towards their boss and do not know whether they are sincere. If an administrator is going to implement in effective and strong culture within the school, their behavior needs to be consistent. This will help staff to feel safe in the school culture.

Members of the school team should feel safe and confident to speak freely as long as it is done in a respectful manner (Parker, 2006). When people state concerns about a concern and not a person then they should not worry about being personally criticized or for their thoughts to be used against them. Open and respectful groups trust each other and work hard to do what is right and in line with the school's mission. The group can speak openly with each other and listen to each other to understand the other member's reasons.

An essential part of strong communication is listening. This has been identified as a key strategy when implementing change, as described under the Research Question 2 discussion. A leader needs to be a good listener, which involves hearing, processing, understanding the evidence, and to take the idea presented to others. Active listening helps people feel they have value and are appreciated. School leaders promoting a safe and respectful culture of learning should focus on ways to allow staff a voice in school-wide decisions that impact them, promote collaboration within development of the decisions, and provide some processing time for people to develop and grow from decisions and changes occurring in the school. Suggested by the staff data and supported by specialists in listening (Bregman, 2012), a way to promote school culture involves effective listening. A school leader should hear and organize information, integrating the new information with knowledge.

Value of why. It is important to discuss the value of why when practicing open communication. It is important for leaders to provide people with the "why," as it explains the

rationale when an initiative or expectation is implemented. When someone can understand the reason for something, it promotes positivity in a school system. The reason most educational leaders want to make a change are for good, altruistic reasons (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). School leaders can provide the reason why to their staff (Duhigg, 2016). When something is going to change, it is not only important for the leader to provide teachers with the reason why, but for the leader to ask the teachers why they think this may be a good thing to do. This provides them with ownership in the change.

People who have a strong internal locus of control, that is when they believe they have control over one's own life instead of believing that others have control over it, have more self-motivation and are more successful. It feels good to make one's own decisions and to do so knowing that they're doing something not because they have to but because they see value in it (Duhigg, 2016). Within a public school, there are many reforms implemented that are from outside sources such as the school board or government (Maine Department of Education, 2015). However the leader needs to figure out how to make that mandate be useful for the teachers responsible for implementing it. There are always ways that people can take control of any situation in some capacity.

When the school leaders ask teachers "why" it helps them to conceptualize their own reasons for doing something (Duhigg, 2016). For some teachers, the initial answer may be because they were told to do it. However, when time is provided to process the change, many teachers will identify the ultimate reason something is being done is because it is expected to support students. Most times, if teachers believe something is good for their students then they will work to support it. They first should see the value it will have for their students they are dedicated to teaching (DuFour, 2015). When school leaders bring the meaning back to the

teachers it helps them remember why they are in education and helps build a common identity of learning and promote motivation within the school.

Through the analysis of data collected, and supported by outside research, school leaders that are clear and direct, role model positivity, and practice open communication are likely to experience success in the change process. Change is emotional and challenging. Leaders should demonstrate qualities that aid in the process of change. When change can be effectively managed the emotional effect it has on a culture is less likely to overburden staff. Instead, the culture is most likely to be a safe, respectful culture that embraces growth.

Research Question 4: Strategy and Quality Transference

All of the strategies, qualities and behaviors described above can be transferred to others. Not everything will come easy to school leaders working on transforming their school but with seeking to improve, having.

Focus on relationships. As noted in Chapter 4, students at the site study indicated they felt included and have relationships not only with their peers in the school but also with the adults. The site continually has a high four-year high school graduation rate. While there are certainly other factors that help lead to graduation rates at 90 percent or above, it is important to consider the impact of having a school culture with a focus on student engagement. A 2014 Gallup Education poll reported that students are 30 times more likely to be successful in the classroom if they show signs of engagement (Blad, 2014). Schools that focus on a culture of learning and student engagement encourage their students to discover and apply their strengths. Teachers can model actively discovering new things, showing excitement about learning, and sharing this excitement with their students.

Scheduling collaboration. The role of collaboration in the development of a school culture focused on learning should not be ignored. A response from the staff interview was, "a respectful culture of learning is where people are giving their best effort, considerate of other viewpoints, focused on the end product and not themselves." This idea is about the concept that the school community is working together as a team. According to the staff interview responses, 4 of 6 (66.7) percent of participants think it is important for the stakeholders to be involved in school processes. When talking about the impact of change on a school culture, a participant stated:

> Change is something leaders are doing too. Leaders should role model this in a positive way to see how it is played out. Having a conversation about how difficult change is. Everyone is on the same page and will figure it out together.

The data from the staff suggest that, for a school culture to support change and keep morale high, leaders need to implement change in the school culture through intentional and transparent efforts to promote teamwork and collaboration. Support experienced within the collaborating team can be incredibly beneficial (Anrig, 2013). Collaboration time scheduled within the school day allows teachers to participate in professional development without burden. Scheduled time promotes a culture where life-long learning is a priority, and support from their team is identified as a major component in their success.

Intentional organization. Another trait that is transferable to others is for leaders to be intentional and organized. When leaders are organized, it helps to provide a clear and direct message to staff regarding school programming and initiatives. Organization helps to prevent the phenomenon of chaotic change in a school system. Chaotic change in an organization are internally and externally complex, the outcome is uncertain and the stability of school culture

and morale is threatened, and uncertainty of the outcome is high (Karl & Helf, 2008). Historically, this is the case for many school initiatives on a national level. There are many education-based mandates that are started by the government. However, they often go away or expectations change drastically. This is true for national reforms such as: A Nation at Risk; No Child Left Behind Act; and the 21st Century Learner (Leiding, 2009). This inconsistent history with sustaining change reinforces educators' beliefs that school change processes are temporary.

This mindset leads to the perspective that change is consistently fleeting and it contributes to fragmented approaches towards initiatives (Adelman, 1995). Some school leaders underestimate the complexity of change. When this happens, the leader is not paying attention to how people within the school are able to deal with change or the strategies and structures required to successfully implement change. School leaders should be organized in the ways they implement change. Leaders should be intentional in their communication about change.

Communication. Through the research data collected, clear and direct communication is a key in promoting a safe culture of learning. Communication experts suggest that clear communication, void from miscommunication; leads to more trust in the school leader have vetted it. Trust supports a positive culture. When a school leader clearly communicates, provides reasoning when changes are required, and allows staff voices to be heard, he or she supports the school culture by allowing those within to feel valued and appreciated.

Positive attitude. The data collected clearly identified the necessity of leaders to demonstrate a positive attitude. When leaders present themselves in an open and positive manner it helps others to follow this model (Peale, 2003). Being present as well as open to new learning helps people feel as though the leader is genuine and caring. It supports the notion that the leader

and all within the school are sharing the same culture. Described in the staff interviews, it is important that everyone feels as though they are in the same school culture.

Being positive is not always easy and, as explained above, the role of the school leader can be stressful. However, the behaviors and perceptions people take on are indicative of how challenges will be transferred to others. When a school leader can focus on respect and clear communication, the rest of the school body will benefit as the witness the role-modeling leader.

Growth mindset. A growth mindset is the idea that people believe that they are not a finished product. All of their abilities can be developed through perseverance and dedication. When people embrace the concept of a growth mindset it promotes a sense of lifelong learning and instills resiliency. Having a growth mindset means someone is solution-focused (Dweck, 2007). Leaders with a growth mindset support the idea of open communication.

Leaders with a growth mindset understand that there's more than one-way to do something and that they can learn from others (Dweck, 2000). Allowing time to listen to stakeholders when decisions are being made promotes value and respect among staff. Active listening is a key component to supporting a school culture that is respectful and focused on learning. When a leader demonstrates active listening, input can be heard and the staff can work collaboratively in overcoming challenges.

Implications

Culture change in a rural high school is difficult. When a school culture is impacted negatively by change it can lead to disengagement and dissatisfied administrators, teachers, students and school leaders. To promote a school culture that is respectful and focused on learning, a positive culture must be a priority. If the culture is negative, and does not embrace

growth, then students will be impacted negatively. Students, teachers, administrators and community members may lose pride and connection to the school.

Focusing on culture is not only relevant for rural schools. Rather, a focus on culture is a necessity for all public school leaders. Concerning evidence classified through the results of the 2014 Gallup Education Poll is that only 31 percent (of the 7,200 K-12 teachers took the poll) felt engaged at their school (Blad, 2014). Teachers did not feel as though their opinions counted in their school. This leads to other questions on later staff surveys conducted through this study about the importance of teachers having a voice within their school system. When teachers feel heard, they are more likely to take ownership and responsibility for the changes happening within the school. To build engagement among the teachers, it is important for the school leaders to actively seek out teachers' voices.

Teachers should understand that they are professionals and have valid insight regarding curriculum, pedagogy, school scheduling and other forms of school wide decisions. When stakeholders feel as though they are included in the school community and the overall process and system of the school they are more likely to be engaged. While school leaders have the burden of final decision-making for most school initiatives, it is important for leaders to seek input from others through active listening. When this happens, it promotes a sense of community and allows for others to take ownership in school initiatives.

Recommendations for Action

Leaders should strive to improve their school culture and embrace the change by using evidence-based strategies to support in these transformations. Through research-based evidence, strategies that help support in this transformation include: collaboration, developing an open

communication style, promoting positivity, and identifying a critical mass of change agents that can support change through shared leadership.

School leaders should consider the impact of collaboration. Collaboration can help build a community. It creates professional development and a support network for educators. Data at both the site and nation show that teachers feel overwhelmed by lack of time. To support the collaboration process, leaders should intentionally schedule time for teachers and other educators to collaborate during the school day.

Open communication includes being intentional about how change is introduced, using active listening skills to support the input and thoughts of teachers within the school, as well as providing the why for when an initiative is put in place. It is important to explain to staff why the change is being implemented so that they can establish their own urgency for the change, and help them visualize what the change will look like once implemented. Open communication supports the concept of positivity in the workplace. When leaders demonstrate strong open communication attributes, they show appreciation and value for others. Leaders presenting with positivity have a growth mindset and are solution-focused. These leaders are not burdened by change. Instead, they see it as a challenge that should be embraced.

A leader working to support a strong school culture needs to first establish the critical mass of staff members that can act as change agents in supporting the change. People who enthusiastically embrace the proposed change are able to help lead the process, and the change comes from within as well as from management.

Recommendations for Further Study

This research covered different aspects of culture, change, and leadership in school systems. This information is expected to be valuable for school leaders not only in rural schools.

It is also in schools throughout the nation. Positive culture needs to be a priority for school leaders, or the foundation of the school is at risk. Consideration for further study would be to look at exactly how much change is expected in public education today and the impact of change on students. Most changes are intended to support students. Emotional stress occurs with change on school culture. Research on how to address negative assumptions about change and counter them with evidence-based rationale can support the process. Further research might confirm how these changes will support a student's educational potential.

Further investigation regarding best strategies to share the information about change initiatives with educators would be beneficial. Social media paints a dark cloud on public education. Research should be done about how to flip the scenario. Social media needs to focus more on the evidence-based strategies that support students. The news needs to focus on the positives happening in education instead of jading perspectives by only focusing on the negative.

Another area of research for additional consideration would be to examine at strategies and attributes noted in this research in regards to leadership. There are many behaviors, attributes and strategies that of been highlighted in this research which are expected to support change and promote a positive culture within a school. Research on these attributes and consideration of how leaders emotionally prepare for change would be beneficial to the field of change leadership.

Conclusion

This research is not all encompassing. One rural high school was used for the site study. Still, the information should be considered for anyone interested in school culture, leadership and change. The results from this research will benefit most people who work in an educational setting. This includes: school administrators, teacher-leaders, teachers, and other educators. Those who primarily work in a rural public high schools undergoing change and seek to improve

the school's culture will find the information useful. The focus of the research was about school culture and change strategies that leaders can envelop and embrace to support school wide improvement efforts.

In order for the school leader to promote a respectful culture of learning, the school should have intentional, scheduled collaboration time available. The leader should be transparent, positive in action and a good listener. When changes are made within a school, there should be repetitive communication regarding the change that explains the reason for the change and, when applicable, how it helps students. Staff members should have an outlet to voice their questions and concerns regarding change. What has been noted as most important when developing a respectful culture dedicated to learning is the ability for the school to have clear and transparent communication with a caring and positive leader who listens and appreciates the ideas of others.

This research has identified steps to aid in the creation and sustainability of a positive, new school-wide culture focused on learning. It focused on the development and sustainability of culture in the school setting. School culture is an important piece of the school system. Everyone within is a part of it, so having a safe culture dedicated to learning supports all of those within. Leaders can promote a positive school culture by: focusing on relationships; scheduling time for collaboration; being intentional and organized; demonstrating a positive attitude; and having a growth mindset. The study examined how change can impact a culture negatively, if not implemented strategically. Change requires new learning and the development of new skills. Using effective change measures will support the changes initiated within the school setting. These measures include: establishing urgency, having clear and direct communication, demonstrating active listening and role modeling positivity. All traits, behaviors and strategies

discussed in this chapter are transferable to others. It requires resiliency and perseverance from

leaders. These strategies and qualities support in implementation and sustainment of a safe,

respectful school culture focused on learning.

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Appendix A

Consent for Participation

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Culture Change in a Rural High School

Principal Investigator(s):

- Kristen Levesque, MS, CAS and Doctoral Student, University of New England, phone: (207) 776-8043.
- Ella Benson, EdD., University of New England, Adjunct Faculty Member and Lead Research Advisor, phone: (757) 450-3628

Please read this form, you may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about this research study, and if you choose to participate, document your decision.

You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during or after the project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Culture Change in a Rural High School

Why is this study being done?

- This study is being done for Kristen Levesque's dissertation research for her doctorate.
- The purpose of this research is to help in identifying the aspects of leadership create a respectful and collaborative culture of learning in a rural high school system.
- There is no consultative or financial interest relating to the study.

Who will be in this study?

- You have been invited participate because you work in the rural high school being used for the site study and are over the age of 18.
- The approximate number of adult staff members participating is 25.

What will I be asked to do?

- This research is being conducted to identify the aspects of leadership create a respectful and collaborative culture of learning in a rural high school system.
  Participation in this research includes taking a survey about your attitudes and beliefs around high school culture and climate, and what leadership aspects help to promote a safe, respectful and collaborative culture.
- The initial survey will take approximately 15 minutes. If you agree to participate in a follow-up interview, that will take approximately 10 to 20 minutes. The follow up interview will be about your view of culture and leadership aspects in supporting a positive culture.
- If you participate in both the survey and the interview, your total time commitment will be between 25 – 35 minutes.
- The survey will be provided to you through you secure school email and will be in a Snap Survey. The anonymous answers from the survey will be analyzed and using to guide the follow up interviews.
- The post- survey interview will be held at a time convenient for the participant, at the high school, and administrated by Kristen Levesque. It will take approximately 10 to 20 minutes. The interview will include follow up questions from the survey you previously completed. All questions will be semi- structured (open ended) and will be about your attitudes and beliefs around high school culture and climate, and what leadership aspects help to promote a safe, respectful and collaborative culture. The follow up interview will be about your view of culture and leadership aspects in supporting a positive culture.

- There is no reimbursement or compensation for participation in this project.

What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?

- There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. This study is completely voluntary and anonymous. Nothing that you disclose while participating in the study may be used in a negative way, nor will your name be associated with anything specific in the results as all results and participants will remain anonymous.
- If you experience any form of discomfort, you may end your participation in the study immediately.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

- There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. There may be benefits to the organization as the results should lead to steps in developing and sustaining a school culture and climate, and what leadership aspects help to promote a safe, respectful and collaborative culture.

What will it cost me?

- There are no costs, foreseeable or otherwise, to you in participation in this study.

How will my privacy be protected?

- The survey will be filled out and completed anonymously
- For those also participating in the follow up interview, your privacy and anonymity will be protected. The time and exact place of the interview will be up to you and when it is best for you.
- The results of this survey will be included in the written dissertation of Kristen Levesque, through the University of New England.
- Anonymity done through the support and use of use of a coding system, secure storage, using summary data from a whole group and use of pseudonyms for direct quotes.

How will my data be kept confidential?

- This study is designed to be anonymous, this means that no one, can link the data results from the survey you provide to you.
- Only the principal researcher could link the data results from the follow up interview to you as a participant, however this would not be disclosed in any circumstance.
- Only the principal investigator could identify you as a participant, however this would not be disclosed in any circumstance.
- Below are the data security standard included in the research protocol:
  - Research records will be kept in a locked file in the locked office of the Principal Investigator;
  - Online survey data will be done through a password based program and incoming results will be coded as anonymous automatically, so results cannot be traced back to an individual;
  - Snap Surveys will be the program used
  - If audio recordings, for those participating in the follow up interviews, only the principal investigator will have access to them and will only be used to help with transcription. They will be destroyed once transcription is completed.
  - Individually identifiable data will be destroyed after the study is complete;
  - Data will be coded;
  - Data will be encrypted using industry standards;
  - For audio recordings from the semi structured interviews: individually identifiable data will be destroyed after transcription of the recordings is complete.
    - Please note that regulatory agencies, and the Institutional Review Board may review the research records.
- A copy of your signed consent form will be maintained by the principal investigator for at least 3 years after the project is complete before it is destroyed. The consent forms will be stored in a secure location that only members of the research team will have access to and will not be affiliated with any data obtained during the project.
- Research findings, once complete, can be provided to interested participants through the written dissertation. Please speak with Kristen Levesque (contact information is above) if you would like a copy of this.

What are my rights as a research participant?

- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the University *of New England or RSU, your employer.*
- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- If you choose not to participate there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive. You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.
- You will be informed of any significant findings developed during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to participate in the research.

- If applicable, state the anticipated circumstances under which the investigator without regard may terminate the individual's participation for the subjects consent.

What other options do I have?

- You may choose not to participate.

Whom may I contact with questions?

The researcher conducting this study is Kristen Levesque, MS, CAS and the Principal Investigator. For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact her at (207) 776-8043 or klevesque5@une.edu. The University of New England's Faculty advisor is Ella Benson, Ed.D., Adjunct Faculty Member and Lead Research Advisor. She may be contacted at (757) 450- 3628 or ebenson2@une.edu.
- *The faculty advisor will be taking an active role in the research activities and will provide supervision throughout the duration of this research study. The faculty advisor is legally responsible for all research activities.*
- If you choose to participate in this research study and believe you may have suffered a research related injury, please contact Ella Benson, EdD. at (757) 450- 3628 or ebenson2@une.edu.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call Olgun Guvench, M.D. Ph.D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review Board at (207) 221-4171 or irb@une.edu,

Will I receive a copy of this consent form?

- You will be given a copy of this consent form.

Appendix B

Confidentiality Agreement

Research Title: **Culture Change in a Rural High School**

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Principal Investigator: Kristen Levesque, MS, CAS, EdD student

University of New England Faculty Advisor: Ella Benson, EdD.

As the principal investigator of this research, I understand that I may have access to confidential information about the site study and participants, By signing this statement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

- I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.
- I agree not to known to unauthorized persons or to the public any information obtained in the course of this research project that could identify the persons who participated in this research
- I understand that all information about the site study or the participants obtained or accessed by me in the course of my work is confidential. I agree not to divulge to unauthorized people any of this information, unless specifically authorized to do so by applicable law or court order, or public health or clinical need.
- I understand that I am not to read information about the voluntary participants, or any other confidential documents. I will not ask questions of participants for my own personal gain but only for this research project.
- I agree to notify Ella Benson, EdD., faculty advisor, immediately should I become aware of an actual breach of confidentiality or a situation which could potentially result in a breach, whether this be on my part or on the part of another person.

_____   _____   _____

Signature of local principal investigator   Date   Printed name

Appendix C

Staff Research Participation Initial Script

January 2017

RE: Research Participation Invitation

Dear [School] Community,

I am a doctoral student at the University of New England, in the Transformational Leadership (EdD) program. I am conducting research on identifying what aspects of leadership create a respectful and collaborative culture of learning in a rural high school system. I am inviting you to participate because you work in the rural high school that I am using as my site study. Participation in this research includes taking a survey about your attitudes and beliefs around high school culture and climate, and what leadership aspects help to promote a safe, respectful and collaborative culture.

The initial survey will take approximately 15 minutes. If you agree to participate in a follow-up interview, that will take approximately 10- 20 minutes. The follow up interview will be about your view of culture and leadership aspects in supporting a positive culture. If you participate in both the survey and the interview, your total time commitment will be between 25 and 35 minutes.

Please let me know if **would like to participate** in the research, I can be reached at ext. 1040, 776-8043 (cell), or EMAIL or come see me in person.

Sincerely,

Kristen Levesque

Appendix D

Research Participation Follow Up Interview Script

February 2017

RE: Research Participation Invitation

Post- Survey Interview

Dear DISTRICT Staff Community,

First, thank you to all of you for completing the survey a last week. As you know, I am a doctoral student at the University of New England, in the Transformational Leadership (EdD) program. I am conducting research on identifying what aspects of leadership create a respectful and collaborative culture of learning in a rural high school system. I am inviting you to participate in the post-survey interviews as you had previously indicated you might be interested in participating in the interviews.

The post-survey interview will be held at a time convenient for the participant, at the high school. It will take approximately 10 to 20 minutes. The interview will include follow up questions from the survey you previously completed. All questions will be semi- structured (open ended) and will be about your attitudes and beliefs around high school culture and climate, and what leadership aspects help to promote a safe, respectful and collaborative culture. The follow up interview will be about your view of culture and leadership aspects in supporting a positive culture.

Please let me know if would like to participate in the research, I can be reached at ext. 1040, 776-8043 (cell), or EMAIL or come see me in person.

Sincerely,
Kristen Levesque

Appendix E

RSVP Pre Survey, Archived 2016

maine BOYS TO MEN	**RSVP JMG Pre-Program Evaluation** **12/21/16**

Thank you for taking this survey! Your responses will help the RSVP program to better understand what you know and what your experiences are like. This will help to improve all that RSVP does! All individual results will be confidential but the cumulative results will be made available for public use. Your responses are anonymous and confidential, this means that what you say is private and that no one will connect you to the answers you put down.
Please do not write your name anywhere on this form.

START: To help keep track of forms, we ask that you write in the **month and day of your birthday using mm/dd format** and your **middle initial** (if you do not have a middle initial, please write Z).
Example: 04/01 Z

_____

For the questions on this survey, it is important to know that not everyone believes in or sees things in the same way. Please take the time to think about what your honest response is. **We want to know what YOU think and how YOU feel!** Please read all questions carefully. Remember, this survey is confidential and you will not be associated with any of the answers you choose.

Demographics

1. How old are you? *Please write your age:* _____

2. I identify my gender as: *Check all that apply.*
   - ❑ Female
   - ❑ Male
   - ❑ Transgender M to F
   - ❑ Transgender F to M
   - ❑ Gender non-conforming
   - ❑ Third-gender
   - ❑ Gender-neutral
   - ❑ Gender queer
   - ❑ None
   - ❑ I prefer to identify my gender as: _____ *please specify*
   - ❑ I prefer not to respond

3. What is your racial or ethnic background? *Check all that apply.*
   - ❑ Alaska Native
   - ❑ Asian
   - ❑ Black or African American
   - ❑ Caucasian or White
   - ❑ Hispanic or Latin American
   - ❑ Native American
   - ❑ Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander
   - ❑ Another race or ethnicity: _____ *please specify*

4. What activities do you participate in during the school year? *Check all that apply.*
   - ❑ Sports
   - ❑ Drama / theater
   - ❑ Newspaper / Yearbook
   - ❑ Other clubs: _____ *please specify*
   - ❑ Music
   - ❑ Community service
   - ❑ Student government

1

Beliefs

Please respond to each statement by choosing the response that best fits with your views.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	As long as you are just joking around, what you say or do to someone cannot be considered sexual harassment.	❏	❏	❏	❏
2.	A man who tells his girlfriend who she can hang out with is being too controlling.	❏	❏	❏	❏
3.	It is all right for a man to talk about his feelings with other men.	❏	❏	❏	❏
4.	Something is wrong with a person if they are not interested in sex.	❏	❏	❏	❏
5.	It is important that a man is in charge.	❏	❏	❏	❏
6.	The sex you were born with determines your gender.	❏	❏	❏	❏
7.	It is all right for a man to hug other men.	❏	❏	❏	❏
8.	The media influences the way I think about myself and others.	❏	❏	❏	❏
9.	It is all right for a man to use violence to solve problems.	❏	❏	❏	❏
10.	A person's gender doesn't change.	❏	❏	❏	❏
12.	Women are more emotional than men.	❏	❏	❏	❏
13.	Sexual assault is an issue that should concern both men and women.	❏	❏	❏	❏
14.	It's okay to call a man "fag" if he is not acting like a "man."	❏	❏	❏	❏
17.	The media accurately portrays men and women.	❏	❏	❏	❏
18.	A person's sexuality doesn't change.	❏	❏	❏	❏
20.	I can help prevent violence against women in my community.	❏	❏	❏	❏
21.	I know at least one resource (either a hotline or a person to talk with) that I could share with someone who has been abused.	❏	❏	❏	❏

Intervention

Please respond to each statement by choosing the response that best fits with what you would do.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I would confront a group of my friends about their sexist language or behaviors.	❏	❏	❏	❏
2.	I have the skills to support a friend who is in an abusive relationship.	❏	❏	❏	❏
3.	I would tell a group of my male friends that it was disrespectful to make sexual comments about women.	❏	❏	❏	❏
4.	I would tell my friend to stop calling their girlfriend names.	❏	❏	❏	❏
5.	If I saw someone I didn't know very well at a party, and they were being taken advantage, I would help them get out of the situation.	❏	❏	❏	❏
6.	I would stop my friends from harassing someone who is gay.	❏	❏	❏	❏
7.	If I saw another student I didn't know very well physically fighting with their partner at school, I know at least one nonviolent action I could take to help the situation.	❏	❏	❏	❏

Thank you for completing this survey!

Appendix F

School Climate Survey (Davis, 2016)

Student survey for teen issues day

survey

As we prepare for teen issues day, we would appreciate your opinions about a few questions. Please help us keep Maranacook a great place. Thank you.

1. Which of these statements is true for you?

◯ It is VERY IMPORTANT to me for every student here, no matter what their race, religion, or sexual orientation, to be safe and feel included.

◯ It is IMPORTANT to me for every student here, no matter what their race, religion, or sexual orientation, to be safe and feel included.

◯ It is NOT IMPORTANT to me for every student here, no matter what their race, religion, or sexual orientation, to be safe and feel included.

Please tell us more about this

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2. Our school has diversity- we have students from different racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. How do you feel about attending a diverse school?

◯ It is VERY IMPORTANT to me to attend a school with diversity in the student body

◯ It is IMPORTANT to me to attend a school with diversity in the student body

◯ It is NOT IMPORTANT to me to attend a school with diversity in the student body

Why do you feel that way?

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3. For each of the following types of actions, how much do you think it helps when students do them?

Appendix G

Teen Issues Post Survey, Archived 2016

Teen Issues Post Survey

Students and Staff, please complete this survey by 12/16/16.

* Required

1. **On a scale of 1-4, how was the school-wide presenter, Ryan Moran** *
   Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
I did not get much from his presentation	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	He was amazing!

2. **How has a relationship that you have helped you in your life? (this relationship can be a relationship with a peer, adult or yourself)** *

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. **What was the best presentation that you attended? ***

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Music is my friend
- ◯ Life is what you make of it
- ◯ Maranacook Voice and Culture
- ◯ Conflict Resolution Strategies
- ◯ Drug Jeopardy
- ◯ The 4 P's (this session is only for grades 11 and 12)
- ◯ Restorative Practices in our daily life
- ◯ Sex Trivia
- ◯ Stress Balls
- ◯ Keep Calm and Reach Your Dreams!
- ◯ Adult Coloring Books
- ◯ What's Wrong with Being Confident?
- ◯ How to Help a Friend
- ◯ The power of passion and empathy
- ◯ Dorm Workout tricks
- ◯ Relationships Red Flags
- ◯ How to build a strong relationships with your parents
- ◯ Peace Mural
- ◯ Therapy Dog!
- ◯ Bear Team Building
- ◯ It's your life and make it great
- ◯ Active Listening
- ◯ The Many Ways to Serve
- ◯ The Restorative Justice Project
- ◯ You don't know what you can do until you know
- ◯ How relationships has gotten me through college
- ◯ What's Wrong with Being Confident?
- ◯ How to Help a Friend- Maranacook Style
- ◯ Maranacook to MIT to Space(x)!

4. **Do you have peers at school that you feel support you?**

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Maybe

5. **On a scale of 1-4, how was the closing assembly? ***

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
I did not like it	◯	◯	◯	◯	I loved the music and the presenters!

6. Do you have at least 1 adult at school that you feel support you?
Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Maybe

7. What would you like to see for session(s) at our next Teen Issues on 4/11/17?

Appendix H

Staff Research Introduction

Dear Staff Members,

Thank you for taking this survey! Your responses will be used to better understand what your perceptions and experiences around school culture and the aspects of leadership that support a caring culture focused on learning. The purpose of this survey, and the follow up interview (for those who volunteer) is to identify evidentiary sound theories that address the following questions:

1. Is the use of team collaboration within a school the most effective way to create a safe, respectful culture of learning in a public school?
2. What change agent strategies should school leaders implement to transform a culture into being a caring community dedicated to learning?
3. What qualities does a successful change leader possess?
4. How can these be transferred to others?

Your responses are anonymous and confidential; this means that what you say is private.

Appendix I

Staff Survey Questions

1. What type of culture best describes your high school?

    a. **Toxic.** A toxic culture is when a large number of teachers focus on the negative aspects of the school's activities and staff, using whatever flaws as a justification for any poor performance.

    b. **Fragmented**. A fragmented culture is when teachers act as individuals with and the doors within the classrooms are closed and teachers believe they have their own territories and they value this.

    c. **Balkanized.** A balkanized culture is one where collaboration only happens among those who are like-minded. Stronger groups often bully others.

    d. **Contrived-Collegial**. A contrived- collegial culture is when the leadership creates a contrived collegiality when collaboration is pushed. This when the leaders have the expectation for teachers to meet and discuss students, and take notes on this. Sometimes this contrived collaboration is needed, as a starting point for change but ownership in meeting should be something the leadership establishes.

    e. **Comfortable-Collaboration.** A comfortable- collaborative culture is when staff value cooperation, courtesy, and compliance. However, in this culture some staff will hesitate to voice disagreement with one another because they are afraid about how the other person will take what they say.*"*

  f. **Collaborative School.** A collaborative school culture is when all staff in the organization have similar educational values, work together for lifelong learning in order to improve their work.

2. What helps to create a good culture?

3. What attributes of leadership support sustainable change?

4. Is culture of your "team" at school consistent with culture of school?

  a. Why or why not?

5. What role do you believe collaboration plays in creating culture?

6. What role do you play in the creation of the culture now?

7. What is the shared identity of staff and students?

8. What role does doing dual enrollment play in the culture created?

9. What role does a PLC play in the development of culture?

10. How often do you reference the staff resource guide?

11. Why do you not reference the resource guide more?

12. How will you meet the needs of the 21st Century learning expectations while also staying positive and productive?

13. What role does complaining play in regards to culture?

14. In your opinion why are some people negative while others are constructive solution focused?

15. What are identified strategies the school has used assisting in implementation of change?

16. Below is a list of changes implemented between 2013-2015. As there has been time to adjust to these changes and see the effect on students, please assess on the benefit these changes have had on staff and students, using a Likert Scale:

0= No effect on students and a lot of wasted time for staff, 4= Good for students and worth the time it takes to do.

    a. Focus Time

    b. RtI

    c. Alternative Program

    d. Dual Enrollment

    e. Pathways Program

    f. Credit Recovery

    g. Summer Intensives

    h. Common Planning Time

    i. New Advisor Training

17. Below is a list of changes implemented between 2015-2016. As there has been time to adjust to these changes and see the effect on students, please assess on the benefit these changes have had on staff and students, using a Likert Scale:

0= No effect on students and a lot of wasted time for staff, 4= Good for students and worth the time it takes to do.

    a. Freshmen visits

    b. Freshmen team

    c. PLC format

    d. Study nook

    e. Supervision in student center for study halls

    f. Consistent use of learning targets

    g. Absence Management (formally AESOP)

h. RSU Model of Instruction

18. On a scale of 0-4 (using the Likert scale below), please answer the following questions

0-N/A	1- Beginning	2- Developing	3- Applying	4- Innovating
Not observed	*Observed/ Experienced 1-20% of opportunities available*	*Observed/ Experienced 21-50% of opportunities available*	*Observed/ Experienced 51-80% of opportunities available*	*Observed/ Experienced 81-100% of opportunities available*

a. Change initiatives have been in place for a little time now. Where is the school in relation to describing the purpose and rationale for these changes?

b. The priority of the school this year is culture. Where is the school is meeting the goal of having a safe and respectful culture of learning?

c. The school established school-wide norms at the start of the 2016-17 school year. Where would you describe the school, as a whole, in following these norms?

d. Where do you see at the high school in regards to the following quote: *Most great learning happens in groups. Collaboration is the stuff of growth (*Robinson, 2016).

Appendix J

Staff Interview Questions

Theme: Collaboration (Research Question 1)

1. What ways can collaboration be increased positively in educational settings?

2. Please describe what a respectful culture of learning looks like

3. What role should teachers play in school-wide changes?

Theme: Change Agent Strategies (Research Question 2)

1. What makes you feel valued/ appreciated (both in school and elsewhere)?

2. In what ways should leaders create urgency for change?

3. What does clear and effective communication looks like?

Theme: Leadership and Transference (Research Questions 3 and 4)

1. How should leaders seek out ideas from others?

2. How can leaders support change? How about those who resist change?

3. What are the benefits and challenges of open and honest communication?