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A study of leadership styles of elementary school principals and their perceptions of school climate and conflict resolution programs

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A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP STYLES OF ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE
AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAMS

by

GEORGE E. CULBERT

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School of

Wayne State University

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

1999

MAJOR: ADMINISTRATION AND
SUPERVISION – GENERAL

Approved by:

Robert A. D. Munn 2/18/99
Adviser Date

Rudi Allee
Donald R. Munn

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Dedication

Dedicated with love to my children, Jason, Kristen and Lindsey. To my wife, Sheila for her patience, understanding and encouragement. To my parents, Thomas and Lois Culbert for their continuous support and confidence in the completion of my goal. And to my late grandfather, Edward Culbert, a wise and compassionate Irishman who believed that the pursuit of knowledge was the key to unlocking the doors to future opportunities.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background

Teaching is different from what it used to be. Fifty years ago, the main disciplinary problems were running in halls, talking out of turn, and chewing gum. Today's transgressions include physical and verbal violence, incivility, and in some schools, drug abuse, robbery, assault, and murder. The result is that many teachers spend an inordinate amount of time and energy managing classroom conflicts (Amsler & Sadella, 1987, p. 54).

When students poorly manage their conflicts with each other and with faculty, aggression often results. As violence increases, pressure for safe and orderly schools increases. Schools are struggling with what to do. Schools are adopting various violence prevention and conflict resolution programs.

Preventing violence and resolving conflicts are interrelated. Violence prevention programs alone are not enough - students also need to learn how to manage conflicts constructively. Violence and even homicide often result from spontaneous arguments among acquaintances or friends (Prothrow-Stith, Spivak, and Hausman 1987). Students need an alternative to using violence for resolving conflicts. Training students in conflict resolution not only helps schools become orderly and peaceful places in which high-quality education can take place but also improves instruction.

Conflicts occur in every school. How conflicts are managed, not their presence, determines if they are destructive or constructive. There are essentially two types of philosophical thoughts regarding conflicts in schools by educators. There are conflict negative schools and conflict positive schools. What are the distinct differences between these schools? Conflict negative schools manage conflicts destructively; conflict positive schools manage conflicts constructively. Unfortunately, most schools today are conflict

negative; they should aspire to be conflict positive (Johnson and Johnson, 1995).

Conflict negative schools assume that all conflicts are destructive and have no value. Management goals, therefore, focus on trying to eliminate them by suppressing, avoiding, and denying their existence. Conflicts are a source of problems, producing fear, anxiety, insecurity, and defensiveness. Johnson and Johnson (1995) believe that conflict negative schools do not teach students and faculty how to manage conflicts because such training might encourage conflicts.

Johnson and Johnson (1995) go on to state that on the other hand, conflict positive schools manage conflicts constructively to enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and school life. Such schools recognize that conflicts are inevitable, healthy, and valuable. Conflicts are not problems - they are part of solutions.

Within the school culture, research has distinguished the principal to be the most influential factor in the implementation and continued development of curricular programs. Dr. Sandra Kaufman in The Ohio Commission On Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management study (1993) stated,

Administrative support is essential both implementing and integrating a new conflict management program. No coordinator believed a peer management program could be successful in its absence. From the leadership necessary to establish the program's legitimacy, to provision of essential resources, to active participation through referrals, administrative assistance can make or break the best-conceived conflict management program. (p. 14)

A collection of effective school research made clear the existence of a variation in the principal's leadership style and its influence upon school quality. Topologies of leadership styles emerged from studies conducted by researchers at school sites. These leadership styles have been statistically shown to have a relationship with school climate and the effectiveness of the schools (Likert, 1976). Administrative support and leadership

style have also been linked to the implementation and success of school programs.

Effective schools, as is known from a wealth of research, are generally led by a principal who persuades faculty, parents, students, and others to commit themselves to high academic goals and educational excellence (Blank, 1995). In their book, The Principal Role In Shaping School Culture, Deal and Peterson (1990) stated:

We know, for instance, that effective principals generally have a “sixth sense” about the values and beliefs that shape their school community. They are able to tap into and harness those beliefs as a positive force for students. These principals nurture a sense of purpose and playfulness in the daily life of the school. Happily, research suggests that these abilities be understood and learned. (p. 24)

With a growing research base for the value and necessity of implementing conflict resolution programs in our schools, as well as, an equally abundant group of findings supporting relationships to administrative style assessment, a natural bridge seems apparent. Research seems to suggest that successful implementation of any conflict resolution program into a school setting may need to be supported by an administrator who has a positive attitude and a strong leadership style.

However, there is a void in the research which compares or determines the relationship between administrative style and the role it may play or the effect it may have on the attitude toward or successful implementation of conflict resolution programs in suburban elementary school settings. Therefore, this research examined the role of leadership style of the elementary building principal and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program.

Problem Statement

There is widespread agreement among educators as to the need to reduce violence in our schools. During the last decade there has been an increasing interest in teaching

conflict resolution in the school setting. There has been a proliferation of programmatic and curricular activities which reflect the belief that learning about conflict and its resolution should begin at an early age (Lam, 1988).

The effective management of conflicts and the reduction of violence in our schools is directly related to one of the most timely issues facing educators today. Whether it is called conflict resolution or management, classroom management or discipline, the need for students to behave civil in school has been identified by numerous educational institutions as one of the major concerns of education during the 1980s and 90s.

Lam (1989) in her book, The Impact of Conflict Resolution Programs on Schools, stated,

Interest in conflict resolution programs to reduce violence, as well as, promote a more positive climate has been stimulated primarily by word-of-mouth. However, with a few exceptions, little research has been conducted on the magnitude and direction of the impact of school mediation. It is generally believed in the field, that mediation training makes the student mediators feel better about themselves and contributes to an improved school climate, but the basis for these beliefs and the ways training accomplishes these ends are not clearly known (p. 38).

Research indicates that efficient effective management and administration are essential elements for the existence of an effective school. Various researchers have found a correlation between management styles and the values and attitudes of each member of the organization.

Studies have been conducted investigating the relationship of administrative style which show the following beliefs are shared by successful schools - (Smith & Piele, 1989)

- Strong values that support a safe and secure environment, one that is conducive to learning and is free of disciplinary problems or vandalism;

- High expectations of every student and of faculty, too, believing that everyone can achieve;
- Belief in the importance of basic skill instruction as a key and critical goal for all students;
- The belief that there should be clear performance goals and that everyone should have clear and helpful performance feedback to help in guiding the learning and improvement process; and
- Strong leadership and a belief in its importance (p. 3 - 4).

Organization's leaders reflect their own beliefs and attitudes through their style of leadership. Limited amount of research has linked management styles and the attitude of those managers toward the implementation of conflict resolution programs in schools.

What is leadership? Here are a few definitions of leadership as described from renown leaders and researchers (cited in Smith & Piele, 1989):

- Leadership is making people do what they don't want to do, and liking it (Truman).
- Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals (Robbins).
- Leadership is influencing people to follow in the achievement of a common goal (Kooty, p. 10).

A review of literature revealed that most management researchers agreed that leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation.

Strong leadership at the school level seems to be essential, whether teachers are generating initiatives or implementing ones created at other levels of the organization. All schools need leadership teams connected to district councils of teachers. Schools also need administrators with broad responsibility for overseeing the health of the organization, making and coordinating initiatives, and governing the technical unit that provides support within the organization.

Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun in their 1993 book, The Self-Renewing School, stated:

Two important dimensions of leadership have been accentuated in the recent research on the dynamics of school faculties:

First, the ability to generate a collaborative community is extremely important... The most effective leadership is not embodied in a “strong man or woman” who manipulates others, but in the ability to generate a democratic framework and process that binds the organization productively.

Second, the most effective leaders do not simply follow established formulas for getting things done, but are effective diagnosticians, problem solvers, and leaders of others to find needs and create solutions (p. 28-29)

In both dimensions, leaders understand the development of their community and its members and work to generate the capability of those they are designated to lead (in Joyce, Wolf, & Calhoun, 1993).

Quality leadership is necessary to initiate and maintain the school improvement process. Hutchins, Guzzetti, and Riley in their 1984 review of effective schools, stated, “. . . good administrators lead through management skills, not personality” (p. 26). Likert’s earlier work also supports these findings. He stated that:

The leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interactions and all relationships with the organizations each member will, in the light of his own background, values, and expectations, view the experience as supportive and as one which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance. (Likert, 1978, p. 58)

Within this statement a correlation is drawn between management style and the values and attitudes of each member. Likert underscored the pivotal role that is played by the leader of an organization (in the case of a school that leader is the principal) in fostering and maintaining an atmosphere that facilitates all members of that organization to perform at their highest level.

Providing students with an orderly environment in which to learn and ensuring student safety is becoming more difficult in many schools. An increasing number of

public and private teachers and administrators face situations involving serious conflicts among students and between students and faculty. In response, schools are adopting various violence prevention and conflict resolution programs.

Johnson and Johnson (1995) in their book, Reducing School Violence Through Conflict Resolution stated:

Training students in conflict resolution not only helps schools become orderly and peaceful places in which high-quality education can take place but also improves instruction. Constructive conflict can gain and hold attention, increase motivation to learn arouse intellectual curiosity, and improve the quality and creativity of problem solving benefits of such training extend beyond schools (p. 24).

Research studies have validated the existence of various styles of management, and a growing number of studies have compared those styles with variables such as: demographics, socioeconomic conditions, school size, student achievement levels, and numerous other factors related to school climate and population. After a thorough review of literature, studies were not found that related the principal's leadership styles to attitudes toward conflict resolution programs. However, a number of studies have reported that students feel better about themselves and safer at school where conflict resolution programs have been implemented (Lam, 1988). The purpose of this study was to examine the role of leadership style of the elementary building principal and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program.

Research Questions

To investigate the relationship between the variables of this proposed study the following research questions were developed:

1. Is there a relationship between principals' and teachers' perceptions of

schools, based on Likert's Profile of a School and perceptions of the effectiveness of their school's conflict resolution program?

2. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the school?
3. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the school as determined by Likert's Profile of the Schools?
4. Is there a relationship between the perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the schools and the length of time the conflict resolution program has been used, grade levels of the students involved in the program, and participation in continuing education programs focusing on conflict resolution?

Need for Study

To eliminate violence and resolve destructive conflicts, schools must first admit that conflicts between students are out of control. They need to recognize that physical and verbal violence, discipline problems, and incivility are not the work of a few troublemakers or just a passing phase. The next step is to set up a conflict resolution program. Most current programs focus on violence prevention only. Schools today need a broader context that includes not only measures to prevent violence but also ways to develop and maintain constructive patterns of behavior.

A survey of 51 conflict resolution programs (Wilson-Brewer, Cohen, O'Donnell, & Goodman, 1991) shows that less than half claimed to have reduced levels of violence and few had data to support claims of effectiveness (Johnson and Johnson, 1995). In examining research, Tolan and Guerra (in press) concluded that many schools are engaging in well-intentioned efforts without any evidence that these programs work.

Some conflict resolution programs are poorly implemented. They (school principals) assume that a few hours of educational intervention can "cure" violent students, a few hours of training can prepare teachers to conduct the program, and follow-

up is not needed. In other words, they are ignoring a valuable source of information - literature on successful innovation within schools (Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

Research studies have been produced to evaluate the relationship of leadership to the school climate. Therefore, leaders of schools, depending on their prevailing attitudes toward the implementation of conflict resolution programs might be able to influence school climate.

Often, programs are collections of ideas and procedures that make sense to the authoring practitioner, but have little, if any, grounding in relevant psychological and sociological theories (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). This comparison study was conducted to begin to understand the paradigms that could influence certain styles of leadership and the perceived relationship that leadership style may have on the climate of the school as it relates to the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program.

Assumptions

The foundation for the theoretical base and the underpinning assumptions for this proposed study emerges primarily from the existing theoretical research of Rensis Likert, Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Their parallel findings clearly indicate division of leadership styles, and the relative effectiveness of those styles in implementing innovative programs, such as conflict resolution. They also found that leaders' styles have a relationship to definition and maintenance of school climate. Their research identified a strong link between leaders' styles and the behavior of the organization. Based on these researchers, the following assumptions are made:

Assumption 1

Principals who feel they have an open style of leadership (System 4) should exhibit positive and supportive attitudes. Those leaders who believe in participative,

collaborative climates should also be supportive of educational programs that provide students and staff with the widest possible means for educational excellence (Likert, 1967).

Assumption 2

Teachers who perceive their principals to have a specific leadership style, also make assumptions about the principal's attitude toward educational practices. If a program is considered either core or basic academic concerns in educational practice, staff members would perceive that an autocratic (System 1) leader would possess a negative attitude toward that educational program (Likert, 1978).

Assumption 3

Teachers perceive that their principal's style is directly related to their beliefs and corresponding attitudes. Therefore, those beliefs would have a direct relationship on the level of implementation of educational programs within the school climate. This assumption is supported by the research of Likert (1967) that draws a correlation between the values, beliefs, and attitudes of principals and how they influence the vision and goals set by the individual.

Definition of Terms

Within the context of this study the following terminology were defined as follows:

Conflict:

A conflict is the existence of incompatible activities that occur simultaneously. One incompatible activity prevents or interferes with the occurrence or effectiveness of a second activity. These activities may originate in one person, between two or more people, or between two or more groups (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). This term is used interchangeably with violence.

- Conflict Resolution: A constructive approach to interpersonal and intergroup conflicts that helps people with opposing positions work together to arrive at mutually acceptable compromise solutions (Johnson & Johnson, 1995).
- Peer Mediation Program: A program that exposes selected students to intensive training focused on a structured, step-by-step process of third party intervention in the disputes of peers. Student mediators, also known as conflict managers, are prepared to help peers voluntarily settle differences through a discussion of the disputants, perceptions, interest, feelings, and alternative solutions (Kaufman, 1993).
- School Principal: The principal is the instructional leader within the school building. S/he is responsible for overseeing the curriculum and instruction for each student, including special programs such as conflict resolution. Even though other principals may play an integral role in implementing and facilitating programs in the public school setting, for the purpose of this study, only one individual was evaluated by the staff.
- Staff: Staff are those who are certified instructional and specialized teachers (special education, social worker, counselor, etc.) of an elementary school, encompassing grades ranging from K through 6.
- School: All references to 'the school' were of a public elementary school that is inclusive of grades K through 5 or K through 6.
- Leadership Style: The principal's style of leadership were based on Rensis Likerts' Four Systems of Management. System 1 is the exploitive authoritative; System 2 is the benevolent authoritative; System 3 is the consultative; and System 4 is the participative style of management.

Significance of the Study

Although most principals agree that the climate of a school is deeply affected by administrative process, few make it a topic of intensive study (Halpin & Andrew, 1966). Being able to provide the best possible education, the means for learning and a safe environment, should be the ultimate goal of all educational institutions, whether they are

public or private.

Estimating where we are and how we got here as regards to conflicts in schools is a prerequisite to understanding the potential for changing or improving them (Milstein, 1980). The significance and value of this study was to provide conflict resolution advocates, who are in positions to impact inclusion of conflict resolution programs in schools, the ability to better understand the leadership style of the elementary building principal and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Introduction

This review of literature and related research is intended to provide an understanding of the relationship between conflict resolution programs, leadership style and the perceived relationship that leadership style may have on the impact of conflict resolution programs on school climate in an elementary school setting.

Youth Violence

The problem of violence in the United States has reached unprecedented proportions. Koop and Lundberg (1992) reported that approximately 50,000 Americans die as a result of suicide and homicide. Furthermore, in 1992 alone, approximately 26,000 Americans – an average of 73 per day – died as the result of interpersonal violence that year (Michigan Department of Public Health (MDPH), 1994). A growing number of these individuals are children and adolescents. This magnitude of the violence problem prompted a United States Surgeon General to declare that “violence in the United States is a public health emergency” (Novello, Shoskey & Froehlke, 1992, p. 3007). In Michigan, 1,000 deaths were the result of violence (MDPH, 1994).

According to MDPH (1994), an analysis of The National Crime Victimization Survey of 1989 found that more than 1 in 5 students feared being attacked while going to and from school. The findings of another national survey conducted by the National School Boards Association (NSBA, 1993) showed that during the 1992-93 school year, 80% of all districts – from urban, suburban, and rural areas – believed that the problem of school violence was worse than it was five years previously. This survey also found that 35% of respondents believed that school violence has increased significantly.

School violence in Michigan reflects the same national patterns of school violence. In the 1995 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which was administered to a nonrepresentative sample of Michigan high school students, a significant number of students were found to have engaged in risky behaviors, including violence (Michigan Department of Education (MDE, 1996). The results showed:

- 33 % of students had engaged in property damage or property theft,
- 24% of males indicating they had engaged in physical fights on school property,
- 9% had carried a weapon on school property,
- 9% were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, and
- 5% had missed a least one day of school during the previous 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or traveling to or from school.

During 1995-96, The Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency (WCRESA) conducted a study of school violence as part of an anti-violence federal project funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Twenty-two Wayne County school districts participated in this study. As shown in Table 1, 12,151 students were referred for disciplinary actions, with 5, 556 students referred to administrators as a result of involvement in physical fights. In addition, 2,428 students were referred for disciplinary actions for verbal abuse and profanities, and 121 students were referred for discriminatory harassment violations.

Table 1
Wayne County Schools Data, 1995-1996
Students (N= 12,151)

Reason for referral	Number of students
Alcohol/ drugs/ narcotics	837
Arson	26
Assault	1,121
Discriminatory harassment	121
Extortion/ coercion	15
False Alarms/bomb Threats	45
Fighting	5,556
Homicide	0
Intimidation/personal threats	972
Larceny, robbery, theft	269
Sexual assault	8
Sexual harassment	202
Suicide	1
Vandalism/ damage to property	334
Verbal abuse/ profanity	2,428
Weapons & look-a-likes	187

Note: The data in column 2 is from Project SAVE, Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency (WCRESA), 1996, Wayne, MI. Adapted by permission.

Teaching students the procedures and skills they need to resolve conflicts constructively has been relatively ignored. Despite the large amount of time teachers and students spend in dealing with destructively managed conflicts, and despite considerable research evidence indicating that the constructive management of conflict increases classroom productivity, teachers receive little training in how to use conflict for instructional purposes and how to teach students conflict management. In essence, teachers and principals have been implicitly taught to avoid and suppress conflicts and to fear conflicts when they burst forth - actions that make them worse. (Johnson & Johnson, 1995).

Today, children are more isolated from parents, extended family members, and other adults than ever before. Workplaces are separated from living places, so children do not see most working adults. Divorce, abuse, poverty, drugs, and other forces that

interfere with healthy parenting disrupt many families. With isolation, separation, and abuse comes a lack of socialization. The family, neighborhood, and community dynamics that once socialized young people into the norms of society are often extinct. Johnson & Johnson (1995) state, "No one is teaching children how to manage conflicts constructively through example or through indirect methods, such as moral codes and patterns" (p. 3).

As powerful and diverse groups aggressively pursue their preferences, conflict has inevitably reached staggering dimensions in our nation's schools. Parents have organized into community interest groups to influence school board policy, teacher and principal unions have linked with national associations to improve their influence on all aspects of educational governance, and federal and state policy makers and executive agencies have imposed legislation and rulings on school district functioning (Milstein, 1980).

Some communities directly promote violence as a way to resolve disputes. Inner-city children typically grow up surrounded by teenagers and adults who are themselves deviant, delinquent, or criminal. The result is youth who have been directly and painfully taught to be violent when faced with a conflict.

What is perhaps most alarming is that violence is becoming so commonplace in many communities and schools that it is considered the norm rather than the exception. This change in view was evident in an article reported in the Oakland Press concerning student violence. In the article, "Student violence worries Class of 2000", the reporter, Diana Dillaber Murray (1998) stated:

The many school shooting rampages by students across the country left Reeda Zabik feeling wounded herself. Like many other Oakland County high school students in the Oakland Press Class of 2000, the 16-year-old Reeda, of Waterford Kettering High, was more affected by those deadly attacks than any other national event.

The random violence was much on the minds of many of the 31 class members and two alternates as they prepare to return to school in the next few weeks.

“The reason these shootings have had an impact on me,” said, Reeda, “is not only are they horrifying, this is a cry from our teenage society about how troubled and dangerous teenagers are becoming. There needs to be more crisis conflict resolution classes taught,” she said. (Section A, p. 1)

Sons and daughters of people raised in the upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s are growing up in a world that their parents see as even more stressful and violent than it was in their own youth. Presently, more than ever, conflict between individuals seems inevitable. As reported by Rothstein (1986):

There are always going to be conflicts and disagreements in an organization that have to be worked out. And if principals involve staff in problem-solving situations, they will gain two things: 1. greater involvement and 2. more open expressions of thoughts and feelings. Getting an principal to accept these ‘gains’ can be difficult. (p. 6)

At the present time, the typical response to conflict in schools is to ignore it, hoping it will disappear by itself. Left alone, however, conflict rarely disappears; instead it grows and festers, feeding people’s aversion to it.

Though the present leaders may acknowledge that employees and students need to release their stress every once in a while, they still believe that group conflict and tension are bad. Patterson (1992) discussed the need to provide appropriate outlets for conflict.

He concluded that:

Today’s leaders don’t like to deal with conflict, so they take steps to prevent it from every occurring. Tomorrow’s leaders, however, embrace conflict. By valuing the energy of dissent, they let people inside and outside the organization know where they stand: honest conflict in a safe environment provides the seeds for rich solutions to organizational issues. (p. 76)

When school conflicts are handled constructively in a safe environment, both the individual and the organization become stronger, though not always without some

measure of pain. Resolving conflicts peacefully moves us forward. As Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said (in Patterson, 1992) ; “If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships - the ability of all people, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace” (p. 104).

Conflicts occur all the time. They are a normal and inevitable part of school life. Students disagree over who to sit with at lunch, which game to play during recess, when to work and when to play, when to talk and when to listen, and who is going to pick the paper up off the classroom floor. They need to develop strategies and methods to resolve these conflicts in a positive manner that allows all participants to achieve consensus.

Dealing with a conflict is like going swimming in a cold lake. Some people like to test the water, sticking their foot in and entering slowly. They want to get used to the cold gradually. Others like to take a running start and leap in. They want to get the cold shock over with quickly. Similarly, different people use different strategies for managing conflicts. (Johnson & Johnson, 1995, p. 44)

As educators, perhaps the primary question that must be asked is, why is there a need in today’s schools to implement conflict resolution programs? The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1995) stated in its summary:

We urge that young people must be given a greater role in determining their own destiny and in shaping the future course of our society. Responsible participation in decision making may, for many, be a substitute for the violence that is born in frustration. (p. 2)

Violence ends destructively. Many times, it ends in physical and emotional pain.

More and more it ends in death. The following newspaper article, reported in the Detroit Free Press, November 24, 1995, depicts the violence that is affecting our schools:

After a four-hour closed session, the Grand Haven School board expelled a 16-year old student for allegedly beating a bus driver, board President Bob Steinlage said. Santos Perez is accused of striking Patricia A. Foust, 60, on October 25 after she came to the back of the bus. (The Associated Press,

Section C, p. 5)

Violence can start almost anywhere. It generally starts with a conflict. The conflict may begin as a difference of opinion, rumor, jealousy, misunderstanding or prank. Conflict also may escalate and involve serious threats, deep prejudices, assaults or weapons.

Violence continues to escalate in schools. Kids instinctively know only two responses to conflicts – fight or flight. The result of either choice is unacceptable because the cause of the conflict is not addressed and resolved.

Responsibility for violence. Parents, teachers, guidance counselors, principals, politicians, religious leaders, newspaper editors, television producers or society as a whole are responsible for violence. Playing the blame game helps no one.

Violence needs to be stopped. The most important element that remains to be addressed is stopping violence in schools. Conflict that possibly leads to violence cannot be eliminated, but must be handled in an appropriate manner.

Conflict is a natural, inevitable part of life, and can never be eliminated. Conflict can be handled in ways that avoid violent outcomes. An important key to reducing youth violence is to provide youth with better conflict management skills. Youth of all ages can be taught to stop conflict from escalating into violence. To achieve this goal, students must be provided with new skills and processes to use in conflict situations. In their 1993 report, Dealing with conflict in Ohio's Schools, the Ohio Commission Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management stated:

A commitment must be made to teach kids essential conflict management skills that will benefit them now and for the rest of their lives. Sadly, for many youth today, "The rest of their lives" carries a sense of urgency. A commitment must be made now. (p. 1)

History of Conflict Resolution

Exploring the history of conflict resolution helps in understanding the makeup of a comprehensive conflict resolution program. Modern conflict resolution programs stress peer mediation, a technique found in many cultures. In ancient China, people practiced the Confucian way of resolving disputes by using moral persuasion and agreement. In Japan, the village leader was expected to use mediation and conciliation to help community members settle their disputes. In parts of Africa, a neighborhood meeting, or “moot,” assembled, and a respected member helped disputants resolve their conflict without involving a judge or arbitrator and without using sanctions. In some cultures, members of extended families served as mediators. For centuries, local religious leaders such as priests, ministers, and rabbis, acted as community mediators.

Even though community mediation has been a part of societal living for thousands of years, school-based programs are relatively new, spanning three decades. Conflict resolution programs have evolved from four general sources (Amsler & Sadella, 1987):

1. Researchers in the field of conflict resolution;
2. Groups committed to nonviolence, such as the Quaker Church;
3. Opponents of nuclear war; and
4. Lawyers (p. 206).

The Peacemaker Program

One of the first conflict resolution and peer mediation programs was called, Teaching Students to Be Peacemakers, developed in the mid-1960s at the University of Minnesota (Johnson 1970, 1972/1993, 1978/1993). Johnson and other researchers translated conflict resolution theory and the results of ongoing research into a set of practical procedures. Building positive relationships among disputants is a major focus in

helping to reduce violence. The peacemaker program was part of a larger approach that used a cooperative context and academic controversies to train all students to negotiate their conflicts and mediate peer conflicts.

Children's Creative Response to Conflict Program

In the early 1970s (Deutsch, 1973), Quaker teachers in New York City became interested in providing nonviolence training to children to resolve conflicts and reduce violence. Their efforts resulted in the founding of the Children's Creative Response to Conflict (CCRC) workshops for public schools. These workshops showed teachers how to help children learn the skills of Creative Conflict Resolution.

CCRC's roots originate in the teachings of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. that foster nonviolence as a way to deal with conflict. Advocates of the CCRC program believed that the power of nonviolence lies in the force of justice, the power of love and caring, and the desire for personal integrity. This type of program was based on the assumption that if peace is what every government seeks, and peace is the yearning of every heart then educational professionals should study and teach it in all schools.

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program

Preventing nuclear war and advocating peace and global education were guiding principles for Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR), a national organization founded in the early 1980s. ESR's interests led them to address violence in classrooms. In partnership with the New York City public schools, ESR began the Resolving conflict Creatively Program. Schools implement a curriculum with lessons on intergroup relations, cooperative learning, and dispute resolution procedures; provide peer mediation training; and conduct workshops for parents.

Community Boards of San Francisco Conflict Managers Program

In 1977, trial lawyer, Ray Shonholtz, responded to President Carter's call for Neighborhood Justice Centers by establishing the Community Boards of San Francisco Conflict Managers Program (Amsler & Sadella, 1987). Initially, mediators taught conflict resolution skills to adults in neighborhoods. Then they approached local schools about beginning a peer mediation program. Conflict management curriculums were developed and implemented in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Schools can teach children how to cooperate and share. David Hamburg, president of Carnegie Corporation, suggested that reversing the trend of violence among the young depends on teaching children how to cooperate, share and help others. He concluded that the assumption that children are learning these competencies outside school is not sound (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Schools must teach children how to work with and be committed to others.

What Can Conflict Management Do?

Conflict management skills are problem-solving skills. Teaching conflict management skills prepares kids to better handle conflict situations. As a result, kids in conflict are able to listen to each others' concerns, share different perspectives, talk about emotions, analyze underlying causes of problems, brainstorm possible solutions, and jointly agree on nonviolent solutions that best meets their interests.

Various types of conflict resolutions programs have been implemented in schools and communities since the mid-1970s. During the past 20 years, few research studies obtained both qualitative and quantitative research data that assessed the true impact of these types of programs on reducing violence in schools.

In 1993, the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management released the results of a comparative research study on the effectiveness of conflict

resolution programs implemented in twenty Ohio schools. The report was titled, “Dealing with Conflict in Ohio’s Schools: Teaching Students New Skills to Resolve Conflicts Without Violence.” The 1993 report included information obtained during the first two years of the Commission’s three-year School Conflict management Demonstration Project.

Prior to the Commission’s Demonstration Project, information about the impact of conflict management programs on students consisted almost exclusively of anecdotal reports describing success stories at individual schools. This demonstration project was designed to assess the impact of conflict management programs on disciplinary actions and student attitudes about conflict in 20 schools from Fall 1990 to Spring 1993. The project’s methodology included both qualitative and quantitative analysis to measure effects.

Over 1,000 student attitude surveys that were collected from 1990 - 1992 in 20 demonstration schools with conflict resolution programs were analyzed as part of the Ohio Commission’s 1993 Comparative Study. The results of this study yielded some interesting preliminary results, including:

- In several schools, students in grades K-3 indicated higher acceptance of kids seen as “different,” better confidence in their communication skills, and an improved likelihood to act independently of peers.
- For students in grades 4-6, survey results indicated a greater willingness to stop fights, their knowledge of non-violent options to resolve a conflict had improved, and they were more confident in regard to their communication skills.
- Results from middle school students indicated increased willingness to talk rather than fight about a problem as well as a greater willingness to stop a fight.
- Responses from high school students hinted at increased awareness of mediation, greater willingness to stop a fight, and improved knowledge

of non-violent options to resolve conflict (p. 9-10).

The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management (1993)

Comparative study also included monthly disciplinary data from the first two years of the projects. The monthly disciplinary data collected showed improved disciplinary results in several middle and high schools.

Here are some comments from the report:

- Three of the schools showed significant reductions in the number of detentions and in-school suspensions.
- Two schools had modest reductions in out-of-school suspensions.
- One high school reported lower expulsions and dropouts. (p. 11)

While the Commission was optimistic about these results, they acknowledged that these are preliminary results collected without strict controls. More importantly, the full impact of these programs on student attitudes and school climate may not be evident for three to five years or longer.

Effective management of conflicts and the reduction of violence in schools is directly related to one of the most timely issues facing educators today. Regardless of what a program is called (e.g., conflict resolution or management, classroom management, or discipline), the need for students to behave in a civil manner in school has been the primary concern of many educators during the 1990s (Newton, 1993).

Interest in conflict resolution programs to reduce violence and promote a more positive climate in schools is a major goal of educational leaders. If violence is going to be eliminated and destructive conflicts reduced, strong school leadership is needed from a principal who possesses the vision and strength to establish violence prevention programs, such as conflict resolution or student mediation programs (Opatow, 1991).

The program must motivate students to change habits, attitudes, values, and

perspectives. Comprehensive conflict resolution programs have components that can help effect such change. Research studies indicated that conflict resolution could create positive and lasting bonds among students and between students, faculty and staff. Positive peer relationships have been shown to be key elements to psychological health, cognitive and social development, and pro-social attitudes and values (Hartup 1976, Johnson 1981).

Schools can implement long-term conflict resolution/peer mediation training for all students. This training should continue for 13 years and should be fully integrated into daily patterns of school life (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). All students, not a select few, need to learn how to manage conflict. Everyone in the school (e.g., students, faculty, and staff) needs to use conflict resolution procedures to reduce violence and promote a positive climate is to occur.

Johnson and Johnson (1995) in their book, Reducing School Violence Through Conflict Resolution, stated:

Training students in conflict resolution not only helps schools become orderly and peaceful places in which high-quality education can take place but also improves instruction. Construction conflict can gain and hold attention, increase motivation to learn, arouse intellectual curiosity, and improve the quality and creativity of problem solving. The benefits of such training extend beyond schools. (p. 14)

Previous research suggested that students themselves may be less likely to engage in acts of violence or crimes in their schools if they enjoy positive interactions with school personnel, academic success, or productive participation in school activities (Wayson, 1989).

Educational leaders (principals) must have the fortitude to facilitate preventive programs, such as conflict resolution, to help promote quality education like educational excellence. “Effective schools” can be defined in many ways; but regardless of its

definition, research has revealed that good leadership is important to achieve it (Patterson, 1992).

Today's organizational values significantly limit openness. Two key value areas that limit this openness are described in Patterson's (1992) book, Leadership For Tomorrow's Schools. He indicated these contrasting values by contrasting today's and tomorrow's values:

Value 1: Openness to Participation

Today's Value: Our organization values employees listening to the organization's leaders and doing what the leaders tell them to do.

Tomorrow's Value: Our organization values employees actively participating in any discussion or decision affecting them. (p. 5)

Most leaders today believe that one of the most important aspects of a strong organization is having everything under control. How they reach a decision is far less important than the substance of the decision, for in their mind, their job is to make good decisions. They also believe they are responsible for controlling what happens in the organization. This feeling of responsibility usually causes today's leaders to discount the ideas of other employees. In fact, leaders who "allow" all employees to participate in decision making are often considered weak by other leaders (Patterson, 1992).

Tomorrow's value argues that a strong organization is characterized by employees throughout the organization participating in virtually all decisions. Leaders in tomorrow's organization want, even expect, employee participation (Patterson, 1992). Helping staff members express themselves openly is part of the group leadership process. A supervisor's responsiveness to staff needs could help his subordinates see him as a caring person. This leadership attitude can best be developed when a school leader is aware enough to foster greater cooperation and harmony between persons working in the

school.

Value 2: Openness to Conflict

Today's Value: Our organization values employees communicating a climate of group harmony and happiness.

Tomorrow's Value: Our organization values employees resolving conflict in a healthy way that leads to stronger solutions for complex issues. (p. 8)

Unfortunately today, many school organizations when faced with conflicts align themselves with Patterson's definition of Today's Value which is based on the belief that an organization values employees who communicate a climate of group harmony and happiness. Such a value is unrealistic and only prolongs the breakdown of trust and the freedom for an employee to express their feelings truthfully.

According to Rensis Likert (1976),

As a society applies modern organizational theory and principles to the management of conflict, the changes produced in the society will enable it to meet deep-seated but unsatisfied human needs and yearnings much more adequately than at present. (p. 8)

These aspirations were perhaps best expressed by Wierzniski (in Likert, 1976)

when he said,

We want to return society to a human scale, a scale small enough for us to participate in the decisions that affect us. We want a society in which our place is not preordained by birth and circumstance. We want a society that tolerates candor and spontaneity. We want to retain control over our own lives. (p. 8)

Today's leaders and school organizations must begin to align themselves with Patterson's (1992) Openness to Conflict: Tomorrow's Value 2. This value is based on the belief that employees are able to resolve their conflicts openly in a healthy way that leads to strong solutions to complex issues. According to Rothstein (1986), "It seems true of most people in our society that, as children, they were taught to control and repress many of their feelings and early attitudes" (p.129).

If being a school leader means anything today, it means changing leadership style from being autocratic to a one that is more collaborative and open. Today's leaders must allow employees to openly discuss their suppressed and negative feelings through a positive process known as conflict resolution. Today's leaders must have a desire to know what is really happening in their building. They must implement supportive conflict resolution processes with their employees. Using these processes can allow leaders to gain deeper insights into what is happening within their organizations. Use of participatory leadership practices combined with the infusion of the conflict resolution process can result in an open, positive school climate. However, school leaders can be sure that these situations can involve their staff and themselves in a continuous process of communication and problem-solving that allows all stakeholders in the school to become more committed to their work and to their school. According to Rothstein (1986), “. . . establishing healthy climates which encourage friendly and trusting ties is an important administrative task” (p. 86).

Leaders who demonstrate Patterson's, *Openness to Conflict: Tomorrow's Value 2* can improve their schools' climate and overall staff morale. This improvement may increase the level of learning among students who want a safe and secure learning environment.

Leadership Style and Its Impact on School Climate

School principals who are concerned only about the monthly paycheck or even personal job satisfaction are not true educational leaders because they have lost sight of the true goals of education. Sergiovanni (in Smith & Piele, 1989) reminded educators of their goals in education when he wrote, “Leadership skills are important, but they cannot bring genuine leadership if the leader does not have a sense of purpose and direction” (p.

145). Those educators who become educational leaders care about something else – educational excellence, which is the “purpose and direction” of which Sergiovanni spoke. No leader can succeed without a clear notion of where he or she is going. As Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggested:

The absence or ineffectiveness of leadership implies the absence of vision, a dreamless society and this will result, at best, in the maintenance of the status quo or, at worst, in the disintegration of our society because of lack of purpose and cohesion. (p. 34)

Successful school leaders, according to Dwyer (in Bennis & Nanus, 1985), have an “overarching vision” of the kinds of schools they want to help create. They formulate their routine daily activities and interactions with teachers, students, and communities with that vision in mind. Communicating the purpose and the mission of the school, through both words and actions, is one of the most important tasks of a school leader.

Everyone knows how necessary and important leadership is to an organization. A question exists regarding why some companies, teams, and schools succeed when others fail. The credit of blame most often goes to the manager, coach, or principal. After interviewing 60 corporate and 30 public-sector leaders, Bennis and Nanus (in Smith & Piele, 1989) concluded that “the factor that empowers the work force and ultimately determines which organizations succeed or fail is the leadership of those organizations” (p. 156).

Literally hundreds of definitions of leadership have been offered. Some emphasize change or moving forward, such as Lipham’s (in Smith & Piele, 1989) definition of leadership as “the behavior of an individual which initiates a new structure in interaction within a social system” (p. 234). Fiedler, Chemers and Mahar (in Smith & Piele, 1989) have noted that leadership includes “the ability to counsel, manage conflict, inspire loyalty, and imbue subordinates with a desire to remain on the job” (p. 45). One of

the best definitions of leadership was suggested by Terry (in Smith & Piele, 1989), who called it “. . . the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group goals” (p. 48).

Brookover and Lezotte (1979), Edmonds (1979), and Sellarole (1986), all emphasized the importance of instructional leadership. Murphy (in Smith & Piele, 1989) cited additional characteristics which included:

- knowledge of curriculum and instruction,
- instructional duties more important than managerial tasks,
- development of clear school goals, and
- active involvement in providing staff development (p. 11)

The principal is considered the instructional leader and the role and perspectives they bring to the school is present and important in effective schools (Blank, 1995).

Austin (in Smith & Piele, 1989); after reviewing studies of school effectiveness in New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland; summarized factors that distinguish effective schools from others. The first four factors in his list revealed the importance of the role of principal.

- Strong principal leadership (for example, schools “being run” for a purpose rather than “running” from force of habit);
- Strong principal participation in the classroom instructional program and in actual teaching;
- Higher expectations on the part of the principal for student and teacher performance advancement;
- Principals felt that they had more control over the functioning of the school, the curriculum and program, and their staff. (p. 35)

This evidence suggested that principals can and do influence what happens in schools and that this influence has real and measurable effects. The following statement from the Senate Select Committee on Equal Education Opportunity report supported this

contention:

In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. He is the person responsible for all the activities that occur in and around the school building. It is his leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. He is the main link between the school and the community and the way he performs in that capacity largely determines the attitudes of students and parents about the school. If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if students are performing to the best of their ability one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success. (Smith & Piele, 1989, p. 56)

School leaders are focusing their energies on providing an excellent educational climate for all students, ranging from high achievers to those who are considered to be at risk. They are expected to provide these services with limited financial resources. At these times, the concern for leadership style may seem at best academic and at worst a waste of time. The question that must be answered is "What is a leadership style and why does it matter?"

History of Leadership Style Theory

Views of leadership have changed radically over the last 100 years. The earliest leadership research tried to determine what makes a leader and what makes a good leader by examining the inherent traits of leaders. After leadership traits became too large to manage or make sense of collectively, researchers began to focus on leadership behavior, or what leaders do in their capacities as leaders. The assumption was that leadership was something almost anyone could accomplish if s/he took the trouble to learn how to do it effectively. More recent views of leadership indicate that effective leadership result from an interaction of behaviors and inherent traits, with leadership ability appearing to be partly learned and partly born.

The concept of leadership style was born, and research began to focus on which leadership style was best, often comparing autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire styles. Although democratic styles frequently appeared to be the most effective, the theory began to emerge that no specific style of leadership was best in all situations. Hersey and Blanchard (1965) suggested that situational theories of leadership style supported the contention that the most effective style changed to fit the situation at hand.

Another way of looking at and classifying the dimensions of leadership style had been proposed by Tannenbaum and Schmidt (in Smith & Piele, 1989), who viewed leadership style as a continuum stretching from “subordinate-centered” to “boss-centered.” The most subordinate-centered leadership involved giving subordinates freedom to make decisions within flexible limits. With boss-centered leadership, the manager alone was responsible for making decisions and either merely announced it or attempted to “sell” the decision. While Tannenbaum and Schmidt admitted there were times when more boss-centered leadership was necessary, they viewed subordinate-centered behavior as the most effective. They advocated making a continuing effort to confront subordinates with the “challenge of freedom.”

As well as differing views about who makes decisions, leaders may also vary in the way they view employees. One principal may see staff members as lacking motivation, needing to be constantly pushed, and holding their own interest above that of the school. Another principal may assume that staff are just the opposite; motivated to improve the school, self-starting, and placing prime importance on school needs. This way of classifying leaders' perceptions of employees is found in the writings of McGregor (1960), who formulated the concept of Theory X and Theory Y. McGregor believed each person holds one of two opposing theories of human behavior. Theory X,

espouses that people are basically lazy, need to be prodded to action, and are motivated only by material or other rewards and punishments. Conversely, Theory Y asserts that people enjoy accomplishments, are self-motivated, and have a desire to make a real contribution to their organization. McGregor classified leaders as following either Theory X or Theory Y, with Theory Y leaders cast as modern, enlightened, humanitarian and compassionate leaders who succeed in motivating people.

According to McGregor (1960), each view of human nature is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If one treats workers as being responsible and self-motivated, they will be. If one treats them as lazy or without motivation, they will be that too. A realization that this is so has been the basis of a movement toward more democratic determination of organizational objectives and participative management as part of an attempt to increase commitment to organizational goals. McGregor's theories have made an important contribution toward making leadership more humanistic.

Hersey and Blanchard (1965) also spoke of situational leadership styles that varied based on external variables. Fiedler (1967) proposed a theory of leadership that contended that group effectiveness was contingent on matching an appropriate leader with a specific group, support the earlier work of Hersey and Blanchard. Fiedler considered leadership style to be a characteristic of personality, and not just a consistent set of behaviors. According to Fiedler, "Important leadership behaviors of the same individual differ from situation to situation, while the need-structure that motivates the behaviors may be seen as consistent" (p. 37). Vroom (1975) also proposed a contingency leadership theory that focused on the decision making process. Vroom's contingency approach proposed that no single process of decision making was the best approach in all situations, and that the effectiveness of a leaders decision making approach depended on

the situation at hand.

Leadership style according to the majority of the research, can be identified through the use of various available instruments such as Likert's Profile of a School Staff Questionnaire (1986). Likert's (1976) approach to organizational diagnosis was structured and directional. As a normative theorist, he believed there was one best way to go to have directional change. In order to diagnose an organization, he developed a questionnaire that contained six major categories; including leadership, motivation, communication, decision-making, goals, and control; to investigate what he thought would have an impact on leadership style. Likert, using work he had done previously, engaged in research in an effort to ascertain the style of management used by managers in high producing organizations. Likert (1967) determined that: supervisors with the best records of performance focused their primary attention on the human aspects of their subordinates' problems and on endeavored to build effective work groups with high performance goals. Likert divided supervisors into two basic operating modes; employee-centered versus job-centered.

The principal's style of leadership has great impact in defining and maintaining the organizational climate of a school building. The school climate may be considered as a holistic concept encompassing all aspects of the school environment. Research exists that specifically links the school principal to the type of climate in existence.

For decades, this "subtle spirit" of a school was generally called "school morale" by researchers and practitioners. In the past 25 years however, it has generally been referred to as "school climate." Litwin and Stringer (1968) provide additional support for a strong causal link between leader behavior and organizational climate with their study in which leadership style was varied within three simulated organization. Their findings

reported that in each of the three simulated organizations, they were able to create different climates. They also found that a closed climate was associated with low performance, while a supportive, open climate was associated with high performance.

Likert (1967) developed a theory of supervision that strongly supported the concept of climate as it affected organizational effectiveness. In 1976, he defined four systems of leadership styles:

- *System 4: Collaborative Group (Group Interactive)* – Increases the power of group processes in problem solving and in activating or directing the motivation of members. Made up of interlocking work groups with high degree of group loyalty and favorable attitudes and trust among peers, superiors, and subordinates.
- *System 3: Consultive Participatory Style (Person-to-Person)* – Encourages management to consult with employees to gather information pertinent to various problems. Communication is both downward and upward.
- *System 2: Benevolent Authoritative (Competitive)* – Developed during the Industrial Revolution. This system is made up of the same autocratic qualities visible in System 1, except there is more concern for the employee as a person. Management is ego-directed and status conscious. Communication is downward, employees are not part of the decision making process.
- *System 1: Punitive Authoritative (One Person)* – Decisions are made by the person in charge who uses fear as a means of maintaining production within the organization. Communication is downward, with employees told what to do and how to perform their jobs.

Likert summarized that the closer an organization's climate is to what he describes as System 4, the more effective the organization. Likert's System 4, or participatory style of management is parallel to Litwin and Stringer's supportive climate. His research showed improvement in conflict management when leadership styles moved toward a System 4 level. In his research studies, Likert described a System 4 leader as a person who exhibited the following behaviors and impacted the organizational climate (Likert, 1976):

Supervisory (Managerial) Leadership

- *Support*: Friendly; pays attention to what you are saying; listens to subordinates' problems.
- *Team building*: Encourages subordinates to work as a team; encourages exchange of opinions and ideas.
- *Goal emphasis*: Encourages best efforts; maintains high standards.
- *Help with work*: Shows ways to do a better job; helps subordinates plan, organize, and schedule; offers new ideas, solutions to problems.

Organizational Climate

- *Communication flow*: Subordinates know what's going on; superiors are receptive; subordinates are given information to do job well.
- *Decision-making practices*: Subordinates are involved in setting goals; decisions are made at levels of accurate information; persons affected by decisions are asked for their ideas; know-how of people of all levels is used.
- *Concern for persons*: The organization is interested in the individual's welfare; tries to improve working conditions; organizes work activities sensibly.
- *Influence on department*: From lower-level supervisors and from employees who have no subordinates.
- *Technological adequacy*: Improved methods are quickly adopted; equipment and resources are well managed.
- *Motivation*: Differences and disagreements are accepted and worked through; people in organization work hard for money, promotion, job satisfaction, and to meet high expectations from others and are encouraged to do so by policies, working conditions, and people. (p. 73)

Likert strongly believed that of his Four Systems of Management, System 4 had the greatest impact on resolving conflicts in an organization. Likert (1976) stated, "If an interaction-influence network is to be effective in resolving conflict successfully, it must have an adequate structure as well as System 4 leadership, interaction, and problem-solving process" (p. 183). Likert described the structure of an interaction-influence

network in a System 4 organization as one that consisted of cohesive work groups where high performance goals were linked together by persons who held overlapping memberships in two or more groups.

The interaction-influence networks of Systems 1, 2, and 3 are much less cohesive than System 4. In Systems 1, 2, and 3; interaction-influence networks are essentially person-to-person. The leadership style in Systems 1 and 2 causes interactions, influence, and motivation process, while problem solving and conflict resolution are more likely to take place on a person-to-person basis. In System 3, the interaction is largely person-to-person, although the leader may convene subordinates to get their views, but not to make group decisions. System 3 leaders tend to make the decision after the discussion.

Likert (1976) stated in his literature:

In System 4, the face-to-face group plays a major role in interactions. These work groups can vary in size from two persons to several. Job problems are solved typically in work group problem-solving meetings and generally by consensus. This System 4 pattern has been derived from the behavior of the highest-producing managers in American business as discovered from extensive research. It is supported also by many studies which show that the communication, influence, motivation, and conflict resolving processes are done best in organizations which are composed of small face-to-face groups using consensus. (p. 238)

According to Likert (1961), "Supervision and the general style of leadership throughout the organization are usually much more important in influencing results than such general factors as attitudes toward the company and interest in the job itself" (p. 24).

Likert's (1976) research showed that managers or administrators who exhibited System 4 leadership styles achieved substantially better productivity, quality, labor relations, employee satisfaction, and employee health, both physically and mentally. Likert (1976) suggested that the dynamic view of the organization should be maintained and that efforts were needed to change both the physical and environmental climate of the

organization at appropriate rates.

School leaders (principals) must seek to adhere to the following System 4 principles if they want to change school climate within their buildings:

A System 4 leader must develop supportive relationships that demonstrate the following, “Each member will, in the light of his background, values, and expectations, view the experience as supportive and one which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance” (Likert, 1976, p. 103).

The principle underlying System 4 leadership styles stresses that an effective leader’s must be sensitive to values and expectations of others. Moreover, Likert believed that to create appropriate conditions for effective supervision, organizations must establish an atmosphere and circumstances which enable and even encourage every supervisor to deal with people he encounters in ways which fit their values and their expectations.

According to Likert (1976):

The research findings show, for example, that those supervisors and managers whose pattern of leadership yields consistently favorable attitudes more often think of employees as “human beings rather than just as persons to get the work done.” Consistently in study after study, the data show that treating people as “human beings” rather than as “cogs in a machine” is a variable highly related to the attitudes and motivation of the subordinate at every level in the organization (p. 101).

In 1961, Likert suggested that supervisors who have the most favorable and cooperative attitudes in their work group usually display the following characteristics:

- S/he is supportive, friendly, and helpful rather than hostile.
- S/he is kind but, firm, never threatening genuinely interested in the well-being of subordinates and endeavors to treat people in a sensitive, considerate way.
- S/he shows confidence in the integrity, ability, and motivations of subordinates rather than suspicion and distrust.
- His/her confidence in subordinates leads him/her to have high

expectations as to their level of performance.

- S/he sees that each subordinate is well trained for his/her particular job.
- The leader develops his/her subordinates into a working team with high group loyalty by using participation (p. 101).

According to Likert (1967) the profile of organizational characteristics of different management systems are revealed in greater detail by the items in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Profile of Organizational Characteristics

Leadership Processes Used	System 1	System 2	System 3	System 4
Extent to which your supervisor has confidence and trust in <i>subordinates</i> .	Has very little confidence and trust in subordinates	Has some confidence and trust	Has quite a bit of confidence and trust.	Has a very great deal of confidence and trust.
Extent to which you, in turn have confidence and trust in your supervisor.	Have very little confidence and trust in my supervisor.	Have some confidence and trust.	Have quite a bit of confidence and trust.	Have a very great deal of confidence and trust.
Extent to which your supervisor displays supportive behavior toward others.	Displays virtually no supportive behavior.	Displays supportive behavior in a few situations.	Displays supportive behavior in a moderate number of situations.	Displays supportive behavior quite generally and consistently.
Extent to which your supervisor behaves so that subordinates feel free to discuss important things about their jobs with him or her.	Subordinates do not feel at all free to discuss things about the job with their supervisor.	Subordinates feel slightly free to discuss things about the job with their supervisor, but discuss things guardedly	Subordinates feel quite free to discuss things about the job with their supervisor, but with some caution.	Subordinates feel completely free to discuss things about the job with their supervisor and do so candidly.

Adapted by permission from *New patterns of management and The human organization* by Rensis Likert.

Likert's research in the area of motivational forces impacted the creation of the Four System of Management and provide for the development of the POC (Profile of Organizational Characteristics). Further development brought about the creation of a Profile of Leadership Behaviors and was the model for Likert's Model of Organizational

Effectiveness in the School. The last document was the precursor to the Profile of School Staff Questionnaire that has since been refined and made more conducive to application within the educational setting.

Research in Schools Supports the System 4 Leadership Model

Likert later began to explore the application of his System 4 leadership model in school settings. Likert (1976) stated:

Research data show that, on the average, schools are about System 2 ½ in their administration and closer to system 2 than to System 4 in their structure. A rapidly growing body of research findings, largely doctoral dissertations, shows that System 4 yields better results in schools than do System 1, 2, or 3 (p. 239).

Evidence had also become available that supported the importance of the face-to-face work group in schools, as elsewhere, as the key building block of organizations. For example, there is a marked relationship between the way teachers view the leadership behavior of their department heads and their perceptions of the leadership behavior of their principals. Teachers' views of their principals also influenced their reaction toward their schools and their own behavior.

Likert's (1976) research has shown that the more teachers perceive that their principal is using supportive, System 4 leadership and having high education performance goals. The leadership behavior of the principals were measured by asking teachers the extent to which they viewed their principal as:

- friendly and supportive
- displaying confidence and trust in teacher
- being easy to talk to about work-related matters
- seeking and using teachers ideas

- giving teachers useful information
- knowing the problems teachers face
- interested in teachers' success
- helping teachers with their problems (Likert, 1976, p. 240)

System 4 leadership style has demonstrated through research to be as effective in schools and school systems as it has been in business at achieving excellent performance, low costs, and the constructive resolution of conflict.

According to Likert (1976):

The leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interactions and all relationships with the organization each member will, in the light of his background, values, and expectations, view the experience as supportive and one which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance (p. 103).

The principal in a school building is the single individual with the greatest influence on the overall ambiance of the school setting and climate. Principals in the most effective schools create and maintain an environment that fosters the academic growth of the students and the professional development of the staff. Research has determined that it is the administrative style that has been shown to exert a significant factor in development of a specific school climate. In fact, research has shown that democratic leadership is more productive than its directive counterpart. Supervisors who replace traditional approaches with participatory ones find themselves working in better, more friendly climates (Rothstein, 1986).

Values, beliefs, and attitudes of principals are also influential in developing the vision and goals set for their schools. To understand and implement conflict resolution programs, leaders must know what is wrong and possess a vision for change. They need to develop a program to implement that vision. The review of leadership research showed

that:

1. Leadership is not domination or coercion of others, but the promotion of fellowship; and
2. Leadership promotes change but it also may resist change to maintain the social structures of the organization, in certain situation (Halpin & Andrew, 1966).

Successful leaders conceive of, and implement, programs based on a philosophy that advances individuals and groups toward desired goals. Leadership by example remains crucial to the process of implementing a successful conflict resolution program in an organization.

Summary

Research has shown that conflict resolution programs have provided young people and adults with better skills in communication, problem solving, critical thinking, de-escalated conflict situations, and achieved a more positive climate. These programs were the foundation for this study. The theoretical framework of human resource theorists on leadership style, established the research base from which assumptions were made. To date, Likert's System 4 management style approach to conflict management is effective in allowing all stakeholders in a school to have input and ownership of the program established to reduce conflict and promote collaboration and collegiality (Likert, 1967). Chapter III describes the methodology that was used to examine the leadership style of the elementary building principal and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program for the purposes of this study.

Chapter III

Methodology

In this section the methodology that was used to collect and analyze the data needed to address the research questions is presented. The overall goal of this proposed research was to analyze the leadership style of the elementary building principal and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program. The discussion includes: the research design, variables in the study, research hypotheses, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Each of the sections are presented separately.

Research Design

In this nonexperimental, descriptive study the researcher investigated the leadership styles of elementary school principals and the relationship between those leadership styles and their attitudes toward conflict resolution programs. The research also evaluated the teachers' perception of their principals' attitudes toward effectiveness of the conflict resolution programs in their school and determine if the teachers' perceived concept of the principals' attitudes is related to the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs.

Variables in the Study

The dependent variables in this study were: principals' and teachers' perceptions of leadership style, climate, intervening, end results as measured by the Profile of a School, and perception of effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the school.

The independent variables in this study were the type of respondents - principals

and instructional staff; and participation in continuing education programs regarding conflict resolution.

The data to identify these variables was obtained through the use of the Likert's Profile of a School, and the Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution Instrument. A short demographic survey was used to obtain information regarding professional characteristics of the participants.

Research Questions

To investigate the relationship between the variables of this proposed study the following research questions were developed:

1. Is there a relationship between principals' and teachers' perceptions of schools, based on Likert's Profile of a School and perceptions of the effectiveness of their school's conflict resolution program?
2. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the school?
3. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the school as determined by Likert's Profile of the Schools?
4. Is there a relationship between the perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the schools and the length of time the conflict resolution program has been used, grade levels of the students involved in the continuing education programs focusing on conflict resolution?

Population

Two populations, elementary teachers and principals in 16 elementary schools from 8 Oakland County school districts were used in this study. These elementary schools had implemented conflict resolution programs in their schools for at least one year.

The first population defined for this study consisted of full-time elementary teachers from elementary public schools in Oakland County located in the State of Michigan. The population included teachers in grades kindergarten through sixth in all curricula of the school.

The second population consisted of principals of 16 elementary schools from 8 public school districts located in Oakland County who had agreed to participate in the study. These principals were responsible for supporting conflict resolution programs in their schools.

Sample

Approximately 15 teachers from each of the included schools were asked to participate in this study. These teachers met the following criteria to be included in the study:

- Assigned full-time to a single school building
- Involved in conflict resolution programs in their school district for at least one year
- At least one year of experience in their school building.

The principals in each school were asked to randomly distribute the survey packets by placing them in the teachers' mailboxes to those who meet the criteria for inclusion in the study.

All building principals of schools that were included in the study were asked to participate in the study. These principals had been involved in conflict resolution programs in their schools and their school districts.

Setting

The setting for this study was 16 suburban public elementary schools (K-6) located in 8 Oakland county school districts. These districts had agreed to participate in

the study and were representative of other districts in the county.

The socioeconomic status of these school districts range from lower to upper class. The range of occupations of people residing in this county range from working class to corporate executives and professionals. The population was multicultural with many different ethnic and cultural groups represented. The citizens lived in areas that extends from rural to inner-city urban. Oakland County represents a microcosm of the State of Michigan, making it appropriate setting for a research study of this type.

Children from these schools were from multicultural, middle to upper-middle class neighborhoods in socio-economically diverse suburban school districts. The enrollment of each school ranges from a low of approximately 300 students to a high of 600 students. All schools used in the study had implemented a conflict resolution program for at least one or more years.

Public elementary schools from Oakland county were selected because many of these school districts are addressing conflict within the schools by implementing conflict resolution programs. While the type of program may vary from school to school, the goal of all of the programs was similar, to reduce conflict that can affect students' ability to learn.

Data Collection Instruments

Instrument 1: The Profile of a School (POS) Staff and Administrative Questionnaires (short form) published in 1972 were developed by Likert to be used, as a tool to describe principal performance, style and school climate. Likert's intent was to bring about organizational improvement by using the information gathered by these instruments.

Likert has been known for both his research and theories of organizational settings, and the leadership he gave in the evaluation which was conducted over a 30 year span by the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan. The POS was developed from the items and instruments used by Likert to measure the human organizations of industrial and business firms in the private sector. During the past quarter century these instruments have been used in over 250 studies involving over 250 managers and 20,000 employees. The instruments have been shown to have a reliability in the .70 to .90 range, with their split half reliability in the .95 range. The Profile of a School Staff and Administrative Questionnaires (1972 edition) split half reliability were found to be consistently .95 or higher. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained to determine the internal consistency of the responses for the present study. The results of this analysis produced an alpha coefficient of .97, which was consistent with earlier findings. In 1986, the POS questionnaire was revised to more fully accommodate an educational setting. The correlation between similar items in the 1972 and the 1986 editions was found to range from a low of .71 to a high of .95. The POS has been used in more than 700 schools in 22 states, with over 45,000 respondents.

The POS was based on an assumption that a promising approach to improving schools was to help principals learn and use a more effective system of management. The POS utilizes Likert's Four Systems of Management ranging from the most effective - participative, to the least effective - exploitive authoritarian. Various versions of the questionnaire were developed by Likert to be used to measure the different components that comprise a school system, such as, superintendents, school boards, students, and parents. For the purpose of this study, the staff and administrative questionnaires were utilized. The staff and administrative version of the POS are best suited for the focus of

this study.

The POS Staff and Administrative Questionnaire combines multiple purpose questions to form four basic categories or indexes. The first index provides a measure of the organizational climate, the second is a measure of leadership style, the third index provides a measure of intervening variables in the organization, and the fourth index provides a measure of end results. The items are phrased in such a manner that a low score (1) represents a System 1 style, and a high score (5) represents a System 4 style. All scoring of the POS instruments were done using the scoring method described by Rensis Likert Association. The POS's five-point scoring system also makes replication of the question format simple, so that the researcher may easily facilitate the addition of needed survey items so that other variables may be analyzed.

The POS was designed to be completed within 30 to 45 minutes by the respondents. It is clear, concise, and easy to understand which made it suitable for self-administration, a necessary component for this proposed study. Therefore, Likert's Profile of a School Staff and Administrative Questionnaires, possessing all of the previously mentioned qualities, were chosen as the instruments to gather information regarding administrative style needed for this study.

Figure 2 provides a summary of the four indexes and their corresponding question number. Each classification runs sequentially and is charted for easy reading and interpretation.

Figure 2

Profile of a School - Staff & Administrative Questionnaires
Index of Components and Corresponding Item Numbers

Scales	Item Number
Climate	
Decision-making	1, 2, 3
Communication	4, 5
Goal Commitment	6, 7
Coordination	8, 9, 10
Influence	11, 12, 13, 14
Leadership	
Support	15, 16, 17
Team Building	18, 19
Work Facilitation	20, 21, 22
Goal Emphasis	23, 24, 25
Encouragement of Participation	26, 27, 28
Job Performance	29, 30
Intervening	
Trust in Principal	31, 32, 33
Openness with Principal	34, 35, 36, 37
Peer Relationship	38, 39, 40
Conflict Resolution	41, 42
End Results	
Educational Excellence	43, 44
Job Satisfaction	45, 46, 47

Instrument 2: The Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution instrument was developed by the researcher and reviewed by Rensis Likert Associates for compatibility. This instrument was developed after comparisons and analyses were made of various conflict resolution attitude instruments used by other researchers. These instruments were found unsuitable for the purpose of this study. The primary reason for this lack of suitability was the researchers' desire to have the format of the instrument to maintain compatibility with the Likert POS instrument. This similarity in format should establish a consistency in statement format and enhance the simplicity of understanding

for the respondents. This researcher also felt it necessary to have scoring consistency with the POS questions to reduce margin of error in responses.

The Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution instrument was scored by summing the responses to the items that have been rated using the Likert type five point scale, with a low score (1) representing; to a very little extent and a high score (5) representing; to a very great extent. Higher scores were indicative of more positive attitudes toward conflict resolution and its impact on school climate, with low scores indicating a more negative attitude toward conflict resolution and its impact on school climate. This scoring format follows the same as within the Likert POS instrument.

Factor Analysis. A principal components factor analysis using a varimax rotation was used to determine the construct validity of the instrument. This type of factor analysis is appropriate the goal is to develop independent factors that maximize the amount of explained variance among the items on the instrument Three factors emerged from this analysis, explaining 68.05% of the variance in perceptions of conflict resolution. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Factor Analysis
Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution

Scale	Item Number	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalues	Percent of Explained Variance
Positive Implications of Conflict Resolution				
Positive Climate	5	.827	3.90	26.01
Positive Impact on Student/Teacher Relationship	6	.755		
Positive Impact on Student/Student Relationship	7	.741		
Problem Solving by Staff	8	.704		
Problem Solving by Students	9	.629		
Cooperation Arising from Conflict Resolution Programs				
Student Cooperation	10	.796	3.24	21.63
Staff Cooperation	11	.791		
Nonviolent Problem Solving	12	.674		
Open, Candid & Unguarded Communication	13	.575		
Parties State Common Goals and Interests	14	.573		
Seek Satisfactory Solutions	15	.556		
Support for Conflict Resolution				
Principal	1	.807	3.06	20.42
Staff	2	.762		
Student Usage	3	.706		
Staff Usage	4	.613		

The three factors; positive implication of conflict resolution, cooperation arising from conflict resolution programs, and support for conflict resolution; that emerged from the factor analysis explained a total of 68.05% of the variance in perceptions of conflict resolution. The associated eigenvalues were each greater than 1.00 indicating the three factors that emerged from the factor analysis were explaining a statistically significant amount of variance in this construct. The factor loadings were in excess of .500 showing a strong relationship between all of the items on each factor.

Content Validity. Rensis Likert Associates, a research company with a long

history of expertise and experience in survey and data collection, was asked to review the content and construction of the instrument for content validity. Their response indicated the instrument was appropriate for use in this study..

Reliability. The reliability of Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution was determined by obtaining the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire scale. The resultant alpha coefficient of .93 was considered to provide evidence that the instrument had good internal consistency and was appropriate for use in this study.

Data Gathering Methods

To conduct this research, preliminary steps had to be taken to obtain copyright permission from the Rensis Likert Associates (RLA) to use the copyrighted Profile of a School Staff Questionnaire. An introductory letter was sent to the RLA office in Ann Arbor, Michigan on January 21, 1997. Notification via a telephone interview from Mr. Raymond Seghers, Senior Associate at RLA was received on January 23, 1997, granting initial approval to use the POS and make adjustments. An official letter of confirmation and approval was forwarded on January 24, 1997 granting copyright permission .

To facilitate this research in selected public elementary schools located in Oakland County, several procedural policies had to be followed in the request to conduct research within these public school districts. The following list of steps are presented in chronological order, with each step contingent on the approval of the preceding step to continue the research further.

1. A letter was sent to superintendents in the selected school districts to request permission to conduct my research. A formal letter of approval was received from each district superintendent on their school letterhead.
2. A letter was sent to all building principals requesting permission to conduct research within their building, detailing the importance and purpose of the

study, data collection procedures that were to be used in their buildings, and time line required by researcher to distribute and collect the data collection instruments.

3. Survey packets were made that include the following items: Administrative Packet: Cover letter, Profile Of A School Administrative questionnaire, Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution questionnaire, and a return envelope for confidential return of the completed surveys.
4. Staff Packet: Cover letter, Profile Of A School Staff questionnaire, Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution questionnaire, and a return envelope for confidential return of the completed surveys.

A cover letter was developed in accordance with guidelines from the Behavioral Investigation Committee. It briefly introduced the researcher and provide the purpose and importance of the study. Assurances of confidentiality was provided in the cover letter, along with a statement indicating the data were presented in aggregate with no individual identifiable from the presentation of the results. The cover letter also indicate the time line and instructions for confidential return of the completed instruments. The participants were provided an opportunity to request a copy of the results of the findings, if they were interested.

The researcher developed a log book to maintain control of the outstanding survey instruments. The log book included the name of the school districts, schools, date the survey packet was distributed, and a space for return date of the completed surveys. The researcher developed a code for the survey packets and recorded these code numbers in the log book. To maintain the confidentiality of participants, the researcher destroyed the log book immediately following completion of the data collection process.

The due date of the responses was no more than 10 days following distribution of the material. At day seven, a bright colored reminder letter was sent to the school's principal to remind the respondents to complete and return their survey instruments. Two weeks following initial distribution of the survey packets, non-respondents were sent a

final reminder letter asking for a final response to complete the survey instrument. Participants who had lost or misplaced their survey instruments were provided with another copy of the survey packet. Four weeks following initial distribution of the instruments, the collected data was entered into a computer file for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the surveys was entered into a computer file for analysis using SPSS, Windows, version 8.0. The analysis was divided into two sections. The first section used frequency distributions, crosstabulations, and measures of central tendency and dispersion to describe the sample and compare principals and staff members. The second section used inferential statistical analyses to test each research question established for this study. The analyses included Pearson product moment correlations, t-tests for two independent samples, and multiple linear regression analyses. All decisions on the significance of the findings were made using an alpha level of .05. Figure 3 presents the statistical analysis that was used to test each research question.

Figure 3

Statistical Analysis

Research Questions	Variables	Statistical Analysis
1. Is there a relationship between principals' and teachers' perceptions of schools, based on Likert's Profile of a School and perceptions of the effectiveness of their school's conflict resolution program?	<p>Perception of School Climate Leadership Intervening End Results</p> <p>Perceptions of Conflict Resolution Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Implications of Conflict Resolution • Cooperation Arising from Conflict Resolution Programs • Support for Conflict Resolution 	Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine the direction and strength of the relationships between the perception of the school and their perceptions of the conflict resolution program in their schools.
2. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the school?	<p><u>Dependent Variable</u> Perceptions of conflict resolution program in the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Implications of Conflict Resolution • Cooperation Arising from Conflict Resolution Programs • Support for Conflict Resolution <p><u>Independent Variable</u> Type of respondent Principal Instructional Staff</p>	t-Tests for two independent samples were used to compare the perceptions of the school's conflict resolution program relative to the type of respondent
3. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the school as determined by Likert's Profile of the Schools?	<p><u>Dependent Variable</u> Perceptions of School Climate Leadership Intervening End Results</p> <p><u>Independent Variable</u> Type of respondent Principal Instructional Staff</p>	t-Tests for two independent samples were used to compare the perceptions of the school relative to the type of respondent
4. Is there a relationship between the perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the schools and the length of time the conflict resolution program has been used, grade levels of the students involved in the continuing education programs focusing on conflict resolution?	<p><u>Dependent Variable</u> Perceptions of conflict resolution program in the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Implications of Conflict Resolution • Cooperation Arising from Conflict Resolution Programs • Support for Conflict Resolution <p><u>Independent Variable</u> Length of time conflict resolution has been used in the schools Grade levels of students involved in the program Participation in continuing education programs</p>	Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine if there is a relationship between perceptions of conflict resolution programs and variables associated with the conflict resolution program.

Limitations

The results of this study were limited to principals and staff members of public elementary schools in Oakland County. The results may not be generalizable to other levels of education, public elementary schools in urban or rural settings, or to private elementary schools. The results of this study may be of interest to principals and teachers in other school districts contemplating the role of conflict resolution programs as part of their school's curriculum.

Chapter IV

Results of Data Analysis

The results of the statistical analyses are presented in this chapter. The analyses are divided into two sections. The first section provides a description of the sample, with results of the inferential analysis used to answer the research questions included in the second section.

The purpose of this study was to determine if principals' leadership styles are related to the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program on the climate of the school. A total of 16 principals and 276 teachers were asked to participate in this study. Of this number, 16 principals and 168 teachers completed and returned their surveys for a response rate of 63.0%. Table 3 presents a breakdown of the surveys distributed and returned by respondent type.

Table 3
Response Rate by Type of Respondent

Type of Respondent	Distributed		Returned		Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Principals	16	5.5	16	8.7	100.0
Teachers	276	94.5	168	91.3	60.9
Total	292	100.0	184	100.0	63.0

The data analysis is divided into two sections. The first section provides a description of the two groups, teachers and principals. The second section answers each of the research questions posed for this study.

Description of the Participants

The participants were asked to provide their educational level on the survey. Their responses were crosstabulated with their position within the school districts. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Crosstabulations
Educational Level by Type of Respondent

Educational Level	Type of Respondent				Total	
	Teachers		Principals		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Bachelor's Degree	61	36.3	0	0.0	61	33.2
Master's Degree	99	58.9	9	56.3	108	58.7
Education Specialist	7	4.2	6	37.5	13	7.1
EdD/PhD	0	0.0	1	6.3	1	0.5
Other	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.5
Total	168	100.0	16	100.0	184	100.0

The majority of the respondents (n=108, 58.7%) indicated they had completed a master's degree, with 61 (33.2%) obtaining a bachelor's degree. Thirteen (7.1%) participants had completed an educational specialist degree, with 1 (0.5%) reporting they had a doctorate. Among the 16 principals in the study, 9 (56.3%) had completed master's degrees, 6 (37.5%) had received education specialist's degree, and 1 (6.3%) had a doctorate. The majority of the teachers (n=99, 58.9%) had master's degrees, with 61 (36.3%) reporting they had a bachelor's degrees. Seven (4.2%) teachers had education specialist degrees and 1 (0.6%) teacher indicated other as his/her degree. None of the teachers had completed a doctorate.

The teachers and principals were asked if they were currently enrolled in a degree program. Their responses were crosstabulated by type of respondent for presentation in Table 5.

Table 5
Crosstabulations
Currently Enrolled in a Degree Program by Type of Respondent

Currently Enrolled in a Degree Program	Type of Respondent				Total	
	Teachers		Principals		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Yes	31	18.5	3	18.8	34	18.5
No	137	81.5	13	81.2	150	81.5
Total	168	100.0	16	100.0	184	100.0

Of the 184 participants in the study, 34 (18.5%) reported they were currently enrolled in a degree program. Three (18.8%) of the principals and 31 (18.5%) of the teachers were currently enrolled in a degree program. Thirteen (81.2%) principals and 137 (81.5%) teachers were not enrolled in this type of program.

Those teachers and principals who were enrolled in degree programs were asked to indicate the degree level they were seeking. Their responses were crosstabulated by type of principal. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Crosstabulation
Type of Degree by Type of Respondent

Degree Level Being Sought	Type of Respondent				Total	
	Teachers		Principals		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Master's Degree	25	80.6	0	0.0	25	73.5
Education Specialist	5	16.1	0	0.0	5	14.7
EdD/PhD	1	3.2	3	100.0	4	11.8
Total	31	100.0	3	100.0	34	100.0

Twenty-five (73.5%) of the respondents were working on master's degrees, with 5 (14.7%) indicating they were obtaining education specialist degrees and 4 (11.8%) working toward a doctorate. The majority of the teachers (n=25, 80.6%) reported they were working on master's degrees, with 5 (16.1%) indicating they were going to obtain an education specialist degree. One (3.2%) teacher and 3 (100.0%) principals were working toward a doctorate degree.

The teachers and principals were asked to report their professional experiences in education, including the length of time they had worked in the school district and length of time in their present positions. Their responses were summarized using descriptive statistics. Table 7 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics
Professional Experiences by Type of Respondent

Type of Professional Experience	Number	Mean	SD	Median	Range	
					Minimum	Maximum
Time in School District						
Teacher	168	12.68	9.04	10	1	38
Principal	16	16.31	9.19	17	3	30
Time in Present Position						
Teacher	168	7.68	6.23	6	1	27
Principal	16	8.00	5.16	7.50	1	22

The mean time teachers had been in their school districts was 12.68 (sd=9.04), with a median of 10 years. The range of years teachers had been in their school districts ranged from 1 to 38 years. Principals had been in their school districts for a mean of 16.31 (sd=9.19) years. The length of time in their school districts ranged from 3 to 30 years with a median of 17 years.

When asked to report the length of time they had been in their current positions, the mean for teachers was 7.68 (sd=6.23) years, with a median of 6 years. The range of time in their current positions ranged from 1 to 27 years. Principals had been in their current positions for an average of 8.00 (sd=5.16) years, with a median of 7.50 years. The principals had been in their current positions for 1 to 27 years.

The participants were asked if they had attended a conflict resolution inservice at their schools. Their responses were crosstabulated by type of respondent. Table 8 provides the results of this analysis.

Table 8
Crosstabulation
Type of Degree by Type of Respondent

Attended a Conflict Resolution Inservice at School	Type of Respondent				Total	
	Teachers		Principals			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	113	67.3	16	100.0	129	70.1
No	55	32.7	0	0.0	55	29.9
Total	168	100.0	16	100.0	184	100.0

The majority of the participants (n=129, 70.1%) reported they had attended a conflict resolution inservice at their schools. Of this number 113 (67.3%) were teachers and 16 (100.0%) were principals. Fifty-five (32.7%) teachers had not attended this type of inservice.

The teachers were asked if the conflict resolution program at their school was student-led (peer mediation). Their responses were crosstabulated by type of respondent. Table 9 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 9
Conflict Resolution Program is Student Led by Type of Respondent

Conflict Resolution Program is Student Led	Type of Respondent				Total	
	Teachers		Principals			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	125	74.4	12	75.0	137	74.5
No	43	25.6	4	25.0	47	25.5
Total	168	100.0	16	100.0	184	100.0

The majority of the respondents (n=137, 74.5%) reported the conflict resolution

programs in their schools were student-led, with 47 (25.5%) providing a negative response to this question. Among the teachers, 125 (74.4%) reported the conflict resolution programs in their school districts were student-led, with 12 (75.0%) of the principals providing the same answer. Forty-three (25.6%) teachers and 4 (25.0%) principals provided a no response to this question. A negative response could mean that either their schools' conflict resolution program was not student-led or they were unaware of that their school had a conflict resolution program.

Description of the Continuous Variables

Two instruments were used in this study. The first instrument, Profile of a School (POS) (Likert, 1972) measured principal performance, style, and school climate. The second instrument, Profiles of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution was developed by the researcher and reviewed by Rensis Likert Associates for compatibility with the POS. Mean scores were obtained for each of the continuous variables by summing the numeric values of the responses for each item and dividing by the number of items on the subscales. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the mean scores were obtained for each of the subscales on these instruments. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 10.

Table 10
Descriptive Statistics
Description of Continuous Variables

Continuous Variable	Mean	SD	Median	Range	
				Minimum	Maximum
Profile of a School					
Climate	3.59	.58	3.64	1.57	4.86
Leadership	3.87	.81	4.00	1.44	5.00
Intervening	3.82	.63	3.91	2.27	5.00
End Results	4.13	.51	4.20	2.40	5.00
Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution					
Support for Conflict Resolution	3.82	.80	4.00	1.50	5.00
Positive Implications for Conflict Resolution	3.52	.77	3.60	1.40	5.00
Cooperation Resulting from Conflict Resolution Programs	3.52	.58	3.50	2.17	5.00

Profiles of a School.

Climate. The mean score for climate was 3.59 (sd=.58) with a median score of 3.64. Actual mean scores for this subscale ranged from 1.57 to 4.86. Possible scores could range from 1.00 to 5.00 with a neutral point of 3.00. Scores greater than 3.00 reflected positive perceptions toward school climate, with scores less than 3.00 indicated negative perceptions toward school climate.

Leadership. The median score on the subscale measuring leadership was 4.00, with a mean score of 3.87 (sd=.81). Actual scores on this subscale ranged from 1.44 to 5.00. Possible scores could range from 1.00 to 5.00, with a neutral point of 3.00. Scores greater than 3.00 were indicative of positive perceptions of leadership, while scores less than 3.00 provided evidence of negative perceptions of leadership. According to the scoring provided by the Rensis Likert Associates, Inc., mean scores that approached 5 were reflective of a System 4 leadership style.

Intervening. Actual scores on this subscale ranged from 2.27 to 5.00, with a median of 3.91. The average mean score on this subscale was 3.82 (sd=.63). Possible scores on intervening could range from 1.00 to 5.00, with scores greater than 3 indicating the respondent was positive about this subscale, and scores less than 3 reflected negative perceptions on this subscale.

End Results. The mean score for the subscale, end results, was 4.13 (sd=.51), with a median of 4.20. The range of actual scores was from 2.40 to 5.00. Possible scores on this subscale could range from 1 to 5, with a neutral point of 3. Scores less than 3 indicates a negative attitude toward this subscale, and scores greater than 3 are reflective of positive perceptions regarding end results.

Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution

Support for Conflict Resolution. The mean score for this subscale was 3.82 (sd=.80), with a median of 4.00. Actual scores on this scale ranged from 1.50 to 5.00. The neutral point on this scale was 3.00, with possible scores ranging from 1.00 to 5.00. Scores greater than 3.00 were reflective of positive perceptions regarding support for conflict resolution and scores less than 3.00 indicating negative perceptions on this subscale.

Positive Implications for Conflict Resolution. The median score for this subscale was 3.60, with a mean score of 3.52 (sd=.77). The range of actual scores on this subscale were from 1.40 to 5.00. Possible scores on this subscale could range from 1.40 to 5.00, with a neutral point of 3.00. Scores greater than 3.00 were indicative of positive perceptions toward this subscale, with scores less than 3.00 showing the respondents had negative perceptions on this subscale.

Cooperation Resulting From Conflict Resolution Programs. The mean score on

this subscale was 3.52 (sd=.58), with a median score of 3.50. The range of actual scores was from 2.17 to 5.00. Possible scores on this subscale could range from 1.00 to 5.00, with a neutral point of 3.00. Scores greater than 3.00 were reflective of positive perceptions toward cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs, while scores less than 3 indicated the participants had negative perceptions on this subscale.

Research Questions

Four research questions were developed for this study. Each of these questions were answered using inferential statistical analyses, with decisions on the significance of the findings made using an alpha level of .05. The findings on each research question are presented separately.

Research question 1. Is there a relationship between principals' and teachers' perceptions of schools, based on Likert's Profile of a School and perceptions of the effectiveness of their school's conflict resolution program?

The mean scores for each respondent on the four subscales measuring Likert's Profile of a School and Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution were correlated to determine the direction and strength of the relationships using Pearson product moment correlations. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 11.

Table 11
 Pearson Product Moment Correlation
 Profile of a School and Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution

Profile of a School	Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution								
	Support for Conflict Resolution			Positive Implications of Conflict Resolution Programs			Cooperation Resulting From Conflict Resolution Programs		
	N	r	Sig	N	r	Sig	N	r	Sig
Climate	184	.50	<.001	184	.51	<.001	184	.59	<.001
Leadership	184	.58	<.001	184	.43	<.001	184	.53	<.001
Intervening	184	.55	<.001	184	.43	<.001	184	.65	<.001
End Results	184	.34	<.001	184	.32	<.001	184	.43	<.001

Statistically significant correlations were obtained for all subscales measuring Profile of a School and Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution. These correlations ranged from .65 for the subscale measuring intervening and cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs to .32 for the relationship between end results and positive implications of conflict resolution programs. Based on these findings building principals and teachers who have positive perceptions on the school environment had positive perceptions regarding the outcomes of conflict resolution programs.

Research question 2. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the school?

The principals' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the school were compare using t-tests for two independent samples. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 12.

Table 12
t-Tests for Two Independent Samples
Profiles of Attitudes toward Conflict Resolution by Type of Respondent

Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution	Number	Mean	SD	t-Value	Sig of t
Support for Conflict Resolution					
Building Principals	168	4.23	.53		
Teachers	16	3.78	.81	-2.19	.030
Positive Implications of Conflict Resolution Programs					
Building Principals	168	3.80	.39		
Teachers	16	3.49	.79	-1.53	.127
Cooperation Resulting from Conflict Resolution Programs					
Building Principals	168	3.85	.29		
Teachers	16	3.49	.59	-2.46	.015

Two of the three subscales, support for conflict resolution and cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs, measuring attitudes toward conflict resolution differed significantly between building principals and teachers. Building principals ($m=3.80$, $sd=.39$) and teachers ($m=3.49$, $sd=.79$) did not differ significantly on positive implications of conflict resolution programs.

The t-value of -2.19 for support for conflict resolution was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 182 degrees of freedom. The mean score of 4.23 ($sd=.53$) for building principals was significantly higher than the mean score for teachers ($m=3.78$, $sd=.81$). This finding provided evidence that building principals were more positive regarding support for conflict resolution programs than teachers.

The difference between building principals' ($m=3.85$, $sd=.29$) and teachers' ($m=3.49$, $sd=.59$) perceptions of cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs resulted in a t-value of -2.46 which was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 182 degrees of freedom. This finding showed that building principals were more positive about cooperation that had resulted from conflict resolution programs than

teachers.

Research question 3. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the school as determined by Likert's Profile of the Schools?

The four subscales; climate, leadership, intervening, and end results; measuring perceptions of the school were used as the dependent variables in t-tests for two independent samples. The type of respondent, building principal or teacher, was used as the independent variable in this analysis. Table 13 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 13

t-Tests for Two Independent Samples
Attitudes toward School by Type of Respondent

Attitudes toward School	Number	Mean	SD	t-Value	Sig of t
Climate					
Building Principals	16	3.96	.32	-2.68	.008
Teachers	168	3.55	.59		
Leadership					
Building Principals	168	4.32	.28	-2.35	.020
Teachers	16	3.83	.83		
Intervening					
Building Principals	168	4.09	.25	-1.76	.080
Teachers	16	3.80	.65		
End Results					
Building Principals	168	4.28	.42	-1.21	.226
Teachers	16	4.11	.51		

Two subscales; climate and leadership; differed significantly between building principals and teachers. Mean scores on intervening; a subscale measuring trust in principal, openness with principal, peer relationships, and conflict resolution; did not differ between building principals ($m=4.09$, $sd=.25$) and teachers ($m=3.80$, $sd=.65$). The subscale, end results, did not differ between building principals ($m=4.28$, $sd=.42$) and teachers ($m=4.11$, $sd=.51$) indicating they perceived the end results of the school

similarly.

The t-value of -2.68 obtained between on the comparison of climate between building principals and teachers was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, with 182 degrees of freedom. The building principals ($m=3.96$, $sd=.32$) had more positive perceptions of climate than teachers ($m=3.55$, $sd=.59$). This finding showed that building principals perceived the climate in their buildings as more positive than teachers.

The comparison of the mean scores for leadership between building principals ($m=4.32$, $sd=.28$) and teachers ($m=3.83$, $sd=.83$) produced a t-value of -2.35, which was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 182 degrees of freedom. This finding showed that building principals were more positive in regards to leadership than teachers.

Based on these findings, it appears that building principals were more positive about the profile of their schools than teachers. Intervening and end results, which include school outcomes, did not produce significant differences between the two groups.

Research question 4. Is there a relationship between the perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the schools and the length of time the conflict resolution program has been used, grade levels of the students involved in the program, and participation in continuing education programs focusing on conflict resolution?

The three subscales; support for conflict resolution, positive implications for conflict resolution, and cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs; measuring perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the schools were used as the dependent variables in three stepwise multiple linear regression analyses. The independent variables in these analyses included: perceptions of school climate, leadership, intervening, end results, educational level of the principal, years employed in school district, years in present position, attendance at a conflict resolution

program inservice, and type of conflict resolution program used in the school. The results of the stepwise multiple linear regression analysis for the dependent variable, support for conflict resolution, is presented in Table 14.

Table 14
Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis
Support for Conflict Resolution

Independent Variable	Constant	b Weight	Beta Weight	r ²	t-Value	Sig of t
Leadership	1.41	.38	.39	.33	4.06	<.001
Intervening		.33	.26	.03	2.71	<.001
Attended a conflict resolution inservice at school		-.23	-.13	.02	-2.25	.007
Multiple R						.61
R ²						.38
F Ratio						36.27
Degrees of Freedom						3/180
Sig of F						<.001

Three independent variables; leadership, intervening, and attended a conflict resolution inservice at school; entered the stepwise multiple linear regression equation, explaining 38% of the variance in support for conflict resolution. The associated F ratio of 36.37 obtained on this analysis was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 3 and 180 degrees of freedom..

The first independent variable that entered the regression analysis was leadership. This variable explained 33% of the variation in support for conflict resolution programs. The t-value of 4.06 obtained for this analysis was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05. The positive value of this relationship showed that participants who had higher scores on leadership were more likely to have higher scores on support for conflict resolution.

Intervening entered the regression equation, explaining an additional 3% of the variation in support for conflict resolution. The associated t-value of 2.71 obtained for this independent variable was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05. The relationship between support for conflict resolution and intervening was positive indicating that more positive perceptions on intervening were associated with more positive perceptions of support for conflict resolution.

Attendance at a conflict resolution inservice in the participant's school entered the regression analysis explaining 2% of the variance in support for conflict resolution. The t-value of -2.25 produced for this independent variable was statistically significant indicating the amount of variance in support for conflict resolution that was explained by attendance at a conflict resolution inservice was significant. As attendance at conflict resolution inservices was coded as a 1 for yes and 2 for no, the negative value of the relationship indicated that teachers and principals who had attended inservices on conflict resolution at their schools were more likely to have higher scores on support for conflict resolution.

A comparison of the Beta weights showed that leadership was the strongest predictor of support for conflict resolution, with attendance at an inservice program on conflict resolution was the weakest predictor. The remaining independent variables did not enter the stepwise multiple linear regression indicating they were not significant predictors of support for conflict resolution.

Positive implications of conflict resolution programs was the dependent variable in the second stepwise multiple linear regression analysis. The same independent variables that were used in the previous analysis. Table 15 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 15
Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis
Positive Implications of Conflict Resolution Programs

Independent Variable	Constant	b Weight	Beta Weight	r ²	t-Value	Sig of t
Climate	1.11	.67	.51	.26	8.06	<.001
Multiple R						.51
R ²						.26
F Ratio						65.03
Degrees of Freedom						1/182
Sig of F						<.001

One independent variable, climate, entered the regression equation, explaining 26% of the variance in positive implications of conflict resolution programs. The associated F ratio of 65.03 was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 1 and 182 degrees of freedom. The relationship between climate and positive implications of conflict resolution programs was positive indicating that respondents who had higher scores on climate were more likely to have higher scores on positive implications of conflict resolution programs. The remainder of the independent variables did not enter the regression equation indicating they were not significant predictors of positive implications of conflict resolution programs.

Cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs was used as the dependent variable in a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis. The independent variables were the same as used in the two previous analyses. Table 16 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 16
Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis
Cooperation Resulting From Conflict Resolution Programs

Independent Variable	Constant	b Weight	Beta Weight	r ²	t-Value	Sig of t
Intervening	1.11	.44	.47	.42	6.56	<.001
Climate		.27	.27	.04	3.72	<.001
Attended a conflict resolution inservice at school		-.17	-.13	.02	-2.44	.016
Multiple R						.69
R ²						.48
F Ratio						55.23
Degrees of Freedom						3/180
Sig of F						<.001

Three independent variables; intervening, climate, attendance at a conflict resolution inservice at school; entered the stepwise multiple linear regression analysis explaining 48% of the variance in cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs. The associated F ratio of 55.23 obtained on this analysis was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 with 3 and 180 degrees of freedom. This result indicated that the amount of variance in cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs was statistically significant.

The independent variable, intervening, entered the regression equation explaining 42% of the variance in cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs. The t-value of 6.56 obtained for this analysis was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, indicating that intervening was accounting for a significant amount of variation in the dependent variable. The positive relationship between intervening and cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs indicated that higher scores on intervening were associated with more positive perceptions of cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs.

Perceptions of climate entered the regression analysis, explaining an additional 4% of the variance in cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs. The *t*-value of 3.72 yielded on this analysis was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05. The positive value of the relationship provided evidence that higher scores on climate were generally associated with more positive perceptions of cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs.

The independent variable, attendance at conflict resolution program at school, entered the stepwise multiple linear regression analysis, accounting for 2% of the variance in cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs. The associated *t*-value of -2.44 obtained on this analysis was statistically significant at an alpha level of .05. Based on the negative relationship between the two variables, it appeared that teachers and principals who attended inservice programs on conflict resolution programs were more likely to have scores on cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs.

A comparison of the Beta weights show that intervening is the strongest predictor of cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs, with attendance at a conflict resolution inservice at school the weakest predictor. The remaining independent variables did not enter the regression equation indicating they were not significant predictors of cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs.

The results of the stepwise multiple linear regression analyses provided evidence that attitudes toward the school and attendance at inservice programs on conflict resolution were significantly related to perceptions of effectiveness of conflict resolution programs. Variables related to principals' professional characteristics and characteristics of the school did not appear to be related to perceptions of effectiveness of conflict

resolution.

Summary

The outcomes of the data analysis, including description of the sample and inferential testing to answer the research questions posed for this study, have been presented in this chapter. The conclusions, implications, and recommendations that can be determined from these findings are provided in Chapter V.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Research studies have validated the existence of various styles of management, although research has not related the principal's leadership styles to attitudes toward conflict resolution programs. A number of studies have reported that students feel better about themselves and safer at school where conflict resolution programs have been implemented (Lam, 1988). The purpose of this study was to examine the role of leadership style of the elementary building principal and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program.

Summary

Conflicts occur all the time. They are a normal and inevitable part of life, and occur in all settings, including schools. Until recently, teaching students procedures and skills needed to resolve conflicts constructively has been relatively ignored.

Changes in family, neighborhood, and societal life have resulted in youth who are not socialized into constructive patterns of conflict management or taught to manage conflicts without using violence and aggression. Given this breakdown in society and along with associated increases in youth violence, educators must be concerned with determining the role of the school in teaching students how to be productive and contributing members of our society. Principals and teachers must develop strategies that deal effectively with violent and disruptive students.

Implementing conflict resolution programs and training students and staff in conflict resolution skills can help schools develop safe and orderly environments that

provide students with a haven in which high-quality teaching and learning can take place.

The benefits of such training extend beyond schools. Students are prepared to manage future conflicts constructively in career, family, community, national, and international settings.

Developing and implementing effective conflict resolution programs in schools does not happen by chance. The success of most programs focused on reducing conflict within an organization depends upon the noncoercive leadership style of an administrator. Research has suggested that leadership style has a direct impact at the top and upper levels of an organization. According to Likert (1967), "Those leaders who believe in participative, collaborative climates should also be supportive of educational programs that provide students and staff with the widest possible means for educational excellence" (p. 205). The principal's leadership style can have a great impact in defining and maintaining the organizational climate of a school and the success of a program. The more a principal is respected and highly regarded by staff, students, parents, and community members, the more legitimate power he may have with others.

Research suggested a strong link between leader behavior and organizational climate. Substantial evidence in the literature shows that peer leadership and cooperation is an important phenomenon in an organization.

Research has also suggested that leaders should be visionaries and work to shape their organization in accordance with their visions. Management expert, Burt Nanus, (1992) stated the case this way:

There is no mystery about this. Effective leaders have agendas; they are totally results oriented. They adopt challenging new visions of what is both possible and desirable, communicate their visions, and persuade others to become so committed to these new directions that they are eager to lend their resources and energies to make them happen. (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 82)

Today's school principals must be focused on developing moral connections among parents, teachers, and students, and defining their responsibilities through a shared purpose. Sergiovanni (1996) supported this premise in the following statement, "In schools, moral connections cannot be commanded by hierarchy or sold by personalities, but must be compelled by helping people to accept their responsibilities" (p. 83).

Methods

A nonexperimental, descriptive research design was used in this study to determine if there was a relationship among leadership styles, attitudes toward the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs, and professional characteristics of the principals and teachers. The study examined the role of leadership styles of elementary principals in K - 6 public schools in Oakland County, Michigan and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program. A total of 16 principals and 276 teachers were asked to participate in the study. Of this number, 16 principals returned their completed surveys for a response rate of 100%. In addition, 168 teachers returned their completed surveys for a response rate of 63.0%. The instruments completed by the principals and teachers included the Profile of a School (POS), Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution (PPTCR), and a short demographic survey. SPSS - Windows, version 8.0 was used to analyze the data collected from the surveys to describe the sample and answer the research questions.

Findings

Description of the Principals. The majority of the elementary principals had obtained a master's degree and had been in administrative positions for more than 16 years. The length of time in their school districts ranged from 3 - 30 years. When asked to report the length of time they had been employed in their current position, the principals

who responded ranged from 1 - 27 years. Of the 16 principals surveyed, the average years in their present position were 8 years ($sd=5.16$).

All of the principals who responded confirmed that they had attended a conflict resolution inservice session at their school. The majority of the principals described their school's conflict resolution program as student-led (peer mediation).

Description of the Teachers. The majority of the teachers had master's degrees. The average number of years employed in their present district was 12.68 years ($sd=9.04$), with a range from 1 to 38 years. They had been in their current position for an average of 7.68 ($sd=6.23$) years.

The majority of teachers described their school's conflict resolution program as student-led (peer mediation). A negative response could have meant that the school's conflict resolution program was not student-led or they were unaware that their school had a conflict resolution program.

Research questions.

Four research questions were posed for this study. Each question was answered using inferential statistical analyses, with all decisions on the significance of the findings made using an alpha level of .05.

Research question 1. Is there a relationship between principals' and teachers' perceptions of schools, based on Likert's Profile of a School and perceptions of the effectiveness of their school's conflict resolution program?

Findings. Pearson product moment correlations were used to correlate the principals' and teachers' mean scores for each respondent on the four subscales measuring Likert's Profile of a School; Climate, Leadership, Intervention, and End Results; and Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution. Statistically significant correlations were obtained between the four subscales of Likert's Profile of a School and

the three subscales, Support for Conflict Resolution, Positive Implication of Conflict Resolution Programs, and Cooperation Resulting From Conflict Resolution, that were measured on Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution,. These correlations ranged from .65 for the subscale measuring intervening and cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs to .32 for the relationship between end results and positive implications of conflict resolution programs.

Conclusions. Conflict resolution programs move some of the responsibility for discipline and control from teachers and principals to students. For this type of change to occur in a positive manner, teachers and principals must perceive that the school has a positive climate and is ready to allow students to assume responsibility for their behavior. The teachers and principals appeared to support conflict resolution as a new strategy to provide a safe and orderly environment that could be conducive to learning and social growth.

Research question 2. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the school?

Findings. T-Tests for two independent samples were used to compare, principals' and teachers' perceptions of the school's conflict resolution program relative to the type of respondent. Two significant differences were found between principals' and teachers' perception when measuring support for conflict resolution and cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs. Principals had significantly higher scores on these two subscales than teachers. Building principals and teachers did not differ significantly on positive implications of conflict resolution programs.

Conclusions. Principals and teachers differed in two subscale areas in their perceptions of attitudes toward conflict resolution, Support for Conflict Resolution

Programs and Cooperation Resulting from Conflict Resolution Programs. The research results indicated that the majority of principals' tend to be more supportive of conflict resolution programs than teachers. This finding could be based on the assumption that principals' envision the immediate benefits of such a program. Conflict resolution programs may help reduce the number of student conflicts in a school. The reduction in the number of behavioral problems that the principals have to address could allow the principal to spend more time to address other school matters constructively.

Lack of a program facilitator could be another factor that may have contributed to the research results when comparing teachers' and principals' perceptions of their support for conflict resolution programs. Dr. Sandra Kaufman in The Ohio Commission On Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management study (1993) stated,

Administrative support is essential both implementing and integrating a new conflict management program. No coordinator believed a peer management program could be successful in its absence. From the leadership necessary to establish the program's legitimacy, to provision of essential resources, to active participation through referrals, administrative assistance can make or break the best-conceived conflict management program. (p. 14)

This lack of a strong facilitator (principal, counselor, or social worker) may have created an additional burden upon the classroom teacher, which in turn may have increased the teacher's stress level and decreased perceived support for the program. Teacher comments from the Profile of A School survey seemed to support this inference:

- You have to support those students to make the program more effective. Sometimes I feel that the students are not supported as much as they should be.
- The conflict resolution training was adequate but there was no follow through as a staff or principal. Therefore, using the process only seems to make a difference inside a classroom, it really hasn't affected the school culture.
- Different teachers are implementing conflict management systems. There is a

lack of consistency.

- The students accept the conflict resolution program at our school, but I am not sure it is taken seriously by the staff.

The principals' more positive perceptions of cooperation as the result of conflict resolution may be attributed to a distorted impression that students and staff are being more cooperative. This perception could have been based on the decreased number of reported disciplinary referrals in a school setting.

Research question 3. Is there a difference between principals' and teachers' perceptions of the school as determined by Likert's Profile of the Schools?

Four subscales; climate, leadership, intervening, and end results; measuring perceptions of the school were used as the dependent variables in t-tests for two independent samples. The type of respondent, building principal and teacher, were used as the independent variable in this analysis. Three of the four subscales; climate, leadership and intervening; differed significantly between principals and teachers. The findings indicated that building principals were more positive about the overall profile of their school than teachers. No difference was found between teachers and principals for the subscale, end results.

Conclusions. Principals were more positive about the overall profile of their school than teachers. Socrates once said, "The greatest way to live with honor in this world is to be what we pretend to be" (in Covey, 1992, p. 51).

Most principals possess a keen sense of purpose and direction for their school. Successful school leaders, according to Dwyer (1989), have an "overarching vision" of the kinds of schools they want to help create, and they formulate their routine daily activities and interaction with teachers, students, and communities with that vision in mind (p. 365).

Given this premise, many principals may have had an overrated impression of the profile of their school in relationship to their staff. Likert's Profile of A School instrument indicated that the most of the principals demonstrated a System 3 Leadership Style. The leadership style reflected by Systems 1 and 2 causes interactions, influence, motivation process, problem solving, and conflict resolution to take place more on a person-to-person basis. In comparison, System 3 leaders interact more on a person-to-person bases, although they may meet with subordinates to get their views, but not to make group decisions. The System 3 leader tended to make the decision after these discussions. Teachers who were lead by a System 3 leader may have provided a less positive perception of their school because they may perceive their principal as less supportive and not as collaborative in allowing participative decision-making.

Research question 4. Is there a relationship between the perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in the schools and the length of time the conflict resolution program has been used, grade levels, of the students involved in the program, and participation in continuing education programs focusing on conflict resolution?

Findings. The three subscales measuring perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in schools were used as the dependent variables in three stepwise multiple linear regression analyses. The independent variables in these analyses included: perceptions of school climate, leadership, intervening, end results, educational levels of the participants, years employed in district, years in present position, attendance at a conflict resolution inservice program, and the type of conflict resolution program.

Support for conflict resolution could be predicted by leadership, intervening, and attending a conflict resolution inservice at school. These variables explained a significant amount of variance in the dependent in support for conflict resolution.

One independent variable, climate, could be use to predict perceptions of positive

implications of conflict resolution programs. The other independent variables did not enter the stepwise multiple linear regression analysis.

Three independent variables, intervening, climate, and attended a conflict resolution inservice at school; entered the stepwise multiple linear regression equation, and could be used to predict cooperation resulting from conflict resolution programs. The other independent variables did not enter the regression equation indicating they were not significant predictors of this dependent variable.

Conclusions. The research suggested that positive support for conflict resolution could be predicted by the independent variables: leadership, intervening and attendance at a conflict resolution inservice program. The research also indicated that teachers and principals who attended a conflict resolution inservice program were more likely to perceive students and staff to be more cooperative in their school. However, the research results indicated that perhaps the strongest predictors of a conflict resolution program's effectiveness were intervening and leadership variables. These results supported the premise that strong leadership and intervention variables, including support, trust and openness, goal emphasis, peer relationship and team building; have a direct impact on the success of a conflict resolution program in an elementary school building.

Discussion

The research suggested that building principals and teachers who held positive perceptions about the school environment had positive perceptions regarding the outcomes of conflict resolution programs. Building principals and teachers did not differ significantly on the positive implications of conflict resolution programs. The research also indicated that principals' and teachers' attitudes were supportive of conflict

resolutions programs in their school.

Results of these findings was supported by Likert's research related to the nature of highly effective work groups and effective leaders. Likert (1961) stated:

The leader feels primarily responsible for establishing and maintaining at all times a thoroughly supportive atmosphere in the group. He encourages other members to share this responsibility, but never loses sight of the fact that as the leader of a work group which is part of a larger organization his behavior is likely to set the tone. (p. 170).

Research further suggested that effective leadership styles must possess sensitivity and supportive relationship in a group.

The research showed that leadership style was the strongest predictor of support for conflict resolution. Principals whose leadership styles were perceived as more collaborative and supportive tended to be more effective in implementing successful conflict resolution programs in their buildings resulting in the creation of an overall climate that reflects positive collaboration and cooperation within their schools.

Some principals in the present study who were perceived to possess strong leadership skills did not necessarily have a positive or supportive perception of the conflict resolution program. However, the research outcomes suggested that participants who had received higher scores on their leadership style were more likely to have higher scores toward their support for conflict resolution programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this comparison study have shown the need for further research to be conducted in the area of leadership style of elementary school principals and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution program in a school setting. Suggestions for this type of research include:

- Examine the individual leadership styles of elementary school principals using Likert's Four System Leadership Style scale, 1 - 4, and determine if a System 4 Leadership Style has more of a significant impact on the implementation of a successful conflict resolution program than a System 2 or 3 Leadership Style.
- Conduct a longitudinal research study to determine the positive impact of conflict resolution programs on the school climate of suburban and urban elementary schools.
- Compare the leadership styles of elementary school principals to secondary school principals leadership styles using Likert's Four System Leadership Style scale, 1 - 4, and determine if there is a significant difference on the presence, support and implementation of conflict resolution programs.
- Study the leadership style of elementary school principals and secondary school principals (Likert's Four System Leadership Style scale, 1 - 4) as it relates to the successful implementation of a conflict resolution program and the positive impact it may have on the overall school climate.
- Develop a study to compare the leadership styles of public elementary school principals and private elementary school principals using Likert's Leadership Style scale, 1 - 4 to determine the impact it may have upon the successful implementation of a conflict resolution program in a school setting.

Appendix A
Correspondence

January 21, 1997

Rensis Likert Associates, Inc.
455 E. Eisenhower Parkway
Suite 15
Ann Arbor, Mi. 48108-3304

Dear Mr. Raymond Seghers,

I am a doctoral student at Wayne State University and I am requesting permission to duplicate and/or modify certain items of your Profile of a School Staff Questionnaire for research I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation. The modifications will address the rating of specific administrators rather than the administrative staff in general. "Modification and used with permission" will be included on each questionnaire along with other pertinent copyright information.

Enclosed you will find a sample copy of the formatted version of Likert's Profile of a School Staff Questionnaire that I intend to use in my research study. In addition, I have enclosed a copy of a questionnaire I created to profile attitudes towards conflict resolution in a school. I developed this instrument based on the Likert model (Profile of Conflict Characteristics) that you shared with me last March.

Thank you for your assistance in my doctoral dissertation study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Culbert". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

George Culbert

RLA Rensis Likert Associates, Inc.
Consultants in Organization Diagnosis and Human Resource Development

January 24, 1997

George Culbert
124 Lisa Circle
White Lake, MI 48386

Dear Mr. Culbert:

Rensis Likert Associates, Inc., is please to grant you permission to modify, duplicate, and use the *Profile of a School Staff Questionnaire* (POS) for your doctoral research. We also grant you the same permission for your Profile of Attitudes Toward Conflict Resolution Questionnaire which is based the *Profile of Conflict Characteristics* (POCC).

We understand that you will include the phrase "Modified and used with permission" on all copies of the questionnaires.

We will waive all royalties for this use of the questionnaires.

You may include copies of the questionnaires in your final bound and/or microfilmed report. We understand that copies of your report including the questionnaires may be distributed upon request.

Good luck on your research. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Raymond C. Seghers
Senior Associate

TO: George Culbert
FROM: Ray Seghers
RE: Questionnaires

In going over the questionnaires I noticed a few typos.

- On the POS cover – please use our current address
- In the definition of Department there are two typos invos (involves) and Custoidal (Custodial)
- On the Conflict Q, remove the as from questions 6 and 7
- On Q8 change seeks to seek.

By the way, are you going to want RLA to do any of the data entry or data analysis? If you are, please give me a call. We are no longer able to use MTS at U of M, so our statistical power has been greatly limited.

George Culbert
123 Lisa Circle
White Lake, MI. 48386

Dear Dr. Thorin,

I am a doctoral student at Wayne State University, completing my research on "The Impact of Administrative Leadership Style And Attitudes On Conflict Resolution Programs." As you are aware, much interest has evolved in recent years regarding the implementation of conflict resolution programs in our schools. The purpose of this study is to compare the leadership styles of elementary principals and their perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in their school in comparison to the perception of the teachers.

The enclosed survey includes two sections and should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The necessary directions to complete the survey are included for your information. If you have any additional comments you would like to make regarding conflict resolution, please include them with the completed survey.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Be advised that all responses will be confidential and that no individual will be identifiable from the analyses presented on the final report. The study will incorporate a nonexperimental, descriptive research design with no potential risks to the human subjects voluntarily participating in this research study. Data collected will be reported in an aggregate format to assure confidentiality of the respondents. Each survey is coded to provide a means of controlling surveys that have not been returned. The researcher will have the only copy of the log and this log will be destroyed at the completion of the data collection. Summarized results of the study will be available for your review on request. The contents and meaning of this study have been explained with the understanding that any questions or concerns have been answered prior to agreement of participation.

No risks or additional effects are likely to result from your participation in this study. In the unlikely event of an injury arising from participation in this study, no reimbursement, compensation, or free medical treatment is offered by Wayne State University.

Please complete the enclosed Administrative Questionnaire and have your teachers complete the Staff Questionnaire within five working days, place them in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope and return them to the researcher via the United States Postal Service. I appreciate your assistance with this project. Without colleagues like yourself, a research project of this type would not be possible.

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding this study, please feel free to contact the researcher at (810) 960-8440. If you would like information regarding your rights concerning participation in this study, please contact Dr. Peter Lichtenberg, Chairman of Wayne State University Behavioral Investigation Committee at (313) 577-5174.

Thank you in advance for supporting this research project. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Respectfully,

George Culbert

George Culbert
123 Lisa Circle
White Lake, MI. 48386

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral student at Wayne State University, completing my research on "The Impact of Administrative Leadership Style And Attitudes On Conflict Resolution Programs." As you are aware, much interest has evolved in recent years regarding the implementation of conflict resolution programs in our schools. The purpose of this study is to compare the leadership styles of elementary principals and their perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in their school in comparison to the perception of the teachers.

The Staff Questionnaire includes two sections and should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The necessary directions to complete the survey are included for your information. If you have any additional comments you would like to make regarding conflict resolution, please include them with the completed survey.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Be advised that all responses will be confidential and that no individual will be identifiable from the analyses presented on the final report. The study will incorporate a nonexperimental, descriptive research design with no potential risks to the human subjects voluntarily participating in this research study. Data collected will be reported in an aggregate format to assure confidentiality of the respondents. Each survey is coded to provide a means of controlling surveys that have not been returned. The researcher will have the only copy of the log and this log will be destroyed at the completion of the data collection. Summarized results of the study will be available for your review on request. The contents and meaning of this study have been explained with the understanding that any questions or concerns have been answered prior to agreement of participation.

No risks or additional effects are likely to result from your participation in this study. In the unlikely event of an injury arising from participation in this study, no reimbursement, compensation, or free medical treatment is offered by Wayne State University.

Please complete the enclosed Profile Of A School Staff Questionnaire within five working days, place it in the attached confidential envelope and return to your principal. I appreciate your assistance with this project. Without colleagues like yourself, a research project of this type would not be possible.

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding this study, please feel free to contact the researcher at (810) 960-8440. If you would like information regarding your rights concerning participation in this study, please contact Dr. Peter Lichtenberg, Chairman of Wayne State University Behavioral Investigation Committee at (313) 577-5174.

Thank you in advance for supporting this research project. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Respectfully,



George Culbert
Doctoral Candidate



Wayne State University
College of Education

Division of Administrative
and Organizational Studies
Higher Education
Detroit, Michigan 48202

March 17, 1997

Mr. Thomas J. Tattan, Superintendent of Schools
Clarenceville School District
20210 Middlebelt Road
Livonia, MI. 48152

Dear Mr. Tattan,

I am a doctoral student at Wayne State University, completing my research on the "Relationship of Administrative Leadership Style Toward Attitude and Implementation of Conflict Resolution Programs." As you are aware, much interest has evolved in recent years regarding the implementation of conflict resolution programs in our schools. The purpose of this study is to compare the leadership styles of elementary principals and their perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in their school in comparison to the perception of the teachers.

I am requesting permission to conduct my research in elementary schools located in your district that have implemented conflict resolution programs. Teachers and principals will be asked to complete a survey instrument that should take no more than 20 minutes. Participation in this study will follow the guidelines of the Wayne State University Behavior Investigation Committee. The information obtained on the questionnaire will be confidential and no individual school district or elementary school will be identifiable from the findings.

I am enclosing a copy of the survey packet for your information. I anticipate beginning my data collection in May of 1997. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further prior to giving permission to use your school district in this study, please feel free to contact me at (810) 698-2843. The Behavioral Investigation Committee at WSU requires letters of commitment written on district letterhead before approving the study. If you would agree to allow elementary schools in your district to participate in this study, please respond in writing on your district's letterhead. You may send your letter of approval directly to me at the following address: 123 Lisa Circle, White Lake Twp., MI. 48386.

Once the research has been completed, I will send a summary copy of the findings to all the school districts that agree to participate in the study.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter.

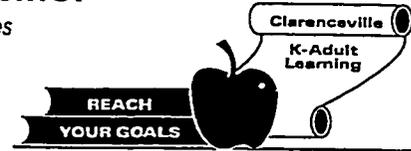
Sincerely,

George Culbert
Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Roger DeMont
Professor, Administrative and Organizational Studies

Clarenceville School District
of Oakland and Wayne Counties

20210 Middlebelt Road
Livonia, Michigan 48152-2099
(810) 473-8900
FAX (810) 476-5460



Thomas J. Tattan
Superintendent

James Lancaster
*Assistant Superintendent
for Instruction/Personnel*

Cheryl M. Leach
Director of Special Services

Gary L Gasser
President

Uda J. Brandemihl
Vice-President

Ronald P. Silye
Secretary

Gary T. Garrison
Treasurer

Vernice M. Dunklee
Trustee

Scott L. Wood
Trustee

Thomas D. Aldrich
Trustee

April 30, 1997

Mr. George Culbert
123 Lisa Circle
White Lake Twp., MI 48386

Dear Mr. Culbert:

I have reviewed your request for permission to conduct research covering the implementation of conflict resolution within schools. The purpose of the study covering a comparison of leadership styles exhibited by elementary principals in implementing conflict resolution programs would be interesting information for study and reporting results.

Permission is granted to conduct the study, administer the surveys, and confidentially report the data. I wish you well in conducting and completing your research and degree program.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Tattan
Superintendent



Wayne State University
Human Investigation Committee

Behavioral Institutional Review Board
University Health Center, 8C
4201 St. Antoine Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48201
(313) 577-1628 Office
(313) 993-7122 Fax

Notice of Protocol Exempt Approval

To: George E. Culbert
123 Lisa Circle
White Lake, MI 48386

From: Peter A. Lichtenberg, Ph.D. *Peter A. Lichtenberg, Ph.D.*
Chairman, Behavioral Institutional Review Board

Date: May 12, 1997

Subject: B05-17-97(B03)-X; "The Relationship of Administrative Leadership Style Toward Attitudes and Implementation of Conflict Resolution Programs"

SOURCE OF FUNDING: No Funding Requested

The research proposal named above has been reviewed and found to qualify for exemption according to paragraph #2 of the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Health and Human Services, CFR Part 46.101(b).

Since I have not evaluated this proposal for scientific merit except to weigh the risk to the human subjects in relation to potential benefits, this approval does not replace or serve in the place of any departmental or other approvals which may be required.

C: Dr. Roger DeMont
369 Education

Appendix B

Survey Packet

POS

PROFILE OF A SCHOOL Staff Questionnaire

We appreciate your answering the questions in this booklet. The questionnaire is designed to collect information about how people in your organization work together. The purpose is to provide information to help make your work situation more satisfying and productive. Therefore, it is important that you answer each question as thoughtfully and frankly as possible.

This is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. Your individual responses will not be identified. The completed questionnaires are processed by automated equipment. Responses are summarized in statistical form by group. To ensure *complete confidentiality*, please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire.

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RENSIS LIKERT ASSOCIATES, INC.
455 EISENHOWER PARKWAY
SUITE 15
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48108
313-769-1980

- I. Most questions have five possible responses. Please respond to the question by checking (✓) your answer in one of the numbered columns next to each question. If none of the choices matches your perception exactly, use the one that is closest to it.
- II. Please do not staple or fold the questionnaire.
- III. In this questionnaire, the following terms have these definitions:

<i>Organization</i>	The school or school district which employs you.
<i>Administrator</i>	The person to whom you directly report. For teachers, this is typically the principal. In large schools, this may be your department head or coordinator.
<i>Work group</i>	All the persons in the same job function who report to the same administrator. For teachers, this may be the department or school.
<i>Department</i>	A part of the organization which carries out a single function or related activities, and which usually involves more than one work group, for example, The Custodial Department. However, for teachers in small schools, this may be the same as the school.

PLEASE CHECK WITH THE PERSON CONDUCTING THE SURVEY TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL OF THESE TERMS HAVE BEEN CLEARLY DEFINED.

To a Very Little Extent 1	To a Little Extent 2	To Some Extent 3	To a Great Extent 4	To a Very Great Extent 5
------------------------------	-------------------------	---------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------

Please place a check Mark (✓) in the column that best corresponds to your feeling about the statement.	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent are decisions made at the appropriate levels for effective performance?					
To what extent are decision makers aware of problems, particularly problems at lower levels?					
To what extent are you involved in major decisions related to your work?					
To what extent is information given to your work group, about what is going on in other departments, adequate?					
To what extent does this organization tell your work group what it needs to know to do the best possible job?					
To what extent does the school board set high performance goals for educational excellence?					
To what extent does the superintendent set high performance goals for educational excellence?					
To what extent do different departments plan together and coordinate their efforts?					
To what extent do administrators, staff, and students work together as a team?					
<p>How are conflicts between departments usually resolved?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Usually ignored <input type="checkbox"/> Little is done <input type="checkbox"/> Appealed to higher levels but not resolved <input type="checkbox"/> Resolved at a higher level in the organization <input type="checkbox"/> Worked out, through mutual effort and understanding, at the level where they appear </p>					
To what extent does each of the following groups of people influence what goes on in this organization?					
Principal(s)					
Teachers					
Central Office Staff					
Students					
To what extent is your administrator friendly and supportive?					
To what extent is your administrator interested in your success?					
To what extent does your administrator try to help you with your problems?					
To what extent does your administrator encourage the members of your work group to exchange opinions and ideas?					
To what extent does your administrator encourage the members of your work group to work as a team?					
To what extent does your administrator try to provide you with the materials and equipment you need to do your job well?					
To what extent does your administrator give you useful information and ideas?					

To a Very Little Extent 1	To a Little Extent 2	To Some Extent 3	To a Great Extent 4	To a Very Great Extent 5
---------------------------------	-------------------------	---------------------	------------------------	--------------------------------

Please place a check Mark (✓) in the column that best corresponds to your feeling about the statement.	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent does your administrator encourage you to be innovative in developing more effective and efficient practices?					
To what extent does your administrator make sure that planning and setting priorities are done well?					
To what extent does your administrator have high goals for educational performance?					
To what extent does your administrator feel responsible for ensuring that educational excellence is achieved?					
To what extent does your administrator seek and use your ideas about:					
Academic matters?					
Nonacademic matters?					
To what extent does your administrator use group meetings to solve problems?					
To what extent does your administrator handle the administrative aspects of the job well?					
To what extent does your administrator handle the technical (or educational) aspects of the job well?					
To what extent do you have confidence and trust in your administrator?					
To what extent do you view communications from your administrator with trust?					
To what extent do you feel free to talk to your administrator?					
To what extent do members of your work group try to be friendly and supportive to your administrator?					
To what extent is the communication from your work group to your administrator accurate?					
To what extent is communication open and candid between your administrator and your work group?					
To what extent does your administrator know the problems faced by your work group?					
To what extent do members of your work group try to be friendly and supportive to one another?					
To what extent is communication open and candid among members of your work group?					
To what extent do members of your work group encourage one another to do their best?					
When conflicts arise between parties (groups or persons), to what extent are mutually acceptable solutions sought?					

To a Very Little Extent 1	To a Little Extent 2	To Some Extent 3	To a Great Extent 4	To a Very Great Extent 5
------------------------------	-------------------------	---------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------

Please place a check Mark (✓) in the column that best corresponds to your feeling about the statement.	1	2	3	4	5
When solutions are reached, to what extent do the opposing parties accept and implement them?					
To what extent do the members of your work group feel responsible for ensuring that educational excellence is achieved?					
To what extent do students accept high performance goals?					
To what extent is it worthwhile for you to do your best?					
To what extent do you look forward to your working day?					
Overall, to what extent is your work satisfying?					

Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution Questionnaire

To a Very Little Extent 1	To a Little Extent 2	To Some Extent 3	To a Great Extent 4	To a Very Great Extent 5
------------------------------	-------------------------	---------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------

Please place a check mark (✓) in the column that best described how you feel about each statement. To what extent...	1	2	3	4	5
1. does the principal support the conflict resolution process at this school.					
2. does the staff support the conflict resolution process at this school.					
3. are students encouraged to use the conflict resolution process to resolve their problems at this school.					
4. is the staff encouraged to use conflict resolution to resolve conflicts that occur at this school.					
5. has the conflict resolution process created a more positive climate at this school.					
6. has the conflict resolution process had a positive impact on student/teacher relationships.					
7. has the conflict resolution process had a positive impact on student/student relationships.					
8. does the staff seek to use joint problem solving to develop innovative solutions satisfactory to both parties.					
9. do students take part in solving their own problems in school and in the classroom.					
10. do students cooperate with one another at this school.					

To a Very Little Extent 1	To a Little Extent 2	To Some Extent 3	To a Great Extent 4	To a Very Great Extent 5
---------------------------------	-------------------------	---------------------	------------------------	--------------------------------

Please place a check mark (✓) in the column that best described how you feel about each statement. To what extent...	1	2	3	4	5
11. do staff members cooperate with one another at this school.					
12. do students know how to solve problems without getting into fights at this school.					
13. is communication and interaction between opposing parties open, candid, and unguarded at this school.					
14. When a conflict arises, to what extent are efforts made between the parties to discover and state explicitly the integrating goals and common interests that they share.					
15. does the opposing party seeks mutually satisfactory solutions with the other party.					

Part C - Demographics — Please answer the questions below. All responses will be confidential.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1. Current Position</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Principal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Teacher</p> | <p>2. Educational Level</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Education Specialist</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ed.D./Ph.D.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> | <p>3. Currently Enrolled in Degree Program</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>4. If yes, what degree level?</p> <p>_____</p> |
|--|--|---|
5. How long have you been employed in your school district? _____ years
6. How long have you been in your present position? _____ years
7. Have you attended a conflict resolution inservice at your school? Yes No
8. Is the conflict resolution program at your school student led (peer mediation)? Yes No

Comments regarding Conflict Resolution as conducted at your school.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!!!!

Appendix C
Comments

Comments From Teachers Regarding Conflict Resolution

- Several teachers and social workers have been trained to instruct selected students to participate in peer mediation. It was to be used on the playground. However, the program has been put aside for reasons unknown to me.
- Students gain problem solving skills when involved in peer mediation. It is teaching them to use their communication skills, listening skills, and cooperation to solve conflicts in a non-violent manner. The students who are involved in this program are held more responsible for their actions. Peer mentors are also gaining a positive responsibility by overseeing and guiding the conflict resolution process.
- I am the person who helps train our conflict mediators. Also, I do the scheduling monthly meetings with the peer mediators. However, the students are trained to assist in resolving conflicts on recess without adult assistance.
- I feel that the conflict resolution program in our school is effective and should be continued.
- It does help in many situations.
- Students are very nice, cooperative, and helpful, but still are developing this skill use with others.
- I feel it is a very effective program and a resounding success. Very rewarding program because it teaches children how to handle conflicts which will be beneficial throughout their life.
- You have to support those students to make the program most effective. Sometimes I feel that the students are not supported as much as they should.
- Student are to reflect on their behavior and change. They problem solve to see who is in the wrong.
- I think some teachers encourage it more than others. The staff on its own uses it among themselves, but not formal at meetings.
- Everyone needs to use the same method of conflict resolution, the same terminology, and use it consistently! Not all teachers (or other staff) are doing this at every grade level. It breaks down!
- We want to begin a peer mediation program - working toward that.
- Most teachers are committed to conflict resolution, however, a few seem to encourage it's use somewhat less frequently.

- The kids need to see more situations modeled in order to fully understand conflict resolution.
- Our social worker comes into the classroom and presents the program. For myself, I have primary students and at times there is too much “lecture” for little ones and not enough role playing, but the basic program is good!
- Most teachers use the 5 step approach in solving problems.
- It’s good in theory - I would like to see the benefits of practice a lot more from the students and the organization.
- There is quite a lot of education regarding what conflict resolution means, looks like, etc., but not much in the way of application. This is our 3rd year of a school wide program.
- We are working towards peer mediation.
- The conflict resolution training was adequate but there was no follow through as a staff or principal. Therefore, using the process makes a difference inside a given classroom, but hasn’t affected the school culture.
- Our staff has been trained by PeaceWorks and our first year of implementation began, but has not continued on a school-wide basis. We plan to revisit this commitment soon.
- We do not follow through or teach it thoroughly.
- We are working on a new system.
- We need to do more of this - we’re working on it.
- There is a district wide conflict resolution plan, but it is not followed or encouraged by anyone. I am not even sure what the steps are. Also, the type of conflict resolution used varies both by teacher and by effectiveness.
- This process at the 2nd grade level requires a great deal of time (resolving all the conflicts) and usually demands teacher assistance. Even though I believe that conflict resolution makes a big difference in all the relationships in the school. We were trained all last year and it will be interesting to see the effects in a few years.
- It works when the students are well versed in the process. Most effective when group meetings are held and problems are discussed openly in general terms.
- We work very hard at holding students accountable for their actions and working different strategies to help them be better to handle conflicts appropriately.

- Our counselor does a good job of introducing this. She is spread too thin for follow-up lessons at all grade levels.
- I am totally against peer mediation. Our staff does not embrace this part of conflict resolution.
- The concepts are being taught, but I don't see the kids using and practicing them when conflicts arise. Also, it seems that the method is not universal at our school. Different rooms bring different methods (playground, lunchroom, classroom).
- It is wonderful watching/facilitating as students take responsibility for their actions and solving their problems.
- Training is done by the guidance counselor.
- The initial training and implementation was effective. Once the counselor in charge left, the new counselor didn't buy into the program.
- We used to have an active counselor who strived to make this work with students on the playground.
- As of this time, conflict managers have had a training session, but have not begun to mediate student conflicts.
- Should parents be trained as well?
- Conflict resolution was a failure in an incident with a fellow staff person.
- Emphasis on peer mediation and conflict resolution has, in my opinion, deteriorated noticeably in the past 3 years.
- I wish an inservice on conflict resolution could be offered for staff.
- At the student level it works well, but at the adult level it has caused problems with trust, loyalty, and confidentiality between persons and groups.
- Different teachers are implementing conflict management systems -- there is no consistency. Parents have voiced concerns regarding the red, yellow, green, black card system to other teachers. This is NOT the Glasser system that I believe we have adopted at our school.
- Student know the process and have become more adept at becoming active listeners.
- Upper grades do not really use this program.
- I feel the students have not yet internalized the skills they have learned. It is my hope that as they mature they will be able to recall and use their conflict

resolution skills effectively.

- The students accept the conflict resolution program at our school, but I am not sure it is taken seriously.

Comments From Principals Regarding Conflict Resolution

- Our program was stronger during 1995-96 school year than it is presently.
- This is a year of development. We are continually searching for better ways to implement this program. Students seem to enjoy it very much.
- It is used by students during lunch recess and it has helped tremendously during that time. However, staff do not use it much in the classroom during instructional time and I would like to see it encouraged more at that level.
- We strive to teach the skills of responsibility and practice conflict resolution strategies that have been taught to all students.
- The program has been very positive in reducing fights and serious violence in our school. Students have learned to talk out their problems.
- The initial training for teachers was done the year before I became a principal. Teachers don't seem to use the process much because it wasn't carried through, I think.
- The involvement of all staff in conflict resolution training has been crucial to its success.
- Would like to see more adult to adult (teacher-teacher/parent-teacher) training.
- Students have been trained in conflict resolution as have all staff. This was designed and presented by our counselor. It has been well received.
- Our peer mediation program was one of the first conflict resolution programs established in the district and in my opinion has been a success. The students and staff have had sincere ownership in the program which has promoted a positive climate at our school.
- Our conflict resolution program is well established as a student to student model for solving problems. There has been less use of the model in recent years to solve teacher and student problems.

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Abstract

A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP STYLES OF ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE
AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAMS

by

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May, 1999

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The purpose of this study was to examine and explore the role of leadership styles of elementary building principals and the climate of the school on the presence, support, and implementation of a conflict resolution programs in Oakland County, Michigan.

This study examined leadership styles of elementary principals and the relationship it had on attitudes and support of a conflict resolution program on schools' overall climate. Implementing a conflict resolution program and training students and staff in conflict resolution skills can help schools develop a safe and orderly climate for students.

The procedures for this study included a sample of 16 elementary principals and 276 K - 6 teachers. Likert's (1983) Profile of a School (POS), Profile of Perceptions Toward Conflict Resolution (PPTCR), and a short demographic survey were used to collect data needed to answer the four research questions.

The research suggested that elementary school principals and teachers who held positive perceptions about their school environment were positive about outcomes of conflict resolution programs. Principals and teachers did not differ significantly on the

positive implications of conflict resolution programs and their attitudes were supportive of conflict resolution programs in their school.

The research showed that leadership style was the strongest predictor of support for conflict resolution programs. Principals' whose leadership style were perceived to be more collaborative and supportive tended to be more effective in implementing successful conflict resolution programs in their buildings. This resulted in the creation of a positive climate that was perceived to be more collaborative and supportive.

Autobiographical Statement

George E. Culbert

- Education: Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
Doctor of Education – 1999
Major: General Administration and Supervision
- Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
Educational Specialist –1990
Major: General Administration and Supervision
- Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan
Master of Arts –1980
Major: Educational Leadership
- Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan
Bachelor of Science – 1975
Major: Elementary Education
- Professional Experience: 1990 to Present
Walled Lake Consolidated School District, Walled Lake, Michigan
Glengary Elementary School
- Principal
- 1989 to 1990
Huron School District, New Boston, Michigan
Miller Elementary School
- Principal
 - District Test Coordinator
 - Gifted and Talented Coordinator
- 1985 to 1989
Greenville Public Schools, Greenville, Michigan
Greenville Middle School
- Assistant Principal
- 1975 to 1985
Novi Community School District, Novi, Michigan
Orchard Hills Elementary School
- Fourth Grade Teacher
- Novi Elementary School
- Third/Fourth Grade Teacher
- Organizations: National Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals
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