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Department of Education
The University of British Columbia
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Date June 13, 2003
Abstract

This study focused on how first-year elementary vice-principals understood the dynamics of school leadership and administration from a micropolitical perspective in schools that supported shared decision-making between administrators and teachers. The research focused on the tasks and responsibilities of vice-principals and the relationships of the vice-principals with the school principals and the teaching staff. Furthermore, the study focused on how vice-principals and teachers exercised power in schools. A multiple case study approach was utilized. It consisted of observing three first-year elementary vice-principals in their schools for one school year. The schools were in one district. Data collection strategies included interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and document analysis. The vice-principals were observed one day per week for four to seven hours during most visits. Participant observations included interactions of the vice-principals with the principal, teachers, students, and school support staff. The vice-principals participated in four formal interviews and engaged in informal conversations with the researcher during the school visitations. School principals, teachers, other first-year vice-principals, two assistant superintendents, and the coordinator of the leadership program were interviewed. Administrator and teacher contracts, accreditation reports, faculty meeting minutes, district handbooks, and policy manuals provided background information for this study.

The study generated several key findings about how vice-principals understand the dynamics of school leadership and administration: (a) vice-principals who were enrolling teachers (classroom teachers) faced more challenges and demands than those
who were not enrolling teachers; (b) vice-principals received little training or mentoring during their first year; (c) vice-principals were expected to learn about administration through their experiences and by making mistakes; (d) vice-principals had few opportunities to engage in critical conversations and analyze their role as novice school leaders and administrators; (e) the vice-principals’ relationships with teachers and principals changed when they became administrators; (f) teachers and administrators used different types of power to affect the actions of others; and (g) the vice-principals grappled with using positional authority, facilitative power, coercive power, and influence in their relationships with the teachers.

Based on these findings, five general recommendations are suggested. First, the teaching workload of enrolling vice-principals needs to be reduced. They are overwhelmed and stressed with their dual roles of administrative and teaching responsibilities; consequently, the learning of their students in their classrooms suffers. Second, vice-principals need systematic training and information on the skills, functions, and knowledge necessary to perform their jobs. Third, the vice-principals need to be mentored, receive feedback, and engage in critical conversations about their roles as school leaders; this needs to occur in supportive environments. The provincial administrators’ association could coordinator the mentor program. Fourth, it is problematic for principals to mentor the vice-principals because they supervise and evaluate the vice-principals. Fifth, the vice-principals need to understand the processes of successful shared decision-making. Last, vice-principals need to understand when and how to use the different types of powers that they possess as administrators.
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Dedication

To my mémére, Viola Levesque, whose memory I hold deep in my heart. Her unconditional love, gracious manner, quick wit, and love of life have inspired me throughout my life. I miss you dearly.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

My Story

The children I cherished, — the colleagues I admired, — the parents I tangled with, — and the administrators that I judged too harshly — all influenced the type of school leader I aspired to become. I had three reasons for becoming an administrator. First, I was motivated to have a positive influence on the lives of children beyond a single classroom. At several of the schools where I taught, the interests of the children were secondary to the interests of teachers and administrators. I was committed to placing the needs of the students above the needs of others. Second, I believed I possessed the experience, knowledge, and skills to be a more effective administrator than several of the principals and supervisors with whom I worked. For example, disorder and confusion were everyday occurrences at one school because the principal lacked basic organizational skills. From my viewpoint, four of the six school principals lacked essential administrative skills and fundamental leadership abilities. In my opinion, they were unsuccessful school leaders. Finally, based on my teaching experiences and observations, teachers controlled what occurred in their classrooms; they were responsible for the academic successes of the students. As a principal, I would respect teachers as professionals; I would recognize their classroom autonomy to make decisions regarding pedagogy and teaching strategies. After teaching for 11 years, I decided to embark on an administrative career.

I developed my philosophy of leadership through interaction with my students, experiences as a classroom teacher, my relationships with colleagues, my interactions
with and observations of administrators, and the leadership styles of which I became aware in university classes. These experiences were factors in my performance as a novice principal. In the next section, I will provide a brief summary of the effects of these experiences on my leadership style. This is followed by a description of the challenges I encountered during my first year in administration and sets the stage for this research. Last, I outline the research problem, present the research questions, and discuss the significance of my study.

My success with children from different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and my ability to form bonds with the children and their parents, were instrumental in my evolving philosophy of leadership. Working in distinct communities and diverse cultures in several countries provided me with a broad background of experiences that I would draw upon as an administrator. These included an Antiguan government school in the West Indies with a British curriculum; an urban, middle and working class, Catholic school with Caucasian and Latino students in Massachusetts; a private, affluent, international school enrolling Caucasian, Chinese-American, and Taiwanese students in Taiwan; and an inner-city, low socioeconomic public school with African-American and Mexican-American students located in Texas.

In Houston, I realized that inner-city poor students could be academically successful in schools and that minority parents cared about their children. This experience dispelled myths I had heard teachers repeat about poor children. During my five years teaching in Houston, I observed “disadvantaged” children thrive in school. The parents were very concerned with the education of their children, but the tangible
differences between the culture of the school and the culture of the families were obstacles that not all of them overcame.

It is, in my view, the responsibility of educators to recognize the incongruence between the home and school, to establish a connection between the school and the parents, and to enable the students and parents to gain some control of their education (Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1983). Each school setting provided me with inimitable learning opportunities that had a substantial impact on my philosophy of leadership. All my future administrative decisions would be based on the academic, social, and emotional needs of children.

Throughout my teaching career, the majority of teachers were competent, professional, and highly qualified. Overall, they knew the curriculum, teaching strategies, methodologies, classroom organization, and behavior management techniques. Problems occurred when school and district level administrators interfered with teacher autonomy. I observed teachers take subversive and overt actions to protect their classroom autonomy when administrators meddled in their area of expertise. Teachers, individually and collectively, used their informal power to protect or influence other aspects of school management that had an impact on their teaching (e.g., scheduling, extra duties, and meetings). Regardless of the school milieu, teachers exercised their power through alliances with other teachers and by separating themselves from administrators. At times, teachers ignored or challenged administrative directives. The degree to which teachers engaged in school politics and the amount of power they exercised depended on the educational beliefs of the teachers and the principal, the culture and history of the school, and the overall
direction of the educational program of the school district. The use of influence and power by teachers was prevalent in every setting where I worked. These experiences contributed to my approach to leadership. As a future administrator, I knew that I would recognize, support, and treat teachers as professionals. I had professional and cordial relationships with my colleagues. I believed I could develop a collegial and collaborative relationship with the school staff when I became an administrator.

As a classroom teacher, I had the opportunity to informally observe and analyze the performances of six administrators. All six school principals influenced my attitude towards school leadership, and they influenced my decision to become an administrator. The administrative styles of these school leaders ranged from authoritarian, patriarchal and controlling, to critical, receptive and participatory, to laissez-faire. Two of the principals were incapable, uninterested, or unwilling to provide any type of leadership. Observing and working with administrators for 11 years was invaluable and informative in the development of my philosophy of leadership.

In the mid-1980s, I taught in a school district with a structural/rational, top-down, centralized management style. The schools were test and textbook driven; central office administrators unilaterally made decisions, which affected all aspects of the classrooms. This style of management was dominant both in schools and in the educational leadership literature from the 1950s to the 1980s (e.g., Fiedler, 1984; Griffiths, 1959; Halpin & Croft, 1963; Hersey & Blanchard, 1993; Hoy, 1996; Stodgill, 1950; Taylor, 1984; Weber, 1984). The pressure for accountability in the early 1980s reinforced the management style of the district. Teachers constantly
received information and directives because of the bureaucratic and rational
management style. As an inexperienced teacher, I intuitively did not support some of
the techniques used by district administrators. However, I was able to acquire a broad
understanding and comprehensive knowledge of curriculum development and
implementation, effective classroom management strategies and discipline techniques,
the purposes and goals of accountability and testing, and professional development for
teachers. During the three-year tenure in this school, I gained inestimable knowledge
and experience, which contributed to my beliefs *a propos* school leadership.

Subsequently, I worked for a principal who endorsed a participatory style of
leadership. She valued the knowledge and expertise of the teachers. Therefore,
building a collaborative relationship amongst the school faculty and administrators
was a focus of her administration. Vertical and horizontal teacher teams were
organized to participate in school-wide decisions. Her efforts to involve teachers in
every aspect of the school were considerable and commendable. Unfortunately, her
efforts to include teachers and to build a collegial and collaborative atmosphere in the
school were marred by school politics. Not only were individual and groups of
teachers influential and powerful, but also several administrators used their power and
influence to build coalitions with teachers to protect their territories. For example, a
vice-principal retained control over student discipline because the teachers supported
him.

While I was completing a graduate degree in Educational Administration, the
research on effective schools (Edmonds, 1979; Persell & Cookson, 1982) had a
profound effect on me because the focus on the academic achievement of children in
inner-city schools appealed to me. According to the literature, effective school leaders had a positive effect on the school culture, and they were influential in determining the school curriculum, which resulted in a significant improvement in the student learning. Burns' (1978) description of transformational leaders affected my beliefs about administration. He claimed, "the most powerful influences consist of deeply human relationships in which two or more persons engage with one another" (p.11). Sergiovanni's (1991) depiction of schools as communities of learners resonated with me. These ideas became a fundamental part of my leadership philosophy.

**Beliefs About Leadership**

As well as having an effectively managed school, my role as an administrator would be to ensure that a caring and supportive environment existed for children and teachers, and to develop and maintain open relationships with parents. Philosophically, I believed that the primary goals of teachers and administrators were the intellectual, emotional, and social development of the students. I thought that most teachers were knowledgeable professionals capable of making decisions regarding pedagogy and methodology. I expected to implement a participatory style of leadership, which would lead to a collegial and collaborative school culture. I wanted the teachers to be partners in school-wide decisions. I believed that using formal administrative authority in forceful or coercive ways would not be necessary because I viewed the relationship between the administrators and the teachers as an equal partnership.

Equipped with my Masters degree in Educational Administration, my knowledge of leadership styles, 11 years of teaching experience, and my philosophy of
leadership, I felt prepared for my first administrative position. I had very high expectations of myself as a school leader. I expected to be successful even though I lacked formal administrative experience. This proved to be an unrealistic and naive goal for a first-year administrator.

**First Year in Administration**

I was delighted when I was offered the elementary principalship at a well-known and highly regarded international school in Asia. Expatriate children from approximately fifty countries were enrolled in the school. I was the elementary principal from 1993 to 1998; however, only my initial year as an elementary principal was pertinent to this study. My first year of administration was everything I expected and countless things I had not. Becoming an administrator was an ineffable and complicated experience. As an outsider unfamiliar with the school, I expected challenges, but I was not prepared for the scope of difficulties I encountered.

It was essential that I became familiar with the philosophy, history, culture, and curriculum of the school. As a newcomer to the school, I lacked the knowledge of a school insider. During the first three weeks of August, I had ample time to peruse school documents, policy manuals, handbooks, and minutes of meetings without any interruptions. Once the school year commenced, the pace of work quickened; every day was hectic, and at times chaotic. Days were filled with attending meetings, visiting classes, organizing events, completing paperwork, and conversing with parents, teachers, and students. My time was dictated or influenced by the needs of others. Because of the numerous and diverse tasks, I was overwhelmed by the
demands of the job. Predictably, eight-hour days stretched into twelve-hour days. Not surprisingly, the daily administrative responsibilities and the fragmentation of tasks and duties prevented me from being a successful school leader. I was disconcerted that I had not accomplished my goal of becoming an effective principal. Gradually, over the course of the year, the administrative work became manageable, but my relationship with the teachers was not developing as I expected and predicted.

Initially, my interactions with the teachers were cordial. A sense of anticipation and euphoria permeated the school, a feeling that we were embarking on a new beginning. Unfortunately, the period of goodwill dissipated after the first couple of months. I was puzzled about why the relationship had deteriorated. I had enjoyed collegial and professional relationships with colleagues throughout my teaching career. As an administrator, I expected similar relationships with teachers. Moreover, I did not anticipate any difficulty with the staff because my participatory leadership style was rooted in consensus building, collaboration, teacher empowerment, teacher autonomy, and teacher participation in school-wide decision-making.

Although I believed in the merits of shared decision-making, the teachers were not prepared to work within this framework. Some of the teachers were suspicious of my intentions to establish collective decision-making procedures in the school. In addition to rebuffing a collaborative relationship, the teachers were divided into several factions because of their different pedagogical beliefs. There were acute disagreements concerning all areas of the school (e.g., student discipline, curriculum, professional development, and admission procedures). Some teachers were disciples of the whole language approach of teaching reading and writing while others were
supporters of basal readers and grammar instruction, which is a more conservative approach to reading instruction. Individuals and groups of teachers used their power and influence to promote their agendas rather than participate in a dialogue about the benefits or deficits of each approach.

The variety of teacher perspectives on curricular and other issues was only one problem. I faced several challenges that caused me an inordinate amount of stress. I wanted to work cooperatively, collaboratively, and professionally with the teachers towards making decisions that focused on the interests of the children, but I was at an impasse. I made several changes, but one seemed to help improve my relationships with most of the teachers. I changed the way I shared my ideas with the teachers. Rather than casually chatting with a few teachers, I presented my views to the entire staff. As I began to make sense of my role as school leader and to understand the school dynamics and the micropolitics of the school, I gradually developed a constructive relationship with teachers. I was able to improve the school atmosphere and make some changes in the school.

The Research Problem

My research focus originated in the challenges I encountered as an inexperienced elementary principal. Struggling with the time demands and workload of the principalship, becoming familiar with the school culture and history, understanding my role as school leader, enduring a loss of identity, and experiencing periods of loneliness and isolation compelled me to investigate the experiences of first-year administrators. Researchers reported similar findings regarding first-year
Although my research topic is based on my experiences as a novice principal, vice-principals and their experiences are the focal point of this study. Unlike my situation where I moved from teaching to the principalship, thus bypassing the vice-principal position, principals usually serve as vice-principals before their appointments to principalships. According to several studies, the vice-principalship is the typical entry-level position for aspiring administrators (Calabrese & Adams, 1987; Marshall, 1992; Norton & Kriekard, 1987). I believed the experiences of the novice vice-principals were different from the experiences of principals because the vice-principals did not have prior administrative experience. I wanted to investigate the experiences of administrators who had not occupied formal district leadership positions before becoming administrators. I believed first-year principals would not be grappling with the same types of challenges as first-year vice-principals.

First-year vice-principals face professional changes that require them to redefine their roles as educators. New administrators encounter a plethora of diverse tasks, different duties and responsibilities, and leadership responsibilities. Vice-principals face challenges moving from their classrooms, which are somewhat isolated environments, to more public roles that are characterized by frequent interaction with others (Hartzell, 1994). Furthermore, they encounter changes in their relationships with the teachers, their former colleagues, and principals who are their new referent group (Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1995). First year vice-principals undergo
changes in various aspects of their new administration roles that affect their understanding of leadership and administration.

I wanted to examine the challenges that novice elementary vice-principals faced and how they understood the dynamics of school leadership and administration during their initial year of administration. The primary goal of this study was to understand how the micropolitics of the schools affected the perceptions of the vice-principals of school leadership. Micropolitical theory was utilized to examine how the tasks and day-to-day activities of the vice-principals, and their relationship and interactions with teachers and the school principals influence their understanding of administration and educational leadership. A second goal of the study was to examine how shared decision-making and distributive leadership affected how the vice-principals understood school leadership and administration. Last, I was interested in how the tasks, duties, and responsibilities the vice-principals performed influenced their understanding of their new roles.

Micropolitical theory was used to examine how teachers and administrators exercised their formal and informal power to affect each other (Ball, 1987; Hoyle, 1986b) and to gain a more in-depth understanding of the complex, daily life of schools (Everhart, 1991; Townsend, 1990). That is, teachers and administrators use authority, influence, facilitation, and coercion to affect each other. Hoyle (1986b, 1988) identified beliefs, values, strategies, interests, and goals as central features of micropolitics. Teachers and administrators shared overlapping, or different beliefs about education (Hoyle, 1988). I was interested to discover what strategies the administrators and teachers used to change the behaviours of others. I endeavoured to
examine how these differences among the educators played out in schools. Blase’s (1991) definition of micropolitics was used in this study; it focused on the use of formal and informal power by educators at all levels of the school hierarchy to achieve specific goals. It included strategies that might cause conflict, but could lead to cooperation. Micropolitical theory was utilized to understand the experiences and dilemmas of first-year school leaders (e.g., Bennett, 1999; Lindle, 1999; West, 1999).

The relationships between the vice-principals and teachers, and between the vice-principals and principals were critical to the micropolitics of the schools.

The second purpose of the study was to investigate how vice-principals understood school leadership in schools where administrators and teachers engaged in shared decision-making and distributive leadership; this included teachers performing some leadership responsibilities. Weiss (1993) defined shared decision-making (SDM) as teacher participation in making decisions that affected their work in schools. According to Ogawa and Bossert (1995), distributive leadership occurred when teachers as well as administrators occupied formal and informal leadership positions. Shared decision-making and teacher leadership were integral features in the schools in this study.

The third objective of my study was to understand how first-year elementary vice-principals made sense of the transition from teaching to administration based on their new tasks, duties, and responsibilities. During the past several years, the British Columbia Principals/Vice-Principals Association published several anecdotal articles about the challenges and difficulties British Columbian elementary vice-principals
encountered because of the demands on their time (Cosh, 1997; Ion, 1998; Sloan, 1999; Young, 1998).

**Research Questions**

In an effort to learn how first-year elementary vice-principals understood administration and school leadership, my study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do novice elementary vice-principals understand the dynamics of administration and school leadership?

2. How do the micropolitics of the schools affect how vice-principals understand the dynamics of administration and school leadership?

3. How do the vice-principals' relationships with the teachers and principals affect their understanding of the dynamics of administration and school leadership?

4. How do shared decision-making and teacher leadership as practiced in the schools in this study affect how the vice-principals understand the dynamics of administration and school leadership?

The primary units of analyses in this case study were three elementary vice-principals, who were assigned to three separate schools in one district in British Columbia. The school sites (which included the main offices of the vice-principals and the principals, staff rooms, classrooms, cafeterias, hallways, gyms, and playgrounds) were the contexts within which the vice-principals learned about school leadership and administration. I investigated how the vice-principals understood school leadership based on their experiences with others, primarily the principals and the teachers. By
conceptually linking the real experiences of the vice-principals with the theories of micropolitics, shared decision-making and distributive leadership, I hoped to provide a complex picture of the development of school leaders.

**Significance of the Study**

This study has implications for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. First, researchers have used micropolitical theory to investigate the relationships between teachers and administrators as well as other issues (e.g., peer coaching, community influences). However, only Marshall’s (1992) book focused on vice-principals, and specifically, secondary vice-principals. This book offered a unique opportunity to understand how secondary vice-principals learned about administration and school leadership based on how teachers and administrators use power, authority, and influence. There is a paucity of research on elementary vice-principals and micropolitics. This study should help fill that void.

Second, learning how vice-principals make sense of their initial experiences and how they make the transition from teaching to administration has implications for the leadership approaches they utilize and implement as new administrators. Knowledge of the experiences of novice elementary vice-principals is critical to understanding and improving school leadership (Marshall & Mitchell, 1991). By utilizing a micropolitical perspective, I hoped to gain practical insights regarding the processes that vice-principals undergo to become administrators and school leaders. Results from this study could contribute to the training, mentoring, and coaching of vice-principals.
Third, Kaplan and Owings (1999) argued that vice-principals were neglected in the educational literature. There were few investigations on elementary vice-principals with the exception of the work of Greenfield (1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1991). Secondary vice-principals have been the focus of most vice-principal studies. Furthermore, principals rather than vice-principals have been the focus of beginning administrative studies (e.g., Beeson & Matthews, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Weindling & Earley, 1987). This study should help fill the void in the research on elementary vice-principals. The ways in which vice-principals understand administration might highlight different areas than those highlighted in beginning principal studies and secondary vice-principal studies.

Finally, a facet of this study was the intersection between shared decision-making and teacher leadership with the micropolitics of the school. As Simmel (1950) noted, relationships between leaders and followers were complicated and difficult to understand. The linking of micropolitics and shared decision-making, presumably opposing ideas, may reveal some of the tension and stress among educators in the schools. Power is a central feature of micropolitics, whereas cooperation is key to shared decision-making. Understanding which actions result in cooperation and which lead to conflict among teachers and administrators was critical to understanding school leadership.

**Structure of the Thesis**

In chapter two, I review the literature on secondary and elementary vice-principals. I discuss traditional, critical, and facilitative theories of power because
power is an integral element in micropolitical theory. I discuss micropolitical theory and provide a synopsis of micropolitical studies. I present summaries of traditional, critical, feminist, and democratic theories of leadership. Last, I describe shared decision-making and distributive leadership.

In chapter three, I present the research design employed in this study. I detail and describe the data sources, data gathering strategies and procedures, interpretation and data analyses processes, and threats to the trustworthiness of the study. Last, I list the limitations of the study.

I report the findings of the study in chapters four, five, and six. In chapter four, I describe the vice-principals in this study, why they became administrators, and their goals for the initial year in administration. I provide background information of the schools, summarize features of the vice-principalship, and discuss the tasks and responsibilities of the vice-principals.

The relationships between the vice-principals and their school principals are crucial to their nascent career. The effects these relationships have on their understanding of school leadership and administration are the primary foci of chapter five. A secondary focus is how the assistant superintendents influence the vice-principals.

In chapter six, I examine the relationships between the teachers and the vice-principals that influenced how the vice-principals understood administration. Shared decision-making and distributive leadership, micropolitics, facilitation, and conflict management are discussed.
The discussion, conclusions, and implications for practice, policy, research and theory are presented in chapter seven. I explain how the novice vice-principals make sense of school leadership based on their roles and functions. Mentoring, coaching, and training are reviewed. Organizational socialization is discussed as an integral component of their first year in administration. Transitions that first-year elementary vice-principals encounter are examined. Attributes of leadership in relation to micropolitics and shared decision-making are discussed. Last, I provide a brief report on the vice-principals' second year in administration.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, I review the literature on vice-principals. Theories of power are considered because power is a key element in micropolitical theory and school leadership theories. I discuss micropolitical theory and review empirical studies in which micropolitical theory was utilized. I present summaries of leadership theories and discuss recent developments in education that affect educational leadership in schools today. Last, I review shared decision-making because it is fundamental to the schools in this study.

Literature on Vice-Principals

The studies in this section of the paper provide background information on vice-principals. The information is divided into the following categories: tasks and roles, challenges, transition into administration, and relationships between vice-principals and principals, and vice-principals and teachers. Secondary vice-principals are the focus of most research on the vice-principalship. As a result, I will identify the elementary vice-principals studies.

Tasks and Roles of Vice-Principals

The vice-principalship was the typical entry-level position for aspiring administrators (Calabrese & Adams, 1987; Marshall, 1992; Norton & Kriekard, 1987). Originally, the vice-principalship was created in the 1920s to assist the principal with administrative tasks (Glanz, 1994). According to Koru (1993), administrative and
routine tasks continued to dominate the work of vice-principals. Researchers found that the primary functions of secondary vice-principals were disciplining students (Austin, 1972; Black, 1980; Calabrese, 1991; Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1995; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Marshall, 1993; Reed & Connor, 1982; Reed & Himmler, 1985; Ricciardi, 2000), supervising students (Black; Reed & Connor), maintaining student attendance records (Austin), scheduling classes (Black), ordering supplies (Kaplan & Owning; NASSP, 1991; Reed & Himmler), attending meetings (Black), and overseeing the general operations of the school (Kaplan & Owings).

Some of the responsibilities of elementary vice-principals were similar to secondary vice-principals. In a survey of 400 urban elementary vice-principals, Gorton and Kattman (1985) reported that the primary roles of vice-principals were disciplining and supervising students, organizing substitute teachers, ordering supplies, providing instructional materials, and establishing teacher duty rosters.

In addition to performing tasks that supported the administration of the schools, several researchers found that secondary vice-principals were primarily responsible for maintaining organizational stability (Austin, 1972; Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991; Hartzell, 1991; Hess, 1985; Marshall, 1992; Reed & Himmler, 1985). Vice-principals looked after organizational stability by continuously monitoring the behaviour and activities of students. As a result, vice-principals preserved and reinforced the norms and rules of the school culture (Marshall). Vice-principals constantly responded to unanticipated events and engaged in crisis management (Kaplan and Owings, 1999; Marshall; Reed & Himmler). Hess reported that vice-principals perform disconnected, but important tasks in the schools.
Challenges

Although novice secondary vice-principals possessed some knowledge of their administrative tasks and duties before becoming administrators, they encountered many unexpected challenges in their new administrative roles (Mertz, 2000). Findings in several studies indicated that vice-principals were overwhelmed and stressed by the time demands (Black, 1980; Garawski, 1978; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Ricciardi, 2000), and the multiple tasks and duties of administration (Marshall, 1992). Gorton and Kattman (1985) reported similar findings for elementary vice-principals.

In a study of British Columbian administrators, Bognar (1996) found that vice-principals worked an average of 55 hours per week. Because of the time pressure, vice-principals encountered difficulties trying to learn the necessary skills they needed to perform in their new roles (Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1995). Helps (1994) supported this finding in his research on primary deputy heads (elementary vice-principals) in Great Britain. Calabrese and Adams (1987) found that vice-principals perceived themselves as more alienated from their co-workers and believed they had less power than the principals. Bognar asserted that vice-principals found dealing with conflict between groups was difficult. Kaplan and Owings (1999) reported that beginning vice-principals expressed surprise at the discontinuity of their tasks. In addition, vice-principals claimed they needed to develop new and different responses to the problems and issues they encountered.

In their survey of 245 secondary vice-principals, Chen, Blendinger, and McGrath (2000) reported on the vice-principals’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction with  

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1 The terms deputy head and primary refer to vice-principals and elementary schools, respectively. The terms are used in British, Australian, and New Zealand schools.
their roles. Overall, vice-principals liked working with students, teachers, staff, and parents; however, they disliked performing too many duties related to student discipline, incompetent teachers, difficult parents, heavy workloads, and after-school duties. Vice-principals expressed interest in becoming more involved in curriculum and instruction, personnel tasks, and business matters. Garawaski (1978) reported strong links among satisfaction, the importance of the vice-principals' tasks, and discretion of authority. Vice-principals were satisfied with the following tasks: teacher evaluation and supervision, and preparation of the master schedule. They were dissatisfied with restrictions to try innovative things, lack of assistance from their supervisors, lack of equipment and privacy, and the constraints of the teacher collective agreement.

Researchers have argued for changing the vice-principalship because the roles of administrators have evolved dramatically during the past 20 years. The call for changes was not groundbreaking. In 1980, Black recommended that districts identify high priority tasks and change the job description to reflect those tasks. In the same year, Clements (1980) claimed that vice-principals should become involved in leading changes for improving academic programs. Five years later, Marshall (1985a) asserted that vice-principals should engage in instructional leadership, collaboration with teachers, and community work. Greenfield (1985a) emphasized that elementary vice-principals needed to be involved in curriculum if they were to be instructional and innovative leaders when they became principals. Furthermore, Greenfield (1986) maintained that the roles of vice-principals were dysfunctional if novice vice-
principals focused on management tasks and the stability of the school over instructional leadership or school improvement.

According to Koru (1993), brevity, variety, and fragmentation characterized the work of the vice-principals. Moreover, the role of the vice-principal was poorly defined (Golanda, 1991). A complete job description did not exist because of the variety of issues that secondary vice-principals encountered (Austin, 1972). Marshall (1985b) contended the job was ambiguous, immeasurable, and unlimited. Garrett and McGeachie (1999) reported that the roles of the primary deputy head (elementary vice-principals) were vague and indistinct. Harris (1998) claimed that vice-principals did not have a clear understanding of their jobs. Most British headteachers (principals) found the deputy headship was a disagreeable experience and inadequate for training for the headship (Ribbins, 1997).

Making the Transition to Administration

Marshall (1990) identified four factors that influenced the daily working lives of vice-principals. These included organizational influence, school context, and the responses of the principals and other vice-principals. Hartzell (1994) contended that novice secondary vice-principals, who moved from teaching to administration, had a more public role because they worked with groups outside of the school environment. Secondary vice-principals had substantial contact with non-school personnel (e.g., parents). In a comprehensive, in-depth study of vice-principals, Marshall (1992) found the vice-principalship was characterized by limited risk taking, avoidance of moral dilemmas, display of values similar to the principals, and commitment and loyalty to
administration. Novice administrators were expected to maintain a calm front during turmoil and chaos because the principals and staff judged vice-principals in these types of situations.

Marshall (1985b) examined how novice secondary vice-principals became part of and accepted into the administrative group. She found that the secondary vice-principals engaged in several enculturation tasks. These tasks included the following: (a) deciding to leave teaching; (b) analyzing the selection process; (c) projecting a calm front on the job; (d) redefining relationships with teachers; (e) adopting an administrative perspective and demonstrating loyalty to new colleagues; and (f) applying practical solutions to daily complex school problems. In Marshall’s study, the vice-principals reported feeling stressed regarding demonstrating loyalty to administrators because they disagreed with some of their colleagues’ decisions. However, the vice-principals knew that exhibiting loyalty to the administrative group was a prerequisite to promotion and was necessary to work with their administrative colleagues. Marshall found that the vice-principals supported school programs and supported teachers they viewed as competent. However, the vice-principals separated themselves from teachers to feel comfortable when they exercised their power over teachers through the enforcement of policies and the evaluation of teachers.

Heck (1995) examined the effects of organizational socialization, professional socialization, and personal attributes (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, and experience) on the performances of novice elementary and secondary vice-principals. Heck defined professional socialization as the process by which new administrators gradually identified with their new roles, colleagues, and profession. Organizational
socialization was learning the skills and knowledge of the roles in specific work settings. The findings demonstrated that organizational socialization and the vice-principals' relationships with others at the school sites had the strongest and total effect on the performance of the vice-principals. Hart (1993) reported similar findings in her research on the experiences of a first-year middle school principal.

**Vice-Principals and Principals Relationships**

The school principal was critical to the career of vice-principal in terms of training, mentorship, support, and promotion. Most new vice-principals claimed that their principals accepted and supported them (Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1995). For elementary vice-principals, the principal was the main supporter; indeed, they received less support from other vice-principals (Gorton & Kattman, 1985). Dorming and Brown (1982) reported that when principals showed concern about the roles of the vice-principals, the vice-principals were more satisfied with their jobs. Although the aforementioned studies revealed positive relationships between vice-principals and principals, mentoring by principals did not always occur even though it was vital to the vice-principals (Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991).

According to several researchers, the principals determined the duties of the vice-principals (Calabrese & Adams, 1987; Gorton, 1987; Marshall, 1992; Marshall & Mitchell, 1991; Scoggins & Bishop, 1993). In one study, scholars reported that head teachers (principals) controlled what tasks and responsibilities the primary deputy heads (elementary vice-principals) performed (Garrett & McGeachie, 1999). Conversely, Mertz and McNeely (1999) found that principals did not have complete
control of the vice-principals. In fact, vice-principals decided what tasks they performed. Calabrese (1991) found that vice-principals performed some of the responsibilities of the principals. These duties included instructional leader, motivator, link to community, care agent, and innovator.

Calabrese and Adams (1987) claimed that vice-principals should work with principals as colleagues rather than superordinates and subordinates. Vice-principals did not see themselves as co-principals; however, Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) suggested that the role of the vice-principal be restructured so that they work alongside the principals as partners. Kaplan and Owings (1999) posited that the roles of the principals were too demanding for one person; consequently, vice-principals needed to assist them by becoming more involved in instructional and curriculum matters.

Gorton and Kattman (1985) found that elementary vice-principals sought partnerships with the school principals because they wanted to be involved in important responsibilities.

Fulton (1987) reported that vice-principals were obliged to carry out the policies of the school principal even if the vice-principals disagreed with those policies. Vice-principals learned about some expected behaviours of novice administrators (Marshall & Mitchell, 1991). These behaviours included building trust with other administrators, avoiding exhibition of different values from other administrators, and keeping disputes among administrators private. Marshall (1992) reported that vice-principals believed they did not possess the same power, authority, and prestige of the principals. However, the principals thought vice-principals possessed more power and authority than the vice-principals perceived.
**Vice-Principal and Teacher Relationships**

Two themes emerged from narrative stories of beginning secondary vice-principals: (a) vice-principals expressed surprise at the range of instructional quality and attitudes among teachers; and (b) they felt separated from the teaching staff (Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1995). Furthermore, new administrators experienced a loss of identity and isolation (Hradecky, 1994) because they were no longer members of the teacher group (Calabrese & Adam, 1987; Marshall, 1985b).

**Critique of studies on vice-principals.**

Although we know much about the secondary vice-principalship because of the numerous studies that focus on this position, a major weakness of the vice-principalship literature is the paucity of research on the work and experiences of elementary vice-principals. Generally, the findings of the secondary principals' studies identify their tasks and duties and describe their transitions from teaching to administration. One goal of this study is to obtain information about the elementary vice-principals' tasks and responsibilities and to explore the challenges and adjustments they encounter when they become administrators. The findings in this investigation will contribute to the knowledge base of the work of elementary vice-principals.

A second limitation of the research on elementary vice-principals is the lack of information regarding the relationships between the teachers and the vice-principals. There is a need to examine the relationship between teachers and vice-principals at a more in-depth level. An objective of this study is to examine how the vice-principals
interact and work with the teachers. In particular, the use of power by vice-principals and teachers will be examined.

*Theories of Power*

Power is an integral and fundamental component of micropolitics and of school leadership theory. In this section of the paper, background information on traditional, critical, and facilitative theories of power are presented. Then, four types of power—coercion, authority, influence, and facilitation—are discussed in relation to how administrators and teachers exercise power in schools. In the subsequent section of the paper, types of power are related to micropolitics and school leadership approaches.

*Traditional Theories*

Weber (1947) provided the following definition of power: “[Power is] the probability that an actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, and regardless of the bias on which this probability rests” (p.152). Dahl (1970) defined power, as the ability of A to get B to do something that B would not otherwise do. He claimed that two persons, groups, or organizations needed to interact for power to exist. Bacharach and Baratz (1962) criticized Dahl’s view of power because he ignored the intentionality of those who exercised power. Bacharach and Baratz claimed that power had two faces. They extended Dahl’s theory by adding that A exercised *power over* B when A prevented B from discussing issues that were contrary to the goals and aims of A. In effect, A controlled B by limiting
what B could not do. Bacharach and Lawler (1980) drew attention to “the tactical use of power to retain or obtain control of real or symbolic resources” (p.1). Lukes maintained that power was the ability to make someone do what you wanted them to do even if it was against the actions of other people. Lukes offered a third face of power. Lukes argued that “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests” (p.27).

Pfeffer (1981, 1997) defined power as the influence that someone had over others. He claimed, “Power represents the potential ability to influence behaviour, to change the course of events and to get people to do things that they would otherwise not” (Pfeffer, 1993, p. 30). He asserted that power was conscious, deliberate, contested, and ubiquitous in organizations, and it existed between equals as well as between subordinates and superiors. Pfeffer (1981) argued that a person was powerless or powerful in respect to other social actors in a specific relationship. Pfeffer claimed that power and politics were inevitable and important to management.

Traditional theorists viewed power from the perspectives of the organizational leaders. French and Raven (1959) identified the following five bases of power of leaders: expert (knowledge and information), reward (ability to grant resources or recognition), legitimate (the right to lead), coercive (ability to punish), and referent (identification with the leader by the followers). Etzioni (1961) identified three bases of power — normative, remunerative, and coercion. A person or group exercised normative power by manipulating symbolic rewards, while remunerative power was utilized based on the ability to award resources and recognize people’s deeds. Leaders used coercive power when they threatened punishment.
Power over was fundamental to traditional theories of power. These theories of power presented static views of organizational power because the focus was on the formal positions of individuals and the structure of the organization. Based on traditional theories of power, people who occupied higher positions in organizations wielded more power. Traditional power theories were zero sum theories; that is, power was finite. Power was divided up among individuals and groups. Leaders possessed more power than followers.

Critical Theory

For critical theorists, power over others was unavoidable because of the hierarchical structure of society and the social system that was reflected in societal institutions (Bates, 1980; Burbules, 1986; Comstock, 1982). Burbules (1986) maintained that power and influence were relational and based on the context of the situation, the relationship between the actors, autonomy of individuals, and the interaction between two parties. Conflict was integral to the exercise of power.

Burbules discussed power and conflict:

Power struggles are the consequences of underlying conflicts between human interests, that these conflicts are inevitable given the hierarchical nature of our social system; that power is latent in structures of ideology, authority, and organization; and that the resolution to the problem of power lies neither in simply exercising power nor in “getting it,” but in transforming underlying conflicts of interests that give rise to it. (p. 95)

Comstock (1982) proposed that power was understood based on how members of organizations perceived, retained, and used power.

Critical theorists viewed the hierarchy of schools as problematic because the relationships among individuals and groups were unequal and asymmetrical. Conflict
was inevitable because the power differentials at the various levels of organizations caused conflict of interests among individuals and groups. Individuals at different positions and locations in schools possessed different amounts of power based on their position in the school hierarchy. Schools mirrored societies in that groups of students were advantaged or disadvantaged based on their socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity. Critical theorists maintained that conflict of interests existed in schools between teachers and administrators, and between students and teachers even though conflict of interests did not have to exist.

According to Foucault (1980, 1981), power existed among all persons and within the structure of organizations rather than possessed by one individual. Power was part of the network of relations in an organization that was in constant tension. Foucault was concerned with how organizational power influenced the way people thought. He was concerned with the ways power operated through social institutions and elements of social relations that controlled, governed, and normalized individual and collective behaviour. Power was embedded in social relations and was exercised through institutional relations that disciplined people’s ways of thinking. Foucault maintained that all persons in an organization possessed and exercised power.

Critical theorists argued that conflicts among various groups of people existed because of the hierarchical nature of the society and societal institutions. They maintained that conflicts needed to be examined and changed to transform how power existed and was exercised. The emphasis was not on using or obtaining power, but on changing societal structures to limit and eliminate the conflict of interests by reducing the power differentials among societal groups and organizational groups.
Facilitative Power/Power With

Follett (1918, 1924, 1942) defined power as the ability or capacity to help others reach their goals; this was developed through their interactions with others. *Power with* enabled individuals to achieve their objectives, but it did not prevent others from achieving their goals. Follett (1942) described *power with* as “jointly developed power.” People worked together to achieve their goals. Follett acknowledged that conflict existed in organizations. However, she identified the process of “integration” as the means for people to work together. Integration was the method by which all parties in a situation obtained what they wanted without being pressured to compromise their positions. Follet maintained that even those individuals or groups who had conflict of interests reached agreement with each other.

“Reciprocal influence” and “emergence” were key concepts in Follett’s work. Reciprocal influence occurred when people affected each other in mutual and circular ways. Namely, they continued to affect each other throughout the process of integration. Emergence ensued when people or groups created new solutions, new possibilities, new values, and more power for individuals to achieve their goals. Follett claimed that, “*Power with* is a jointly developing power, the aim, unifying, which while allowing for infinite differing, does away with fighting” (p. 115).

Starhawk (1987) defined *power with* as influence, or the equal power of individuals in a group. Her focus was on how an individual was allowed to influence the other members of a group. The source of *power with* was the willingness to listen to and be open to the ideas of others. Responsibility was an element of *power with*; each individual had the right to influence others, but they had to accept the
responsibility that accompanied that right. Starhawk explained that the power to influence others was not necessarily permanent because of the equal status of individuals in the group. The group considered the ideas of individuals, but was not forced to obey or accept them.

Feminists' views of power were comparable to the definitions of power put forth by Follett (1942) and Starhawk (1987). Carroll (1984) defined power as the ability to influence people to act in their own interests rather than the interests of organizations or institutions. Power with enabled rather than prevented people from achieving their goals and objectives. Moreover, power with engendered respect among individuals and groups.

Traditional theories of power accentuated the organizational leaders and their authority over followers. Critical theorists emphasized the conflicts among societal groups because of the hierarchical structure of organizations. Foucault's definition of power supported the view that both teachers and administrators possessed and used power in schools. Facilitative theories of power underlined how equality and respect among individuals and groups enabled them to use power together to achieve individual and group goals even when conflicts existed among people.

**Power in Schools**

Muth (1984) formulated his theory of power in schools based on traditional and critical theories. He maintained that power was the ability of a person or group to affect the behaviour of another person or group to achieve a specific goal. Furthermore, Muth claimed power was relational, probably asymmetrical, and could
be latent. According to Muth, power ranged from coercive to authority to influence. Facilitation was a fourth type of power (Follet, 1942; Starhawk, 1987). The four types of power (coercion, authority, influence, and facilitation) existed in schools.

Muth (1984) equated coercive power with domination. He claimed coercion was the ability of an individual or group to affect another person or group's behaviours, by using physical or mental force, regardless of the others' desires. For instance, forcing teachers to participate in extra-curricular activities is a form of coercion if it is accompanied with threats of job termination. Muth defined authority as the ability to affect the behaviour of another person or group because they accepted the legitimacy of the authority of the person who occupied a higher position in a hierarchical organization. School leaders possess legitimate authority because of their positions in hierarchical school systems. Principals exercise authority when they make decisions based on rules, regulations, and policies. Muth defined influence as the ability to affect the behaviour of another person or group without using force or legitimation. Influence is the capacity to cause people to be receptive and willingly respond to actions or words or to listen to views of others. Influence is not associated with force.

Follett (1942) defined facilitative power as the process that created or sustained favourable conditions for all individuals in a group. Facilitative power existed in the kinds of interactions, negotiations, and mutuality that occurred in professional organizations, such as schools. Dunlap and Goldman (1991) defined facilitative power as the "ability to help others achieve a set of ends that may be share, negotiated, or complementary without being either identical or antithetical" (p. 6). Goldman, Dunlap,
and Conley (1993) maintained that facilitative power is “interactive and additive,” and it is “power manifested through someone” (p. 70). Facilitative power allowed administrators and teachers to enhance their individual and collective performances.

Dunlap and Goldman provided a description of facilitative power. School-based administrators were facilitative leaders when they obtained material and resources for the staff, selected people who worked well together, trained the staff for collaborative behaviour, stressed feedback and reinforcement, and provided networks for teachers to work together. Facilitative power or empowerment occurs when the principals support and assist teachers to achieve their classroom goals.

The following researchers identified the sources of power in schools (authority, coercion, influence, and facilitation): Authority included resources (symbolic), funds and materials (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1989; Hoyle, 1986b; Muth, 1984), formal positions (Morgan, 1997; Muth), and knowledge or information (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1992; Morgan; Muth). Influence encompassed personal attractiveness and personal characteristics (Ball, 1987; Blase; Bridges & Groves, 1999; Hoyle; Morgan), reputation (Ball; Blase; Hoyle), expertise (Ball; Blase; Bridges & Groves; Hoyle; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins; Morgan), capacity to motivate (Morgan), proximity (Morgan), and knowledge or information (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins; Morgan; Muth). Facilitation was equated with the empowerment of others (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins). Political power was influence, threats, and positional authority (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins; Muth).
Politics and Micropolitics

According to Strauss (1962) and Cyert and March (1963), the political and competitive milieu of organizations was ignored in structural/rational theories of organizations. They maintained that bureaucratic models of institutions limited our understanding of the day-to-day workings of organizations. Several scholars argued that traditional views of organizations overlooked conflict (Bolman & Deal, 1984; Miles, 1980), ignored the use of power (Comstock, 1982; Tushman, 1977), and neglected the plurality of interests, and behaviours of leaders and followers in organizations (Mangham, 1979).

Mangham (1979) maintained that the behaviours of individuals in organizations were political given specific circumstances. Wamsley and Zald stated that “structure and processes of the use of authority and power to affect definitions of goals, directions and the major parameters of the organizational economy” (1973, p. 18). Burns (1961) claimed that conflict was as widespread as consensus among people. Burns stated that both conflict and cooperation were necessary to achieve the goals of organizations and both could lead to organizational change.

Defining Micropolitics

Political science scholars laid the groundwork for studying politics in organizations, and hence micropolitics in schools. Iannaccone (1975) conceptualized two levels of politics or subsystems in schools that affected each other: micro and macro. He defined macro-level politics as the outside forces (e.g., senior district administrators, parents, community members, policymakers, politicians, and
government officials) that influenced the teachers, students, and administrators and the
day-to-day activities of schools. Micropolitics focused on the internal activities and
dynamics of individual schools.

Since the mid-1970s, researchers have used micropolitical theory to gain a
more comprehensive understanding of the complex, intricate, and multi-
dimensionality of the daily processes and day-to-day ambiance of schools (Everhart,
1991; Townsend, 1990). Micropolitical theory enabled researchers to investigate the
power dynamics and changing character of schools. Micropolitics highlighted the
behaviours and actions of educators (Blase, 1991). Ball (1987) described micropolitics
as “ongoing, multifaceted, indexical, and obscure. It’s about relationships, not
structures; knowledge rather than information, and talk rather than paper” (p. 5).
Bolman and Deal (1991) posited that conflict in organizations was based on
differences among groups concerning values, preferences, beliefs, information, and
perceptions of reality. For this study, Blase’s definition of micropolitics was used:

Micropolitics is the use of formal and informal power by individuals and
groups to achieve their goals in organizations. In large part, political actions
result from perceived differences between individuals and groups, coupled
with the motivation to use power to influence and/or to protect. Although such
actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously
motivated, may have political significance in a given situation. Both
cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of the realm of
micropolitics. Macro- and micropolitical factors frequently interact. (p. 248)

Power, beliefs, interests, goals, and strategies are the main features of
micropolitics. Micropolitics exists in schools because schools are hierarchical; people
at different levels in schools possess and exercise different amounts of power
Iannaccone (1991) reports that administrators and teachers do not engage in open
debate and dialogue of policy issues during meetings because they do not want to disrupt the teacher-administrative relationships and the school atmosphere in this school.

Several researchers found that educators possessed different and sometimes conflicting interests because they had diverse values, ideologies, and beliefs about education (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991; Everhart, 1991; Hoyle, 1986). In addition, interests represented the concerns, preferences, and needs of various educators (Bridges & Groves, 1999). Researchers reported that interests could be personal (Ball; Hoyle), professional (e.g., curriculum, pedagogy, and status) (Hoyle), and political (Ball; Hoyle). Hoyle maintained that teachers and administrators had mutual, overlapping, and separate interests. Obtaining resources would be an example of mutual interests between teachers and administrators. Teachers and administrators’ concerns about student discipline would be an illustration of overlapping interests. Disagreement between administrators and teachers regarding professional development would be an example of separate interests. Bridges and Groves, Ball, and Blase maintained that they pursued different goals because they have diverse interests. Marshall and Scribner (1991) reported that other staff members are affected by conflict and controversy. Ball found that consensus occurred when individuals and groups, who had different goals, eventually agreed to the same course of action.

Administrators and teachers used various strategies to exercise power. Depending on the situations, circumstances, and the people, various strategies were used to affect the behaviours of others. Hoyle (1986b) and other researchers identified several strategies that administrators used to achieve their goals: bargain or exchange
Bridges & Groves, 1999), negotiate boundaries (Ball, 1987), divide and rule, coalition building (Marshall & Scribner, 1991), cooptation, displacement of issues or ideas to avoid discussions, manipulation (Marshall & Scribner), face saving, and control of information and agendas of meetings. Bridges (1970) reported that teachers used flattery, biasing information, and colleagues to influence the decisions of principals. In addition, Bridges asserted that administrators were not always aware of the influence of teachers on their decisions. Blase (1989) found that teachers used diplomacy, conformity, extra work, visibility, avoidance, ingratiation, documentation, and threats to influence principals. Blase maintained that both conflict and consensus existed within micropolitics.

**Micropolitical Studies**

A dynamic theoretical and empirical knowledge base has developed in the area of micropolitics. Scholars use micropolitics to understand how people use informal and formal power in schools and to investigate the dynamics of the internal life of schools. Teachers and administrators use different types of power to further and/or protect their interests (Blase, 1991; Hoyle, 1986b; Marshall & Scribner, 1991). Power can be exercised through coercion, influence, authority (Ball, 1987; Blase; Hoyle, 1988), and facilitation (Ball; Blase).

Researchers have investigated the following topics using a micropolitical perspective: novice administrators, teacher-administrator relationships, school leadership, induction of novice teachers, mentor relationships, and evaluation of teachers. The micropolitical studies that will be discussed in this section have been
divided into two categories. The first group of studies focused on the *power over* aspects of the relationship between administrators and teachers. Overall, findings in these studies indicated that administrators used coercion and authority to affect the behaviours of the teachers. *Power with* was the focus of the second set of studies. In general, administrators used authority, facilitation, and influence to affect the behaviours of teachers.

*Power Over and Micropolitics*

Researchers have examined how administrators use authority and coercion to affect the behaviours and actions of teachers. Joseph Blase has conducted comprehensive and extensive studies on micropolitics in schools from the perspectives of teachers. The findings from Blase's (1988, 1990) research were based on data from an open-ended survey completed by 902 teachers. Blase used a *power over* definition to define politics. Politics was defined as the strategic use of power to keep or acquire the control of real or symbolic resources (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980). Blase (1990) reported that thirty-one percent of 902 survey respondents claimed that principals used negative strategies or coercive power to affect the behaviours of teachers. These principals used protectionist strategies such as sanctions to control individual teachers, manipulate resources, or reward some teachers. As a result, teachers alleged that they became angry, depressed, anxious, resentful, and alienated. Teachers claimed that these principals violated basic professional norms, broad educational standards, and basic human rights. Using the same data, Blase (1988) analyzed the responses to the following survey question: What do teachers mean when they refer to politics in
schools? Thirty-nine percent of the teachers maintained that administrative favouritism had a negative impact on the morale and work of teachers. According to the teachers, administrators used favoritism to protect their jobs, and to influence and control others.

Blase (1987b) used Bacharach and Lawler’s (1980) definition of politics in a case study in a biracial, urban high school in southeastern United States. Bacharach and Lawler defined politics as the strategic use of power to keep or acquire the control of real or symbolic resources. Blase interviewed 80 teachers to investigate interpersonal politics. He found that teachers developed both negative and positive political orientations towards principals and department heads. Teachers viewed ineffective administrators as unsupportive, non-collaborative, and self-oriented. Teachers employed the following strategies when working with ineffective administrators: confrontation, passive aggressiveness, ingratiation, flaunting, and avoidance of principals. Blase (1989, 1993) reported that teachers used the following strategies to influence or protect themselves from the principals. Diplomacy was used by 50% of the teachers. The other major strategies were conformity (10%), avoidance (7%), extra work (6%), visibility (3%), and ingratiation (3%). Fifteen teachers maintained they used documentation, intermediaries, coercion, and threats to influence both open and closed school principals.

Ball (1987) conducted his investigations when English schools were undergoing considerable structural change. The national government was the chief architect; coercion and authority was used to develop and implement educational policies. Most if not all of the decisions were top-down directives that school
administrators were required to implement. Ball focused on how administrators used authority and coercion to force changes in schools and to affect the behaviours of teachers. Ball found that administrators controlled the political stability in the schools, while teachers controlled the teaching and curriculum in the classrooms. Even though both groups exercised power in school, conflict occurred when administrators interfered with teacher autonomy. The maintenance of organization, control by administrators, the degree of teacher autonomy, disagreement about policies, and teacher participation in decision-making were micropolitical issues that caused conflict between teachers and administrators. Administrators and teachers constantly negotiated and renegotiated boundaries controlling these areas.

Ball (1987) identified three types of school leaders: adversarial (heads of schools used coercion to dominate the staff), authoritarian (heads of school were seen as the legitimate leader, but there was covert dissension among the staff), managerial (heads used their formal positions to affect the teachers), and interpersonal (heads relied on person relationships and informal procedures to influence teachers). Ball did not identify facilitative leaders who used their power to assist teachers.

In his case study in a British school, Vann (1999) reported that the principal caused tension by using confrontation as a way to make teachers participate in decision-making and to force change in the school. He reported that school leaders sometimes used forceful strategies to influence teachers. Spaulding (1994) reported comparable findings in his case study of a school in the US. Spaulding found that the school principal affected teachers through manipulating teacher suggestions, using voting techniques, planting information, exchanging principal favours for the support
of teachers, and using expert knowledge. Administrators used coercion when they wanted to force teachers to act in specific ways.

Noblit, Berry, and Dempsey (1991) conducted evaluative case studies in two schools in one school district in southeastern United States. The researchers evaluated the district goals, which were to develop shared beliefs among educators in the district and to promote teacher professionalism. When teachers increased their political power, gained influence at the school level, and actively spoke out on issues that affected district-wide policies, the district administrative leaders terminated the initiative to develop shared beliefs between teachers and administrators. They expected teachers to accept the philosophy and beliefs of the district. The district administrators did not want to share their power to formulate district-wide policies with the teachers. In these schools, the goal to develop shared values was a one-way, uni-directional, top-down process.

Anderson (1991) investigated the micropolitics of an affluent, suburban high school. He found that the philosophy of cooperation and collaboration at the school limited the teachers from opposing school policies. The teachers were powerless as individuals in schools, but they were able to exercise power as a union and affect the district-wide restructuring and reform processes. The principal was also powerless in the district. Overt conflict between the teachers and principal was not evident. Kleine-Kracht and Wong (1991) examined the effects of the top-down, authoritarian style of a superintendent in a one-school district. The superintendent caused tension, insecurity, and competitive behaviour among the district supervisors, high school principal, and curriculum directors because of his leadership style. Corbett (1991) studied the
cultural norms of teachers in a suburban, affluent high school. He reported that the principal used his authority to change the student discipline policies. The principal was trying to protect the teachers from parental pressure. Instead, he weakened the authority of the teachers over the students.

Schempp, Sparkes, and Templin (1993) investigated the experiences of three novice teachers in three separate schools. Findings indicated that new teachers quickly learned that principals possessed power over them because of their authority to appoint new teachers to permanent positions. The novice teachers recognized that they influenced the principals through demonstrating effective classroom management and participating in extra-curricular activities. The researchers found that students and other teachers exercised informal power over the new teachers by informing them how people thought and acted in the schools. Teachers, administrators, and teachers informally transmitted the cultural codes of the schools (Foucault, 1970) to novice teachers.

**Power With and Micropolitics**

The findings in several studies indicated that facilitative power existed in schools; administrators used this power to work with and support teachers. Blase’s (1989, 1993) findings were based on an open-ended survey completed by 770 teachers enrolled in graduate classes in US universities. Blase used a symbolic interactionist perspective to explore the strategies teachers used to influence and protect themselves from school principals. Blase (1989) reported that 52% of the teachers claimed they worked with open principals. Open principals were honest, collaborative, friendly,
communicative, supportive, accessible, organized, and efficient. These principals utilized facilitative power to support teachers.

Blase (1993) analyzed the same data from the open-ended surveys of teachers enrolled in the graduate classes. The results indicated that open, effective principals embodied the core values of the schools and focused on the needs of the students. These principals used rewards and recognition, clear communication, support (financial, administrative, material), formal authority, visibility, interpersonal interaction, and modeling behaviours (honesty, consideration, and optimism). The principals used facilitative power or empowerment to influence teachers. The principals consulted and involved teachers in decision-making.

In a case study in an urban, ethnically mixed high school in the southeastern US, Blase (1987a) claimed that effective principals had strong effects on the sociocultural contexts of the school. According to Blase, effective principals were accessible, visible, decisive, knowledgeable, fair, equitable, and consistent in their behaviour with all of the staff. They communicated expectations, followed up issues, managed their time, supported teachers over parents and students, participated and consulted with teachers before making decisions, praised and rewarded teachers, and delegated some authority to teachers. The teachers reacted positively to supervisors who were supportive, collaborative, integrative, reciprocal, and interactive.

Greenfield (1991) conducted a case study of an elementary school in a district that valued cooperation and negotiation. Greenfield maintained that the moral or professional school leader was the ideal educational leader. He found that the principal used facilitative power to support the teachers and students in the school. Interpersonal
interactions and collaboration between teachers and the principal were noted characteristics of the relationships. District and school-based administrators believed working with teachers would have the best effect on the learning of the students. Greenfield concluded that moral leadership occurred when the all school decisions were based on the interests of the children.

Acker-Hocevar and Touchton (1999) interviewed several "Teachers of the Year" candidates. The teachers claimed that they possessed the capability to influence others because they worked with administrators who engaged in shared decision-making practices.

According to Harvey (1991), new principals used three strategies to influence the culture of their schools. The principals became familiar with the views of the teacher groups in the school; they used communication with teachers to shape the culture of the school, and they managed the school culture by reaffirming the central values of the schools. Principals in this study acquired knowledge and information about the school sites to influence teachers. The credibility of the novice principals depended on their ability to manage the school culture.

Conley, Bas-Isaac, and Scull (1995) examined whether a district-initiated peer coaching program caused contrived or collaborative collegiality between novice and experienced teachers. Conley et al. found that district-sponsored peer relationships led to collegiality among teachers. The results were based on one third of 157 surveys. Their findings challenged the results of Hargreaves' (1991) study of collegiality in two Ontario school districts. Hargreaves concluded that contrived collegiality was the
result of forced cooperation among teachers. Hargreaves claimed that forcing teachers to be collegial was another administrative tool to control teachers.

Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers (1992) conducted a study in one district that had a teacher leadership program to develop new opportunities for teacher professional learning and development, to recognize teacher excellence, and to expand teachers’ professional roles and responsibilities. The findings were based on interviews with seven teacher leaders. The researchers found that the principals and teachers used their influence to shape their relationships with the other person. They based their views on their own values, perceptions, and beliefs about their roles.

Blase and Blase (1994) contended that teachers and their evaluators, school administrators, used four micropolitical strategies during their post-observation conferences: teachers viewed personal orientation and conversational congruence as helpful strategies; conversely, the use of formal authority and situational variables caused discord and conflict between the teachers and evaluators. The researchers reported that the teachers and evaluators tried to shape the conversation of their evaluation conferences based of their individual perceptions, expectations, interests, and prerogatives of their tasks and interpersonal relationships. The teachers and supervisors used influence. However, the teachers reacted when the supervisors attempted to use authority.

In her investigations of elementary school reading programs in four school districts, Fraatz (1987) claimed that although teachers perceived themselves as powerless, they were more likely to exercise influence inside and outside the classroom than any other school personnel, including administrators. The power base
of teachers was professional autonomy; they controlled what and how they taught in their classrooms. Additionally, Fraatz found administrators used influence (persuasion and negotiation) rather than authority because teachers controlled the classrooms limited the ability of the principals to use rewards or sanctions. Fraatz concluded that teachers seemed to possess more power than administrators.

**Critique of micropolitical studies.**

Micropolitics is prevalent in schools because of the divergent values, goals, purposes, and beliefs of teachers and administrators. Schools are complex, multifaceted, intricate organizations that are primarily influenced by the principals, vice-principals, and teachers. The relationships between administrators and teachers are critical to the internal live of schools. Power is the main element of micropolitical theory. Administrators and teachers exercise power that is based on their educational philosophies, beliefs, and goals.

Micropolitical theorists have examined a wide range of topics (*i.e.*, novice administrators, teacher-administrator relationships, school leadership, induction of novice teachers, mentor relationships, and evaluation of teachers). As a result, the issues and findings of various investigations are diverse and complex, a reflection of the daily life of schools. A rich body of literature has been developing on school micropolitics since the mid 1980s.

However, the micropolitical studies reviewed in this chapter have several limitations. The majority of researchers use a traditional definition of power to frame their studies. That is, administrators exercise power because of their positional
authority in the school hierarchy. In these studies, reports of the teachers' use of power are not as prominent as the administrators' use of power. Consequently, the findings in most of the studies demonstrate how administrators exercise power to affect the behaviours of the teachers. A broader definition of power is used in this study. Power is defined as the ability of an individual or group (i.e., administrators or teachers) to affect the behaviours of others. It is not limited to a power over or top-down perspective. In addition, power encompasses authority, influence, facilitation, and coercion. A goal of this research is to look at how administrators and teachers exercise the different types of power in schools and to examine how it affects the vice-principals' understanding of school leadership.

Additionally, the teachers' perspective of how administrators exercise power in school is the focus of most of the studies. Few researchers (e.g., Greenfield, 1991) investigate the teachers' use of power from the administrators' perspective. In this study, one objective is to examine how vice-principals view the use of power in schools.

Another limitation of the studies is the lack, from a micropolitical perspective, of research on novice elementary vice-principals. First-year elementary vice-principals' experiences have been overlooked by the research community although there have been several studies on novice secondary vice-principals (e.g., Marshall, 1985b, 1992; Marshall & Mitchell, 1991; Marshall & Scribner, 1991). A goal of the study is to analyze how first-year elementary vice-principals understand school leadership within the realm of micropolitics. Using micropolitical theory to examine the relationships
between vice-principals and teachers should contribute to our understanding of the day-to-day dynamics of elementary schools.

Theories of School Leadership

School leadership has undergone considerable change since its inception in the early 1900s. The governance structure of school administration in the early 20th century has changed somewhat to the administration in the early 21st century. Traditional, critical, feminist, democratic, and distributive theories of leadership, and the reform and restructuring movements of the 1980s and 1990s have contributed to and influenced the leadership styles that currently exist in these schools.

In this section, I provide a summary of several leadership theories that affected educational administration throughout the 20th century, briefly describe school reform and restructuring that has occurred in the last 20 years, and discuss shared decision-making between teachers and administrators in schools.

Traditional Leadership

Rational/structural leadership theory and research dominated educational administration from the late 19th century to the 1980s, but less so since the 1980s (Greenfield, 1975). Since the 1970s, other theories of leadership (e.g., critical, transformational, feminist, democratic, participatory) have influenced educational leadership. Rational/structural research and theory focused on management, thus reinforcing the authority of managers (principals) over workers (teachers). Scientific management (Taylor, 1984), Weber’s (1984) theory of bureaucracy, and Fayol’s
(1984) administrative principles contributed to the establishment of this leadership style. Taylor’s work in scientific management has had substantial influence on schools. Managers were more important than workers because they planned and designed the work, and then directed the workers who performed it. The goals of scientific management were efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Dividing a task into smaller tasks, which was performed repeatedly, by more the one person, thus separating workers from their work is another facet of scientific management. Weber’s theory of bureaucracies has had a substantial impact on schools. Bureaucratic leaders, who occupied formal positions or held offices in hierarchical organizations, possessed the authority to direct their subordinates. Followers recognized the legitimacy of the leaders and willingly submitted to their leadership. Leaders were objective and independent. Rules and regulations controlled bureaucratic organizations; administrators performed specific functions and needed specialized training. Bureaucratic features in schools were necessary because of the technical activities that needed to be performed. These approaches to leadership were mechanistic, functional, top-down, value-free, and linear. They emphasized efficiency and accountability.

Logical positivism influenced administrative research from the 1950s to the 1980s. Research was based on the scientific method, that is, social phenomena were studied, measured, and analyzed. Findings from these investigations were perceived to be neutral, objective, and value free. In the 1970s, scholars began to discuss the limitations of these types of studies. Logical positivism research separated people from the structure of the organization. This was a false dichotomy because people are the organizations. Greenfield (1975) was instrumental in challenging and pressuring
educational administrator scholars to use other paradigms and perspectives to investigate school leadership. Interpretive research has become more prevalent in leadership studies during the past 25 years.

Research on the relationship between leaders and followers has been extensive (e.g., Barnard, 1938; Griffiths, 1959; Halpin & Croft, 1963; Stodgill, 1950). Human resource theory emphasized the commitment of employees to the organization through their support of the goals, values, and beliefs of the organization. In the 1930s, research in human resource theory demonstrated the importance of motivating and satisfying workers within industrial settings (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Managers were expected to motivate workers to perform activities that achieved the goals of the organizations.

The trait approach to management has had a lasting effect on business and school leadership (Fiedler, 1984; Stodgill, 1950). This research was based on the identification of distinctive physical or psychological characteristics of leaders that were related to or explained their behaviours. These characteristics included, but were not limited to personality, height, weight, appearance, and intelligence. Researchers attempted to isolate specific traits that endowed leaders with unique qualities, which differentiated them from their followers. Stodgill claimed that the correlation between traits and leadership was positive, but low. Furthermore, he claimed there were many contradictory findings.

The effective school leader was another example of a traditional, top-down leadership style. Based on his research of inner-city schools, Edmonds (1979) developed the following principles of effective schools: strong administrative and
instructional leadership, high academic expectations; an orderly school atmosphere, student acquisition of basic skills; close monitoring of student progress; the belief that all students can learn, and recognition of student achievement. The school leaders were the catalysts for school changes and improvements in student learning. Edmonds argued that if school principals followed and instituted the tenets of effective school research, they would become effective leaders. Angus (1989) criticized effective schools research because the focus was on the principal and the individual school sites; it ignored the broader social, political, and economical circumstances that affected educational systems. Angus suggested that educational leaders use their authority to facilitate critical and reflective discussions among staff about the educational issues and purposes of school reform.

Since the 1930s, researchers have focused on the interpersonal relationship between the leaders and the followers. Researchers found it was important that the followers were satisfied with their jobs; this was directly linked to increased productivity. The focus on the relationship between leaders and followers has continued unabated.

Burns’ (1978) theory of transformational leadership has had considerable impact on schools. Burns compared transformational leadership to transactional leadership. He claimed that most leadership was transactional. Exchange and bargaining were the key characteristics of transactional leadership. Transactional leadership acts occurred when leaders and followers used exchange and bargaining to achieve or advance their own goals or purposes. According to Burns, exchange and
bargaining did not engender mutual and reciprocal relationships even though the purposes were related.

Burns (1978) saw transformational leadership at the opposite end of the continuum as transactional leadership. Transformational leaders possessed the capacity to influence followers to pursue higher purposes. Transformational leaders were more skilful and knowledgeable than their followers. They evaluated the followers' motives, anticipated their responses, and determined their power bases. The foci of the leaders were to create mutual support and shared goals with their followers. Transformational leadership emphasized the relationship between leaders and followers and the importance of a shared vision. Burns viewed transformational leadership as fundamentally moral because the leaders elevated the followers to pursue higher ideals. Bass (1985) maintained that leaders engaged in both transactional and transformational leadership actions. He saw transformational leaders as motivators who influenced followers to do more than they originally expected to do. Leaders influenced followers by raising the awareness levels of followers and by connecting with them. Furthermore, leaders convinced followers to pursue the group's goals rather than their own goals.

The traditional approach to leadership has advantages and disadvantages. Generally, the qualities of rational/structural leadership theory are hierarchical, centralized, linear, and objective. According to the traditional leadership theory, school leaders are dominant in schools. Administrators possess and exercise power over their followers because of their higher organizational positions. They possess the authority to make school decisions, and they expect teachers to consent to their
leadership and abide by the rules and regulations of the schools. Traditional leaders focus on consensus; conflict between teachers and administrators was overlooked. Successful school leaders are top-down, authoritarian, efficient, and accountable.

One of advantage of traditional leadership that continues to benefit schools is the need for school leaders to make unilateral decisions that do not affect the teachers or students. One role of the school leaders is to protect the internal operations of the schools from external pressures. Bureaucratic structures are necessary to schools because of the complexity of the school districts. Policies, rules, and regulations continue to guide the operations of schools. In addition, people who possess specific expertise and knowledge serve in different capacities in schools.

**Critical Leadership**

In the 1970s and 1980s, critical theorists challenged the dominance of rational/structural theory in schools. Critical theorists explicated how schools were value-laden, biased, and inequitable. Critical scholars contended that the hierarchical nature of schools reflected the structure of society, thus certain groups of students were empowered or disempowered based on their socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender (e.g., Anyon, 1981; Bernstein, 1975; Bourdieu, 1986; Gaskell, 1987; Giroux, 1983; Gordon, 1998; Lareau, 1987, 2000). Burbules (1986) elucidated how the power differentials among individuals and groups caused conflict of interests in schools. The privileged groups in society were the privileged groups in schools. Critical theorists challenged the “zero-sum” nature of
organizational power within the rational/structural paradigm theory. They maintained that organizational power and control can and should be contested.

Several researchers applied critical theory to school leadership (e.g., Bates, 1980, 1989; Foster, 1986a, 1986b, 1989; Smyth, 1989; Watkins, 1989). Scientific management, reification of traditional models of leadership, the hierarchical school structure, the separation of structure and process, and the power and control elements of schools were scrutinized. Dantley (1990) urged school leaders to use schools as vehicles for social and political change. Smyth argued that the emphasis on traditional leadership, which focused on efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability needed to be replaced with leadership that focused on critical pedagogy. He maintained that teaching and learning were the focal point of school discussions and examination. Angus (1989) asserted that leadership needed to be reconceptualized for leaders to become facilitative leaders.

Foster (1986a, 1989) discussed leadership in terms of praxis. He defined praxis as “the ability of all persons to engage in acts of leadership which help in the transformation to a way of life which incorporates participative principles; leadership in this regard is, is both critical and a shared leadership” (1986a, p. 18). According to Foster, leadership existed among all members of the school community; leadership acts were more important than leaders. Based on Foster’s views of praxis, leaders needed to engage in critical reflection and critical action, analyze and challenge the way schools are structured and how they are viewed, alter the power and control in schools, engage in dialogue with others (teachers) about schools, and advocate for changing power over into power with. The language of schools needed to be evaluated
critically in terms of what was communicated and how it was communicated. Foster maintained that the communication of school leaders needed to be honest, straightforward, comprehensible, transparent, and appropriate. School cultures needed to be assessed in terms of who was privileged and why they were privileged. The goal of critical leaders is to challenge the status quo of the hierarchical nature of schools and actively try and change it and to treat all groups equitably.

The argument for critical leadership in schools has benefits and drawbacks. Critical theorists denounce the power over element in schools, and they support the moral authority of power with. Critical leaders are encouraged to reflect on their roles in the schools and challenge the hierarchical structure of schools. However, they might not be able to change the structure of schools as individuals although they might be able to change the power relations between teachers and administrators. Critical leaders can reduce the power differentials between teachers and administrators by engaging in democratic shared decision-making. Additionally, they can refuse to use their authority to make unilateral decisions that warrant collaboration with teachers and others. Critical theorists challenge the power over element of rational/structural leadership theory. They reject the notion of zero-sum power. Instead, critical theorists advocate power with or shared power in schools.

Feminist Leadership

Feminists argued that gender was fundamental to the way people perceived themselves and their relationships with others (Gaskell & McLaren, 1991). Since the 1960s, feminist scholars have investigated the gender inequality in educational
institutions (e.g., American Association of University Women, 1992; Eichler, 1979; Kenway & Willis, 1998; Klein & Ortman, 1994). One focus of the research has been challenging the sex roles and stereotypes of females depicted in educational books (e.g., Gaskell, 1977; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Another topic of inquiry was the comparison of how teachers treated girls and boys differently in classrooms (e.g., Davies, 1993; Keller, 1985).

Feminists challenged the traditional school leadership styles, which were based on masculine models of power over governance. Radical feminists viewed power as exercised in contemporary society as power over, which was representative of a masculine, or patriarchal world-view in which social relationships originated from primary relationships defined by male power over women and children (Rich, 1976). Radical feminist contended that our societal structure needed to be changed completely. Carroll (1984) claimed power was the capacity of the community as a whole that was used for good intentions; it was not dependent on the goals of formal leaders.

In the early 1980s, some feminist scholars began to examine the dominance of men in school administration (e.g., Blackmore, 1989). Shakeshaft (1993) found that there were fewer female than male school leaders because hiring practices favoured men. In addition, men were more visible in schools, women were not viewed as leaders, and there was a lack of support networks for women. Furthermore, the lack of women in positions of authority was linked to the inferiority and low status of women in society. A primary goal of feminist scholars was to equalize the number of male and female administrators.
Feminist scholars conducted research to compare the leadership attributes of female and male school administrators (e.g., Andrews & Basom, 1990; Feuer, 1988; Neville, 1988). A caveat is necessary when discussing leadership characteristics based on the gender of individuals. Not all women exhibit feminist leadership characteristics, nor do all men display traditional masculine leadership attributes. Neville reported that the style of leadership of the majority women was less hierarchical, more democratic, and inclusive than traditional, patriarchal school leadership. She posited that more people were involved in the decision-making process when women were leaders. Several other researchers supported this finding (Feuer; Heck, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1993). Findings indicated that the majority of female leaders used less authoritarian language than men (Shakeshaft). Overall, a majority of women leaders did not use their position to gain power over people; indeed, they were interested in collaborative, supportive, cooperative, and collegial relationships (Blackmore, 1989). According to Feuer, a substantial number of women leaders appeared to be more flexible and sensitive to the needs and concerns of the teachers. Andrews and Basom found that morale was higher among teachers in women-led schools, and female administrators were more instrumental in the learning process.

Regan and Brooks (1995) identified five attributes of feminist leadership. These qualities were based on the work of women administrators who explored, analyzed, and discussed leadership over a 20-year period. This group of women maintained that collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision were feminist leadership characteristics. They defined collaboration as the ability of people to work together in a supportive environment. Caring was described as the development of an
affinity for the world and the people in it; it occurred when there was a commitment to
work on the behalf of others. Courage was depicted as the ability to take risks and test
new ideas as professionals. Intuition was depicted as the capacity to consider feelings
and experiences equally. Vision was defined as the ability to formulate and express
original ideas, enabling others to consider options in new and different ways.

The contributions by feminist and critical researchers to school leadership have
been considerable. Feminist and critical leadership theorists have been instrumental in
expanding the way people perceive and exercise power. *Power with* others, not *power
over* others; interdependence of people, a more egalitarian view of community, and
decisions based on concern for and responsibility of people are central features of
these approaches to leadership. Feminist and critical leadership research and theory
have affected work in shared decision-making, distributive leadership, and teacher
empowerment.

*Democratic Leadership*

Democratic leadership became an issue in education during the second wave of
reform in the 1980s. The principles of democratic leadership included the open
exchange of ideas; confidence the group will resolve problems; critical reflection and
analysis of ideas, problems and polices; concern for all members of the group, and a
specific concern and respect for the rights of individuals and minorities (Bean &
Apple, 1995).

Gastil (1994) argued that the tasks of democratic leaders were critical. Based
on Gastil's work, the first undertaking of democratic schools was the distribution of
responsibility. Everyone participated in all discussions and decisions. Additionally, democratic leaders ensured that every group member possessed a certain level of competence to lead and to take on leadership tasks. Because the process was as important as the product, the democratic process became the focus. Working together to resolve problems was important because it led to resolutions. Democratic leadership challenged the notion that great leaders were needed at the apex of organizations. Starhawk (1987) proposed a “leaderful” approach to organizational leadership. The position of leader was rotated among all members of the group so everyone developed the skills and competencies to provide leadership; they experienced leadership. As a result, all members were held accountable for their actions, all were held responsible for the well being of the group, and all acted to restrain any autocratic tendencies.

One drawback of democratic leadership is the assumption that consensus is reached on all issues or problems. Democratic leadership does not eliminate the different values and beliefs of teachers and administrators. Rotating leadership positions among individuals can be a disadvantage because of the time needed to assume leadership roles. It appeared that more time was devoted to leadership and less to the work of the organization. According to Gastil (1994), democratic leadership is most effective when the interests of community members are at stake and they are qualified to make the decisions. However, democratic leadership is less suitable for resolving technical problems or when the group is indifferent to problems or issues. The decision to vote is problematic for democratic groups because it can be difficult for a group to decide when a vote is necessary. Gastil identified the question that beleaguer democratic groups: “How do we vote on the need to vote?” Voting on
every issue is not necessary. Democratic leadership is based on a power with philosophy. Individuals are not dominant in the groups. Group members possess equal status and power.

**Distributive Leadership**

In the mid 1990s, school leadership literature shifted away from individual and role-based conceptions of leadership and toward organizational and task-oriented conceptions of leadership. Leadership was described as an organization-wide resource of influence and power rather than the performance of specific tasks or functions of individuals (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995). Ogawa and Bossert argued that leadership occurred through the interaction among individuals not through the actions of individuals. They maintained that leadership occurred through interaction; leadership was multidirectional; and it flowed vertically, horizontally, and diagonally within organizations. As well, influence that was exerted through leadership was not only unidirectional; it did not always move in one direction. Leadership was not confined to specific roles or positions in organizations. Therefore, power and influence were distributed across roles. People in different roles had access to different levels and types of power and influence. Based on distributive leadership theory, the functions of effective organizations were the following: (a) goal achievement, (b) ability to control relationships with the environment, (c) commitment among members to the organization, and (d) social solidarity among members.

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2000, 2001) argued that leadership was distributed in the active network of people, interactions, and situations. They claimed
that the situation was a core element of leadership, and that leadership could not be
separated from its organizational, structural, and social-cultural contexts. Reciprocal
forces existed between situations and leadership activities. Leadership activity
influenced and caused changes in the situation over time, whereas elements of the
situation affected leadership through facilitative or restrictive activities.

Models of distributive leadership affect school leadership in several ways. Teachers as well as administrators perform important leadership tasks inside and
outside formal positions of authority. Distributive leadership is based on shared power
between administrators and teachers. Distributive leadership requires mutual reliance
among all school personnel even though different personnel might perform some
leadership tasks better than others because of knowledge, skills, or expertise
(Thurston, Zenz, Schacht, & Clift, 1995). Distributing leadership tasks among various
people are crucial for schools because the school leaders are not able to perform all of
the school leadership tasks (Johnston & Pickersgill, 1992; Hallinger, 1992; Murphy &
leadership model in schools allows different people to take on leadership tasks and
enhances the commitments of those people to the school. It brings to the forefront a
greater number of resources, knowledge, and skills in the school.

Reform and Restructuring Movements

In addition to the leadership theories, the reform and restructuring movements
beginning in the early 1980s and continuing to the present day have influenced schools
in Western, English-speaking countries (i.e., Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand,
Australia, and the United States. Presumably, the primary goal of school reform and restructuring was the improvement of schools and the academic achievement of students. Schools were seen as failing to educate students; consequently, various stakeholders (i.e., politicians, business people, government officials, researchers, educators, and parents) believed major changes were required.

In the early to mid 1980s, the first wave of reform focused on the quality and effectiveness of education. This was a traditional, authoritarian, top-down attempt to improve schools. Power over policies were developed and implemented to force changes in schools. Accountability of student academic achievement was the main theme of school reform. In the United States, the 1983 federal document, "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" was the catalyst for implementing changes in various states and local school systems. Policy initiatives of the states included standardized, narrow curriculum, student testing, and teacher evaluations and testing. School principals were key to the reforms because they monitored teachers and students in their schools. During this time, the state of Texas was zealous about the reforms. As a teacher in the Houston Independent School District from 1985 to 1990, I had first hand experience of several policy changes. Students were tested on math, reading, and writing at every other grade level beginning with grade one. As a fifth grade teacher, I was responsible for preparing the children for the test and I was accountable for the test results. Another Texas policy change in the mid-1980s was teacher testing. In June 1986, I had to prove my teaching competency by passing the state mandated Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers. In addition, principals, vice-principals, and supervisors evaluated my teaching 20 times
using The Texas Teacher Appraisal System instrument, which was made up of approximately 40 criteria.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, various stakeholders continued to claim that schools were failing to educate students. Accountability, standardized curriculum, student testing, and teacher evaluations continued to be integral to school reform. However, researchers, educators, and policymakers suggested different types of changes to improve student learning. School restructuring and decentralization of power were two prominent changes that occurred at this time. Politicians, educators, policymakers, business people, and community members supported these changes. School districts engaged in school restructuring and decentralization of power.

Restructuring was based on the belief that radical structural changes were needed to improve organizational effectiveness. Decentralization of school management and the increase of participation in decision-making by teachers, parents, and community members were policy initiatives for restructuring schools. Decentralization was the transfer of formal power and authority away from the district office to the school sites. Site-based management (SBM) was an umbrella term used to describe various degrees of decentralization. Shared governance, participatory leadership, democratic schools, and shared decision-making have been used interchangeably with SBM to describe various forms of decentralization and devolution of authority. The meanings of these terms overlap, consequently, they do not always precisely describe the same type of school governance. Murphy and Beck (1995) developed a typology of SBM that encompasses the various terms used for
decentralization of authority, which was transferring power from the school district office and allocating it to the school sites.

Murphy and Beck (1995) identified the following three ideal types of site-based management: administrative controlled SBM, professionally controlled SBM, and community controlled SBM. In administrative controlled SBM schools, the school principals were the key figures in the schools. The central office transferred complete or partial authority to the principals in individual schools. Although the principals were expected to engage in shared decision-making and seek the input of teachers and parents, the principals possessed the ultimate authority to make decisions in the schools. Principals maintained power over teachers at individual school sites. Schools in Miami, Florida had administrative controlled SBM schools (Wohlstetter & McCurdy, 1991). Professional-controlled SBM occurred when authority was transferred to the teachers at the individual school sites; they were the primary decision-makers in the schools (Murphy & Beck). Teachers possessed the power over others at individual schools. Schools in Los Angeles, California most closely resembled professional-controlled SBM (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992). Teachers had the largest number of representatives on local school councils, and they were extremely influential in the decision-making. Administrative controlled SBM was more prevalent than the professional controlled SBM (Murphy & Beck). Community-controlled SBM shifted the power and authority from professional educators to parents and community groups that were not previously involved in school governance (Murphy & Beck). Community control of schools was implemented in Chicago schools in the early 1990s (Hess, 1991). Local councils comprised of lay people, made
decisions for individual schools. Community members maintained and exercised the most power in schools.

The second major piece of restructuring was teacher participation in decision-making. Teacher empowerment, teacher autonomy, ownership of decisions and changes, and increased professionalism were arguments made by teachers, researchers and others to include teachers in educational decisions. Several researchers argued that the increased control over teacher work through student testing and standardized curricular was antithetical to the professional autonomy of teachers (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1985; Rosenholtz, 1987). Conway (1984) found that teachers wanted to become more involved in school-wide decisions. The US Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) promoted teacher involvement in decision-making. Additionally, educational practitioners supported teacher participation in decision-making (e.g., Heller, 1993; Kessler, 1992; Vann, 1992).

Decentralization in educational organizations ranged from administrative to community to professional controlled schools (Murphy & Beck, 1995). Within each model, there were different degrees of teacher participation in educational decision-making. Moreover, different groups possessed and were able to exercise more power than other groups depending on the type of restructuring the school districts implemented. For the purpose of my research, I considered studies that focused on teachers and administrators engaging in shared decision-making (SDM) at the individual school sites that were administratively controlled SBM schools. In the next section, studies that focused on SDM at the school level are reviewed.
Shared Decision-Making

According to Taylor and Bogotch (1995), teacher participation was defined as teachers' engaging in decision-making about issues that affected their job assignments or activities. Weiss (1993) defined shared decision-making as "a formal system for the representation of teachers in a decision-making body" (p. 69). For this study, SDM was defined as teachers engaging in decision-making with administrators about school-wide issues.

Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994) conducted a comprehensive study of shared decision-making in twenty-four schools in four districts where substantial authority had been transferred to the school sites for three to four years. The researchers investigated if and under what conditions administrative-controlled SBM engendered principals and teachers to plan changes in curriculum and instruction to improve student performance. Schools that were struggling with SDM were compared with schools that experienced success with SDM. The researchers compared the following aspects of SDM at the school levels: knowledge, power (participative structures, the role of the principal, devolved authority), information, rewards, and instructional improvement. Successful SBM schools provided time and money for professional development; unsuccessful schools did not provide as much financial support or time for professional development. In successful schools, power was shared among teachers and administrators; it was devolved to committees and subcommittees, whereas, power was a contentious issue for educators in the unsuccessful schools. Different types of and broader information were disseminated to the teachers in successful SDM schools. Furthermore, there was a focus on sharing information.
among educators in the successful SDM schools. The principals were critical to the success or failure of SDM. Adversarial relationships existed between the administrators and staff in the unsuccessful SDM schools. The teachers in the successful schools were recognized for their work. Teachers discussed curriculum and pedagogical improvements and changes, and they reached consensus on curriculum goals in the successful schools. The most important features were teacher involvement with decision-making of all school-wide decisions and the support of the school principals and district of SDM. The researchers maintained that SDM and curriculum and instruction reforms should be implemented simultaneously.

The findings in Wagstaff's (1995) study supported the findings in Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman's (1994) study. Both studies identified similar elements that engendered and supported successful SDM in schools. Wagstaff examined the impact of SDM on math and science curriculum and instruction in 16 schools in two Texas districts that had engaged in some form of SDM for two years. The findings indicated that SDM had considerable impact on math curricula and instruction, but less so in science. The researcher contended that SDM was successful when the following conditions existed: preparation and guidelines for the shared decision-making process were developed, SDM training was provided before implementation; SDM was implemented in stages; the district superintendent and state education agency supported SDM; and schools allocated time to make decisions.

Researchers in the next set of studies identified conditions in schools that supported SDM. The faculty and staff at the Coral Springs Middle School engaged in successful SDM for several years (Kilgore, Webb, & Faculty & Staff of Coral Springs
Middle School, 1997). The researchers claimed that the following conditions were necessary for successful SDM: trustful relationships between teachers and administrators, focus on learning and teaching, good communications, and criteria for decision-making. In a case study of one school, Epp and MacNeil (1997) reported that SDM was effective if there was a free flow of information, commitment to the process, expectation of change, and candour in resolving conflicts. Bauer (1992) found that school changes or improvements were sustained when teachers participated in, and took responsibility for and ownership of decisions. In addition, the redistribution of power between teachers and administrators was a significant outcome of SDM. Weiss, Cambone, and Wyeth (1992) reported that delineating the lines of responsibility of the decision-making process and implementing training on how to function within a SDM model were necessary conditions for success with SDM.

The findings by Ingersoll (1996) and Taylor and Bogotch (1994) supported the findings of Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994). Ingersoll and Taylor and Bogotch used surveys to examine teacher involvement in decision-making and its effect on student performance. Ingersoll found that teachers had power over activities related to curricula and instruction, but they lacked power over issues related to students (e.g., discipline outside of the classroom, assignment to classes). Teachers reported that when they were unable to influence student issues, there was no improvement in student learning. Taylor and Bogotch reported that teachers were most involved in decisions related to their classrooms (i.e., how and what they taught and grade or subject assignments). The researchers found there was no statistically significant effect on the outcomes of students and teachers based on the teachers’
limited involvement with decision-making. Limiting teacher decision making to
curriculum and pedagogy did not improve student learning. Ingersoll (1996) and
Taylor and Bogotch (1994) concluded that teachers needed to participate in decision-
making that encompassed school-wide decisions and policies.

Researchers reported on the deterrents and problems that affected the
implementation of SDM in schools. Weiss (1993) identified several challenges for
schools that engaged in SDM. These included loss of support from central office,
disillusionment among teachers, action of principals to end SDM, and budget cuts for
training. Weiss, Cambone, and Wyeth (1992) investigated the demand that SDM
placed on teachers. Data were based on interviews and observations in 12 high schools
over a two-year period. There was confusion about who possessed the ultimate power
and authority to make decisions—teachers or administrators. The roles and
responsibilities of teachers and administrators were vague and ambiguous.
Furthermore, there was uncertainty about who ensured the execution of decisions. In
addition, conflict occurred among teachers because they were unprepared to argue
with their colleagues when they expressed different views. Weiss and Cambone
(1994) contended that SDM was a major change in schools; therefore, other school
changes should not be linked to it. Instead, school staff needed time to implement and
practice SDM before undertaking other major educational changes.

According to Johnson and Pajares (1996), the following factors were
detrimental to SDM: the need for additional resources, resistance to democratic
reform, inexperience with group decision-making, and the perception of teachers that
the district was unsupportive. Based on interviews with five teachers from five
schools, Griffin (1996) reported that the teachers were reluctant to engage in discussions about pedagogy because they did not want to disrupt the collegial school atmosphere and their relationships with their colleagues. The researcher also found that SDM caused relatively modest effects on student performance. Epp and MacNeil (1997) found that the teachers were surprised when conflict increased among the teachers when SDM was implemented. Researchers identified insufficient time to engage in SDM (Cistone, Fernandez, & Tornilo, 1989).

The relationships between teachers and administrators influenced the success of SDM in schools. Researchers addressed this issue in their findings. Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994) reported that teachers and administrators worked together in schools that had successfully implemented SDM; whereas, conflict between teachers and administrators existed in schools that did not successfully implement SDM. Weiss and Cambone (1994) supported this finding in their five-year study of 12 schools. There was more conflict between the teachers and principals in the unsuccessful schools. In these schools, the teachers were split over supporting the principals’ agendas or maintaining the status quo. When principals supported SDM and did not have personal educational goals, there was less conflict between administrators and teachers. The benefits for students were limited in both schools.

Two researchers found that the principals’ beliefs about SDM were critical to successful implementation. School principals played pivotal roles in these schools. Lunsford (1993) explored the impact of SDM on the role of the principals in 14 schools in one school district. Findings indicated that the principals who instituted SDM structures believed they did not have all the answers, trusted teachers, and felt
better decisions were made with teacher participation. Strong commitment by the principal, acceptance of role change, and a philosophical belief about shared governance were critical elements for implementation of shared governance. Moreover, Stine (1993) reported that principals were organizers, advisors, and consensus builders in the shared decision-making processes.

Weiss (1993) compared six schools that had implemented SDM to six traditional principal-led schools. She found the school principals were the initiators of change whilst the teachers supported the changes in SDM schools. Weiss reported that SDM improved teacher morale and their sense of professionalism, but it was not a vehicle for improving student academic success.

Johnson and Pajares (1996) examined the implementation of SDM in a large public high school in a longitudinal study. The participants reported they were supported by the principal, confident in themselves and their colleagues, and experienced early successes. Furthermore, the participants created democratic rules and procedures. The SDM process altered the traditional concepts of leadership that existed in the school. Johnson (1990) stated, “As teachers’ formal powers are augmented and administrators’ authority is abridged, the role of the principal will be redefined” (p. 343).

Siskin (2001) surveyed 500 Texas school administrators to ascertain their dominant leadership styles, attitudes, and practices. In the first section of the survey, principals reported that shared decision-making with teachers was important. However, this statement was not supported when the principals identified their preferred leadership style in the second part of the survey. Seventy-one percent of the
principals maintained that “telling” was their style of leadership. Telling leadership was defined as leaders who closely monitored instruction and teacher performance. Seven percent of the principals preferred selling while 22% stated that they favoured a participatory style of leadership. Siskin contended that leadership style appeared to be mainly a function of professional characteristics rather than personal or organizational characteristics. A majority of the principals were either top-down, authoritarian leaders who controlled what occurred in their schools. Most of the principals in this study expressed a power over leadership philosophy.

Shared decision-making between administrators and teachers in schools was instituted to improve the learning outcomes of students. There were mixed results regarding the effects of SDM on student learning. However, teacher professionalism and morale increased when SDM was successfully implemented. The following factors contributed to the success of SDM: belief and support of school principal, support from the district, ongoing professional development of SDM process, guidelines regarding responsibility, execution of decisions that were made, criteria for decision-making, involvement in all school-wide decision-making (e.g., policies, testing, class assignments), recognition of teachers, dissemination and sharing information, and good relationships between staff and administration. A critical feature of SDM was the knowledge of how much authority was transferred from the district office to the school sites and who (teachers, administrators, and parents) possessed the authority to make decisions.
Critique of shared decision-making

Researchers have developed a comprehensive body of literature regarding shared decision-making in schools. Several researchers (e.g., Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994) have identified factors that contribute to successful shared decision-making in schools. In addition, scholars (e.g., Weiss, 1994) have noted practices that impede the effort of teachers and administrators from engaging in shared decision-making. The results of the shared decision-making studies provide guidelines and guidance for teachers and administrators engaging in shared decision-making. A limitation of these studies is the lack of information regarding how power is used to influence the shared decision-making process. In this study, shared decision-making will be examined in relation to how first-year vice-principals, teachers, and principals use power to affect the decision-making process.

Power is a key factor of the literature in this chapter. A power over philosophy underpins traditional theories of power and the rational/structural leadership styles. Ball’s (1987) research on legitimate, managerial, and adversarial school leaders and Blase’s (1987b, 1988) studies of closed principals correspond to the power over perspective. Feminist, critical, democratic, and distributive leadership styles and critical and facilitative theories of power are interlinked to power with philosophy. Facilitative power appears be an integral quality for schools that successfully implemented SDM. Blase’s (1989, 1993) open principals and Greenfield’s (1991) moral leaders correspond to the power with viewpoint.
Summary

In this study, I used the following lens to examine how vice-principals understood the dynamics of school leadership and administration: research on vice-principals, the theories of school leadership, micropolitics, and shared decision-making. The studies on vice-principals provided considerable background information of the typical tasks, roles, challenges vice-principals encounter. In my research, I was interested in identifying the tasks and roles of the elementary vice-principals. In addition, I focused on how the vice-principals balanced their leadership and administrative duties with their teaching responsibility.

The focus of micropolitical theory was how individuals and groups used their power to influence the actions and/or behaviours of others. The relationship between the principals and the vice-principals, and the teachers and the vice-principals were central in this study. I focused on the following questions: What types of power did the vice-principals, principals, and teachers use that affected each other? What strategies did teachers and vice-principals use? How did the beliefs, goals, and interests of the vice-principals, principals and teachers affect the micropolitics of the schools? How did these processes influence the vice-principals' understanding of their new administrative roles?

The questions that arose around shared decision-making were the following: What were the characteristics and main elements of the shared decision-making model in the schools in this study? How were power and decision-making interrelated in the schools? What policies were initiated and developed at the school site or the district
level? How did shared decision-making that existed in the schools affect the vice-principals understanding of administration and school leadership?

In the next chapter, I review the methodology, strategies of data collection, analysis, and trustworthiness of the study.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, I present the methodology and research design employed in this study. I define what constitutes a qualitative inquiry, and describe its attributes and characteristics. I present information on case studies as one type of qualitative inquiry, and explain why I chose to use a multiple case study design. I discuss my position as a researcher. After that, I present the purpose of the study and provide a detailed description of how I conducted the research. This description includes the selection of the cases, background information on the district, schools, and vice-principals, methods of data collection, the timeline of the study, and procedures for analyses of the data. I examine the merits of a qualitative study based on the attributes of triangulation, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity, and ethics. Last, I discuss the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Qualitative Inquiry

A qualitative methodological approach was utilized in this study. Researchers used qualitative inquiry as an umbrella term for different types of research. These included ethnography (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998), phenomenology (Creswell; Denzin & Lincoln; Merriam), educational criticisms (Merriam), case studies (Creswell; Denzin & Lincoln; Merriam; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994), biography (Creswell; Denzin & Lincoln; Merriam), grounded theory (Creswell; Denzin & Lincoln), historical inquiries (Denzin & Lincoln; Lancy, 1993), life histories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), ethnomethodology (Denzin & Lincoln), interpretive...
practices (Denzin & Lincoln; Miles & Huberman, 1994), and feminism (Atkinson, Delamont, & Hammersley, 1988).

Qualitative researchers were emphatic about understanding how people made sense of their lives (Bogdan, Biklin, & Knopp, 1998; Filstead, 1970). Researchers engaged in qualitative inquiry because they were concerned with understanding the viewpoints, situations, and perspectives of the participants in the study (Bogdan & Biklen, & Knopp). For researchers to understand social phenomenon they needed to "immerse themselves in the settings or lives of others" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 7). This enabled researchers to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomena they were studying. Moreover, to understand the world of the participants, investigators observed them in natural settings, such as schools (Bodgan, Biklen, & Knopp; Filstead). Researchers focused on the "human and social actions" that occurred within historical or social contexts. This allowed the researcher to explore the complexity of the situation or social phenomenon and to place it in a larger context (Wolcott, 1988). Hendstrand (1993) maintained, "The heart of qualitative work is the opportunity to know a few people or a social system really well" (p. 83).

Eisner (1998) distinguished six characteristics of qualitative inquiry. First, qualitative inquires were field focused; hence, researchers collected data in the field. They observed, documented, illustrated, interpreted, and considered settings as they were. Participant observations and interviews were techniques researchers employed while working in the field. Other strategies that investigators utilized to organize and to begin to analyze data were memos, analytic files, rudimentary coding schemes, and
interim reports (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). As well, maintaining a journal of reflective notes was an integral component of qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1998).

For the second characteristic of qualitative research, Eisner (1998) claimed the researcher was the instrument of interpretation. Throughout the study, researchers used all of their senses to comprehend, to figure out, and to reflect on what and why something occurred. Investigators brought their own insights, perspectives, and worldviews to the research. As a result, investigators attended to and were conscious of their subjectivities or personal biases. Peshkin (1991) argued that subjectivity “filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe, and misconstrue what happens” (p. 285). Researchers considered how their personal beliefs and values affected their engagement in the study. Recognizing, acknowledging, and disclosing their biases enabled researchers to deal with their subjectivity.

Third, the study was interpretive; the inquirers needed to be able to account for their observations and perceptions, and they needed to understand the experiences of the participants (Eisner, 1998). Researchers interpreted what they saw, heard, and perceived; they asked questions throughout the study to explain why events and behaviours occurred. Smith (1993) defined interpretation as the art of understanding, reflecting, analyzing, and reporting on a particular phenomenon. Researchers needed to be aware of how the personal histories of the participants influenced their experiences. Schwant (1997) maintained that intersubjectivity was critical to qualitative research. Intersubjectivity was rooted in shared interpretations of experiences. That is, people who worked and lived together in schools had common experiences, which led to overlapping views, and shared meanings and values.
Coupled with the feature of intersubjectivity was the ability of researchers to write about the study in detail, and with insightfulness and profundity. Geertz (1973) used the term “thick descriptions” to illustrate how the writing placed the readers into the “heart of that which is the interpretation” (p. 18). He eloquently described this quality as providing the readers with a complex, rich, vivid portrayal of the phenomena that was studied.

According to Eisner (1998), a fourth feature of qualitative inquiry was the ability of researchers to use expressive language and have their voice present in the findings of a study. Researchers accomplished this through developing empathy for the participants in the study. Empathy was defined as the capacity of investigators to develop an understanding and appreciation of the people involved in the study. In a similar vein, Stake (1995) claimed qualitative inquiry was emic; the understanding of events was through the perspectives of people in the study.

Perceptivity was the fifth characteristic of qualitative inquiry (Eisner, 1998). Some aspects of the study were more important than others. Effective researchers learned to recognize and attend to the more important elements of a study and paid less attention to the insignificant aspects of the study (Peshkin, 1991). Researchers paid attention to the particulars of the phenomena; they were attentive to the details of specific events, people, and objects. Merriam (1998) asserted that successful researchers possessed the following attributes: (a) a tolerance for ambiguity, (b) sensitivity to complex social phenomena, and (c) the ability to establish rapport with the participants and to possess a capacity of instinctive communication.
Finally, coherence, insight, and instrumentabity were the criteria for judging the credibility of qualitative inquiry (Eisner, 1998). The study needed to be comprehensible, believable, and useful to the reader. In addition to Eisner's benchmarks, Marshall and Rossman (1995) argued that the following criteria were fundamental to qualitative inquiry: triangulation, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity. I will discuss these characteristics, as well as ethics and reciprocity, in more detail later in this chapter.

Case Study

The feature of “boundaries” distinguished case studies from other qualitative research. Case studies were limited or restricted to a single unit, such as a person, group, institution, period of time, or event (Merriam, 1998). Case studies were used to increase the understanding of a particular problem, issue, or concept (Schwant, 1997). Furthermore, researchers who used a case study approach asked why and how questions (Yin, 1994).

Yin (1994) argued that the major advantages of case studies were the various methods that were utilized to collect data and the multiple facets that were examined. He identified the following data collection strategies: archival records, documents, in-depth interviews, observations, participant observations, and physical artefacts. Yin emphasized the need for detailed plans and notes for case study research. Yin maintained that case study research was applicable to school situations because the researcher was able to closely observe the phenomena being studied. Researchers using case studies were able to work side by side with the participants (Bromley,
1986). Numerous and diverse topics have been studied within a case study design. Bromley claimed that case studies were particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and holistic.

Merriam (1998) maintained that the origins of case studies were rooted in anthropology, history, psychology, and sociology. Questions, issues, and topics of anthropology, history, psychology, and sociology were analogous to education. Anthropologists studied the sociocultural nature of cultures and communities. School cultures and the local community fell within the domain of ethnographic case studies. Peshkin’s (1991) work, *The Color of Strangers, the Color of Friends: The Play of Ethnicity in the School and Community*, is an exemplar of an ethnographic case study. Fournier and Crey’s (1997) book, *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*, is an example of an historical case study. Piaget’s (1930) work with an individual child on math conservation concepts is an example of a psychological case study. Sociologists are interested in how the structure of society and institutions affected the education of young people. *Home Advantage*, an investigation of how the socioeconomic status of the parents influenced the education of their children, is an example of an educational/sociological case study (Lareau, 1987, 2000).

Merriam (1998) maintained that case studies were descriptive, interpretive, or evaluative. Investigators employed a descriptive case study and presented a detailed account of their findings when little information was gathered about a specific topic and/or problem. The investigation of the working relationship between a teaching staff and a gay or lesbian administrator would be an example of a descriptive case study.
Investigators used an interpretive case study to explain some phenomena or to extend theory that was inadequate or incomplete. Researchers used interpretive case studies to collect data about phenomena with the intention of analyzing, interpreting, and theorizing about the issues. Descriptions were basic to developing a conceptual framework for the problem or topic that was being investigated. Researchers of interpretive case studies produced rich and thick descriptions of the phenomena.

The third type of case study was evaluative; it consisted of description, explanation, and judgment. Assessment was the key feature of this type of case study. Delpit’s (1993) work on the effectiveness of teaching reading to inner-city students within a whole language approach is an example of an evaluative case study.

I chose to use an interpretive case study for my research for several reasons. I was able to do an in-depth investigation of a multi-faceted and dynamic topic, and I conducted the investigation in a natural setting. This case study was holistic; I was able to investigate the multiple perspectives of various educators. I gained valuable insight and different points of view from interviewing teachers, principals, assistant superintendents, and the leadership coordinator as well as the vice-principals. As a researcher, I was required to critically understand and reflect on how the vice-principals understood school leadership. Using an interpretive framework required that I describe how vice-principals understood school leadership and administration during their first year, and explain why it happened. Eisner (1998) encapsulated the essence of interpretive research: “Inquirers try to account for what they have given account of” (p. 34).
This Study

The purpose of the study was to report on how novice elementary vice-principals understood school leadership and administration during their first year. The research design was a multiple case study; three vice-principals, employed in three schools in one school district, participated in the study. Herriot and Firestone (1983) argued that case studies were considered more robust and rigorous when several cases were included in one project. In the next section, I will discuss the selection of cases, gaining access to the sites, the timeline of the study, and the data collection strategies.

Selection of School District

For this study, purposeful sampling was used to choose the district, the three schools, and the three vice-principals. The Evergreen School District, a large, urban school district in British Columbia, was chosen because of its diversity, proximity, and size. The school district was economically and culturally diverse. There were low, middle, and high socioeconomic neighbourhoods and ethnically diverse student populations throughout the district. The schools were located in different socioeconomic neighbourhoods. The student populations were multicultural. I was able to visit the schools frequently because of the location of the district.

During every school year, the Evergreen School District accepted applications for the elementary vice-principalships from internal and external candidates. The interview process included culling the applications, interviewing the candidates, and appointing individuals to vice-principalship positions. Because there were over 100

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2 A pseudonym is used for the school district to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the school district personnel that participated in this study.
elementary and secondary schools, the district hired a number of vice-principals every year. The Evergreen School Board appointed nine elementary vice-principals during the year I conducted my research. I was confident that I would be able to include three vice-principals in my study. I was able to conduct three case studies. As a result, I worked in schools that were different and distinct in some ways, but similar because they were in the same school district and had similar directions, goals, and district leadership.

Working in one school district was beneficial because I became familiar with the philosophy of leadership, networks for supporting new administrators, and expectations of first year vice-principals in the Evergreen District. I was able to discern some common elements and similar experiences that the vice-principals encountered because they worked in the same district. I acquired information about the district organization, hierarchy, bureaucracy, and politics that helped me develop a more comprehensive understanding of the first year experiences of the vice-principals. Conducting the research within one district allowed me to explain some links between the district office and its effects on the experiences of the vice-principals. This critical relationship would not have been as evident if the research had taken place in more than one district.

The governance of the Evergreen School District was traditional. A hierarchical structure was firmly in place. Elected school trustees, at the apex of the district, developed policies, rules, and regulations, and set goals for the district. The superintendent, the head of the professional ranks, was responsible for the operations of the schools, and the organization, administration, supervision, and evaluation of all
educational programs (Evergreen School Board, 1999).\(^3\) In addition, he oversaw the overall supervision and direction of the staff. Four area assistant superintendents were under the direct authority of the superintendent; they were responsible for the management and administration of about 30 schools in the four geographical areas (west, central, east, and southeast) of the district. The assistant superintendents were the direct supervisors of the school principals. When policies were set at the district level, senior administrators expected the school-based administrators to execute the policies. Principals and vice-principals were the school-based administrators. The principals were the direct supervisors of and possessed authority over the vice-principals.

Since the 1970s, the Evergreen School District instituted consultative process to ensure that various stakeholders participated in and contributed to district-wide decision-making (Evergreen School Board, 1999). Representatives of teachers, parents, administrators, and community members served on district-wide committees and provided advice and feedback to the school trustees.

Although the focus of the study was three individual schools sites in one district, the British Columbia Ministry of Education was the governing body of the public school districts. It influenced the individual school districts primarily through the development of policies, goals and objectives, and rules and regulations that provided guidance to the school districts (BC Ministry of Education Goals, 1999). The Ministry of Education provided funding for each school district. The goals of the Ministry of the Education influenced the goals of the individual school districts. For

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\(^3\) A pseudonym is used for the school documents referred to in this study to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.
example, one objective of the Ministry of Education was the following: “Improve learning conditions/environment for students.” In response to this initiative, the Evergreen superintendent and trustees developed the policies for anti-bullying programs, and then directed principals to institute the anti-bullying programs in their schools. The Ministry of Education had an indirect effect on vice-principals because the principals and vice-principals were responsible for implementing and at times adapting and developing the policies at the school level.

Selection of the School Sites and Vice-Principals

Spradley (1980) identified six key elements for researchers when they chose participants and sites for a study. Willingness, simplicity, accessibility, unobtrusiveness, permissibleness, and participation were the criteria for selecting the settings. Primarily, the participants must be willing to participate in the study. Simplicity allowed the researcher to move from studying uncomplicated situations to more complex ones. Accessibility was equated with how often the researcher can visit the sites. Unobtrusiveness was the degree to which the researcher was inconspicuous or viewed as ordinary when visiting the school. Permissibleness allowed the researcher to have access to restricted areas at the school site. Participation meant the researcher engaged in or attended activities in the school. The degree of access that a researcher negotiated directly influenced the kind of research that was conducted. It was unusual for researchers to meet all of the criteria; consequently, compromise was usual.
Burgess (1984) described the difficulties associated with gaining access to research sites. When a researcher shared information about the study with prospective participants, the description of the research design and the role and routine of the researcher must be clearly defined. Based on his experiences, Burgess maintained that researchers negotiated access to people at different levels of the school hierarchy. Researchers might have to renegotiate access during the study.

Choosing the school sites and gaining the consent of the vice-principals to participate in the study were inextricably linked. Undoubtedly, the agreement of the vice-principals was critical to the study because they were the key actors in the study. For this study, I did not need the permission of the Evergreen School District. The district delegated this authority to the school principals. The principals decided who conducted research in their schools. All three principals consented and gave me permission to engage in research in their schools (see Appendix P).

Purposeful sampling was used to determine which schools would be in the study. Stake (1995) argued that choosing sites was based on how much can be learned at the site. Hence, the researcher needed to consider the uniqueness of the site, and its characteristics and features. The decisive factor for choosing the three schools was the presence of a first-year vice-principal and one school in each of the four areas of the district. I wanted to conduct my research in schools that were different from each other in terms of the following characteristics: (a) type of school (inner-city, French immersion, community, and typical neighbourhood school), (b) socioeconomic status (low, middle, and high) of the schools and neighbourhoods, (c) ethnic origin of the student population (mix of ethnic groups), and (d) school enrolment (range of student
populations). I also wanted representation of male and female vice-principals in the study.

The Evergreen School District hired eight first-year elementary vice-principals for the 2000-01 school year. These eight vice-principals were the original pool of novice administrators for this study. The district hired another novice elementary vice-principal in October 2000. The nine first-year vice-principals were Caucasian; two were males and seven were females. Eight vice-principals were in-district hires. Four vice-principals were assigned to schools in the west area of the district. Two vice-principals were appointed to schools in the central area. Two vice-principals were assigned to schools in the southeast area, and one vice-principal was appointed to a school in the east area of the district.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah consented to participate in the study; they received permission from the principals. Celeste was one of two principals assigned to the southeast area. Her school was the first choice because it had a large multicultural student population, was an inner-city school, and was located in a low socioeconomic area of the district. The second choice for the southeast area was a community school located in a middle-income neighbourhood. A male vice-principal was assigned to this school.

Gina and another novice vice-principal were assigned to the central district area. I decided to invite Gina to participate in the study because she worked in a community, multicultural, middle-income, mid-size school in the central district area. The other

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4 To protect their anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms are used for the names of the participants in this study.
vice-principal in the same area was new to the Evergreen District; she was an outside hire. She was the second choice in this area of the district.

There were four female vice-principals in the west area. The vice-principal who worked in an affluent school with mostly European-Canadian students agreed to participate in the study. At the beginning of the school year, she decided not to participate because she was concerned that the study and her involvement in a school-wide evaluation would be too demanding for a first year administrator. Hence, I contacted Hannah, who worked in a similar type neighbourhood school in the same area of the district, except the ethnicity of the student population was different. It was a mixture of European-Canadian and international students. Hannah agreed to participate in the study. I did not consider the vice-principal who was assigned to an annex in the west district because her role was more like a principal than a vice-principal. She was the only administrator in her building. The vice-principal who was appointed in October was not in the initial group of vice-principals.

The only vice-principal appointed to the east area of the district did not want to participate in the study. He felt the demands of participation would interfere with his work at the school.

Three female, Caucasian vice-principals in three diverse schools, from three of the four district areas, participated in the study. The Evergreen District employed all three vice-principals when they were appointed to the vice-principalships. The schools were distinguished from each other based on the type of school, the socio-economic status of the school neighbourhood, the ethnic diversity in the student body, and the number of students enrolled in the school. The schools were similar because the
principals, vice-principals, and teachers in the schools worked within a model of
shared decision-making. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

The table below depicts information about the schools and nine vice-principals:

- Locations of the schools
- Type of school
- Socioeconomic status of neighbourhood
- Ethnicity of the students.

**Figure 1: Vice-Principals Assignments to Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southeast</th>
<th>Southeast</th>
<th>East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female (Celeste)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner-City School</td>
<td>Community School</td>
<td>Partial Inner-City School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Income</td>
<td>Middle Income</td>
<td>Low/Middle Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Nations, Chinese, Indo, &amp; Filipino-Canadians</td>
<td>European &amp; Asian Canadian</td>
<td>European &amp; Asian Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (Gina)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community School</td>
<td>French Immersion School</td>
<td>Neighbourhood School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Income</td>
<td>Middle Income</td>
<td>High Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo, Chinese, Filipino, &amp; European-Canadians</td>
<td>European-Canadian</td>
<td>European-Asian-Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (Hannah)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Neighbourhood School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood School</td>
<td>Neighbourhood School</td>
<td>High Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Income</td>
<td>High Income</td>
<td>European-Canadian students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Nations, European &amp; Asian-Canadians, Non-Canadian</td>
<td>School Annex</td>
<td>European-Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (Appointed in October)</td>
<td>Neighbourhood School</td>
<td>Neighbourhood School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood School</td>
<td>High Income</td>
<td>High Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Income</td>
<td>School Annex</td>
<td>European-Canadian students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah, the vice-principals, possessed different educational
backgrounds and employment histories. Gina completed a Master's degree in
curriculum and instruction during the first term of the school year. She taught all
elementary grade levels (K-7) and computer technology during her 10-year teaching
career. Gina taught for seven years in the Evergreen District and three years in anotherprovince. Gina attended the seven-week district leadership program the year before
she was appointed to the vice-principalship. Gina was appointed to McCleery School,
which was a community school and had a 90-year history. As a community school, a director organized programs and classes after school for adults and children living in the surrounding school area. For example, the school offered access to computers after school. Mandarin and Punjabi language classes were held in the school. The school enrolment was approximately 450 (McCleery School Profile, 2000). The student body was mainly Chinese-Canadian, Indo-Canadian, Filipino-Canadian, and European-Canadian. There were 24 professional staff members — 17 classroom teachers and 7 non-enrolling teachers, four male and twenty female teachers, and a part time counsellor and multicultural worker. The support staff included a full time secretary, part time secretary, engineer, and three supervision aids.

Celeste’s professional career spanned 22 years in the Evergreen school district. Her experience included classroom, English as a Second Language, resource, and special project teaching before becoming a vice-principal. Celeste attended graduate school classes during her first year in administration. She completed the district leadership program the year before she became a vice-principal. She was assigned to Ashland Elementary, an inner-city school, which served economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse students in a low-income area. Ashland’s student population was approximately 735 students. There were forty-six teachers; thirty-one were classrooms teachers, sixteen taught English as a Second Language or were resource teachers. Thirty-seven members of the staff were women; nine were men, and nine were people of colour. Two full time secretaries, an engineer, lunch supervisor, and

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5 To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms are used for the three schools in this study: McCleery, Ashland, and Woodlawn.
6 Each school in the district published a school profile of basic school facts. Pseudonyms are used for the schools and documents to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the people who participated in this study.
four supervision aids made up the support staff at Ashland. Twenty-nine nationalities were represented in the school; students of Chinese, East Indian, Vietnamese, European, and Filipino heritages were the most populous groups. Over 30 languages were spoken in the school. Almost 70% of the students were English as Second Language students at one time. As an inner-city school, Ashland received several benefits (Ashland School Profile, 2000). A counsellor, youth worker, First Nations worker, urgent intervention worker, neighbourhood liaison, and multicultural worker were assigned to the school.

Hannah was a 20-year veteran who worked in the Evergreen School District for most of her career. She had taught social studies and physical education in another school district in British Columbia for several years before transferring to the Evergreen District. Hannah had been a counsellor at the elementary and secondary levels, coordinated the district urgent intervention program, and was a resource home instructor during her tenure in the Evergreen School District. Hannah possessed Master’s degrees in counselling and school leadership. She was assigned to Woodlawn Elementary, which had a multicultural population of almost 500 students with a yearly transient rate of 22% (Woodlawn School Profile, 2000). Thirty percent of the students were non-Canadian and 37% were English as Second Language learners. Within this group, there were children from East Asian, African, South America, and the Middle East. In addition, six percent of the students were First Nations; the remaining students were European-Canadians. The children came from upper middle-income and high-income families in the local neighbourhood as well as the families of students and staff at the local postsecondary school. The professional staff consisted of twenty-four
classroom teachers and five English as Second Language teachers; four teachers were male; twenty-six were female, and two were people of colour. The support staff included a full time secretary, part time secretary, engineer, three supervision aids, and lunch server.

**Role of the Researcher**

Qualitative researchers recognized that their life experiences influenced their views of the world, and subsequently their research. My 11-year teaching career and five years as an elementary principal had considerable impact on my research. On the one hand, I was familiar with schools, their cultures and complex environments. Many of the events and activities that I observed in the three schools had a familiar feel for me. I believed I understood what occurred in the schools at greater depth because of my prior experiences. My educational experience was critical to me during my study. Geertz (1983) vividly explained why experience and knowledge contributed to the researcher’s perspective: “In order to follow a baseball game one must understand what a bat, a hit, an inning, a left field, a squeeze play, a hanging curve, and a tightened infield are, and what the game in which these ‘things’ are elements is all about” (p. 69).

However, I was cautious that my recollections of my first-year in administration would not colour my interpretation of the experiences of the new elementary vice-principals in this study. As a first-year principal, I was overwhelmed with the amount of information I needed to assimilate because of my new role and because I was new to the school. In addition, I had difficult relationships with several teachers even though I believed I was working collaboratively with the teaching staff.
During this study, I needed to guard against keeping my experiences separate from the vice-principals’ experiences. I believed I was successful because I was conscientious about examining and finding supporting evidence for various data throughout the study. Asking many questions about specific topics was another way I limited how my experiences affected my research. For example, I made numerous inquiries about the shared decision-making processes in the schools. I tried to attend as many meetings as possible to observe the process first hand.

Last, I believed my experience as an administrator influenced the study because the vice-principals were aware of my background and respected me as an educator. The vice-principals viewed me as a person they could talk to relieve some of the pressure they felt as new administrators.

**Methods of Data Collection**

Before I began the formal research in October 2000, I gathered background information for the study. I had informal conversations with two novice vice-principals employed by the Evergreen School Board. I talked with five first-year vice-principals about their experiences as novice administrators when I attended a summer leadership institute for new and aspiring administrators sponsored by the British Columbia Principals and Vice-Principals Association (BCPVPA). Additionally, I met with a long-time executive of the BCPVPA to obtain information regarding the history, roles, and functions of administrators in British Columbia.

The following methods were used to collect data: in-depth interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and analyses of documents. My research plan
included interviews, observations, and documents (see Appendix A). Every activity in the research project was recorded (see Appendix B for a sample of the record). The main data collection phase of the study began in October 2000 and ended in June 2001. The three vice-principals were interviewed in October, January, and June. Teachers, principals, assistant superintendents, and other first-year elementary vice-principals were interviewed from January to June 2001. I engaged in observations from October to June, and I reviewed documents throughout the school year. As a follow up to the study, I interviewed the three vice-principals at the end of their second year in administration in June 2002. Although a schedule was pre-arranged for the observations and interviews, I remained open, receptive, and flexible regarding investigating unanticipated events, situations, and new phenomena. These changes are discussed in the appropriate sections of this paper.

**Observations**

I observed for 20 or more days in each school for a total of 360 hours (see Appendix C for details). I engaged in participant observations and direct observations of the vice-principals from October 2000 to June 2001. Direct observations took place when the vice-principals were in meetings, assemblies, or classrooms. The settings were not conducive to casual conversations. Participant observations occurred when the vice-principals and I talked informally while they performed some of their duties. For example, we chatted while they supervised the children during recesses or when the vice-principals worked in their offices.
The purposes of the October, November, and December visits were to become familiar with the vice-principals and the structures and cultures of the schools. Because I was in such close proximity to the vice-principals during the visits, it was crucial to build relationships based on integrity and trust. On some days, I spent two to four hours with a vice-principal while she worked in her office. Every visit was a delicate balance of remaining quietly unobtrusive in the shadows yet probing the world of the vice-principals by asking questions.

After January, I felt less conspicuous in the schools; I had become a familiar face and an accepted visitor to the schools. Many teachers and the school secretaries were friendly and talkative; they had become accustomed to my visits with the vice-principals. From March to June, I had several opportunities to engage in informal conversations with the principals of the schools. The principals shared insights about their views of leadership and their roles as schools leaders. These exchanges were invaluable because I obtained information about the Evergreen District.

Decisions regarding which events and activities to observe at the school sites were based on the focus of the study (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). In this case, I observed the vice-principals, the daily routine of the schools, and special events (e.g., sports day, professional development workshops). I observed the vice-principals working in their offices, performing administrative duties, interacting with teachers, staff, and the principals, facilitating and leading meetings, and supervising students. I observed Hannah and Gina teaching students; however, I did not observe Celeste teaching because she taught few classes. Meetings encompassed a wide range of topics and subjects. These meetings (both scheduled and spontaneous meetings) concerned
the staff, curricular matters, events, resources, parents, and professional development. I negotiated access to some meetings I had not anticipated attending when I commenced the study (e.g., professional development and some committee meetings). School activities were opportunities for observation; I attended several assemblies, performances, and parent meetings in each school. Occasionally, I was involved or observed unexpected events (e.g., a mid-size earthquake and fire drills occurred during visits).

In general, I was present at the majority of the meetings the vice-principals attended (see Appendix G & H for meetings attended). However, on several occasions I was not included in meetings because sensitive issues were discussed. For example, I did not attend a meeting when a vice-principal met with government officials to discuss a child who was in government care.

When and how often the researcher visited the school was critical because each school had its own rhythm, regular events, and activities (Burgess, 1984). Initially, I planned to observe the vice-principals on every day of the workweek during different weeks so I would be able to observe as many different activities as possible (See Appendix C for observation schedule). For instance, I visited Woodlawn on Wednesday one week; the following week I observed on Thursday. However, I adjusted the schedule for Hannah and Gina because they taught 60% of the time (see Appendix D for teaching schedule of the vice-principals). As a result, I rescheduled the observations for Wednesdays because Hannah and Gina did not teach on this day. Changing the observation schedule was important to the study because I was able to
observe the vice-principals engaging in administration activities rather than teaching classes.

After every observation, I wrote up my field notes and reviewed them, then I engaged in preliminary analyses in preparation for the next observation. I used the information to prepare myself for interviews or to check school or district documents. In addition to writing field notes, I systematically recorded the daily interactions of the vice-principals with other members of the staff from January to June (see Appendixes F and G). This was a strategy to portray the daily lives of the vice-principals (Burgess, 1984). Additionally, it provided another means to triangulate and verify the data I had collected.

**Interviews**

Interviews were integral to this study because the participants were able to explain their thoughts, ideas, and concerns about various issues and topics. The three vice-principals were interviewed four times. Three interviews were held during the school year that I conducted the study; one interview was held at the end of the vice-principals' second year in administration. In addition to the vice-principals, I interviewed 10 to 12 teachers in each school, the three school principals, two assistant superintendents, and the leadership coordinator. I interviewed five other first-year elementary vice-principals appointed at the same time as the three vice-principals. In all, I conducted 53 interviews during the research; the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to two hours in length (see Appendixes A and N for information on the interviews).
Generally, the interviews were semi-structured. I was receptive to discussing issues not anticipated but relevant to the study. Initially, I prepared a comprehensive list of questions for the interviews because I wanted to ensure that I obtained crucial information. However, as I reviewed through the interviews, I depended less and less on prepared questions. Instead, I focused on specific topics or questions that were important to the study or the interviewees. For instance, I thought the predecessors of the vice-principals might have influenced the acceptance of the vice-principals by the teachers. I planned to ask the teachers several questions about this issue. However, I quickly realized that the teachers did not believe the previous vice-principals influenced how the teachers responded to the newly appointed vice-principals. Subsequently, I spent less time inquiring about this issue.

Participants: vice-principals.

The vice-principals were interviewed four times (see Appendix J for a sample of interview questions). The purposes of the first interview were to gather background information about the vice-principals, to ascertain their early perceptions and expectations of their roles of administration, to collect data on how their relationships with the principals and teachers might have influenced their understanding of administration, to identify their tasks and responsibilities, and to note their observations of the culture and micropolitics of the schools.

The goals of the January interviews were to ascertain if and how the views of the vice-principals about administration had evolved, to discuss whether their tasks and responsibilities had changed since the beginning of the school year, to determine
how their teaching time affected their transition into administration, to query the effects of the collective agreement on vice-principals, to discuss their support systems, to ask about the challenges of their new posts, and to inquire about their views on their participation in the study. Several questions addressed the micropolitics of the school, shared decision-making, teacher leadership, and critical incidents the vice-principals encountered.

The purpose of the June interviews was similar to the January interview. The issues that were discussed included, but were not limited to the following topics: understanding school administration and leadership, challenges of the job, relationships with the teachers and principals, their support groups, participation in the study, self-assessment and self-evaluation of their performances as first year administrators, and plans for next year. The purposes of the interviews at the end of two years as administrators were the following: (a) comparisons of the second year of administration to the first year of administration, and (b) evaluations of their performances over the two year period.

**Participants: other first-year vice-principals.**

In May and June 2001, I interviewed five of the six other first-year elementary vice-principals in the Evergreen School District (see Appendix J for interview questions). I decided not to use the interview of one vice-principal because her situation was different than the other vice-principals; she worked in a school annex.

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7 One vice-principal did not respond to my letter or to a follow-up phone call.
8 She fulfilled the role of the principal rather than the vice-principal because she was the lone administrator in an annex which was a satellite school of a main school.
The chief objective of the interviews was to provide triangulation of the data I had collected throughout the school year. Four of the interviews were held at the respective schools. One interview was held at the University of British Columbia. I compared these interviews with the interviews of the three vice-principals who participated in the study. We discussed the challenges of the position, their tasks and responsibilities, their relationships with the school principals, assistant superintendents, influential teachers, and their self-evaluations.

*Participants: principals.*

All three principals were interviewed in April or May 2001 (see Appendix K for interview questions). The interviews were conducted in the offices of the principals. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain information regarding the career and administrative experience of the principals, their philosophy of leadership, district information regarding vice-principals, how the principals influence the transition of the vice-principals into administration, the collective agreement, shared decision-making, teacher leadership, and general information about the culture and micropolitics of the school.

Other queries covered the following topics: the number of vice-principals with whom they had worked, informal and formal mentoring relationships, leadership styles of the principals, roles of administrators, the philosophy of management and leadership of the district, vice-principal training, expectations of vice-principals, support for the vice-principals, power of the principals over the vice-principals, the
positions of the vice-principals in the district hierarchy, and the teaching assignments and administrative duties of the vice-principals.

**Participants: teachers.**

Ten to twelve teachers in each school were invited to participate in the interviews. The interviews, which took place at the school sites, were held from January to May (see Appendix M for interview questions). I deliberately scheduled the interviews during the second term of the school year because I wanted the teachers to have had substantial and sustained contact with the vice-principals before I interviewed them. The selection of teachers was based on combinations of the following criteria: grade levels (primary and intermediate), specialist areas (e.g., librarian, counsellor, and resource teacher), tenure in the school, teaching experience, gender, and ethnicity. In addition to the previously mentioned criteria, I felt it was essential to interview the chairpersons of the staff advisory committee (SAC) and the union representatives (see Appendix N for teacher demographics). The majority of the teachers were able to devote an hour to the interview. Of the twenty-nine teachers asked to participate in interviews, only one teacher declined to be interviewed. Another teacher requested that segments of her interview not be taped.

The goals of the interviews were to gather data on the history and culture of the schools, the perceptions and expectations of the teachers of school administrators, influential teachers in the school, evaluation of the effectiveness of committees in the school and shared decision-making, and expectations and views of the teachers related to first-year vice-principals.
Participants: assistant superintendents and leadership coordinator.

I hoped to interview the four assistant superintendents who were in charge of the four areas in the district and the coordinator of district leadership program. The coordinator and two of the four assistant superintendents agreed to be interviewed. However, only one of the assistant superintendents was the supervisor for a school in this study. He was in charge of the southeast area in the district. The other assistant superintendent was the administrator for the east area of the district. Regrettably, the other two assistant superintendents did not respond to my invitations to be interviewed. The June 2001 interviews were held in the offices of the assistant superintendents and the leadership coordinator (see Appendix L for interview questions). In addition to triangulation of the data, the purposes of the interviews were to obtain information about the roles of the assistant superintendents and leadership coordinator, their views of the roles of vice-principals, typical problems that new administrators encountered, and the processes and procedures for training new administrators. The interviews contributed to a broader view and understanding of leadership in the school district.

Review of Documents

The third strategy used to collect data was examination and analyses of school, district, and government documents (see Appendix A for documents that were reviewed). The objectives of examining the documents were to gain background information and data about the schools and district, to compare and contrast some of
the information with the data I collected during the observations and interviews, and to compare the information from the documents with the experiences of the vice-principals. School documents provided background information about the history, structure, and goals of the individual schools. District documents served two purposes: (a) they included information on the hierarchy, directions, and goals of the schools and district; and (b) there was information on the training, expectations, and evaluations of principals and vice-principals. Government documents provided historical and legal information about the roles of the school administrators and their association with the teachers.

Data Analysis Procedures

During this study, I collected data from 53 interviews and 62 days of observations (i.e., 360 observational hours). I reviewed numerous documents to obtain background information about the schools, district, and Ministry of Education. The research questions, which encompassed the vice-principals' understanding of school leadership and administration, the micropolitics of the schools, the use of power by the vice-principals, principals, and teachers, shared decision-making, and the vice-principals' relationships with the teachers and with the principals, were guidelines I used to collect the data throughout this investigation. Conversely, I was receptive to other issues and topics that the vice-principals discussed during the interviews and the observations.

I recorded field notes in a notebook during the school observations. After each observation, I rewrote and added comprehensive comments to the field notes.
Additionally, I included my interpretation and thoughts about the observations. I used similar procedures for the interviews I conducted. I usually wrote a few notes during the tape-recorded interviews, and then I added detailed and analytical remarks after each interview. Because unexpected topics emerged from the observations and the interviews, I asked additional questions about these issues during subsequent observations and interviews. For example, the vice-principals claimed that mentoring by their principals was important to their development as school leaders. As a result, I inquired about mentoring during the second term of the school year. Moreover, I asked the principals and the assistant superintendents about mentoring.

The concurrent and reciprocal processes of collecting data, writing field notes, and analyzing data enabled the identification of topics, themes, and patterns in the data. Analyses of the data began during each vice-principal’s first interview, and I continued to analyze the data throughout the study. As I collected data during the observations and interviews, I engaged in preliminary analyses. I used codes based on the research questions and interview questions to describe block sections of the field notes. Also, I coded topics that emerged from the data (e.g., mentoring). The codes included, but were not limited to, the vice-principals’ roles and responsibilities, goals, challenges, expectations, beliefs about leadership, leadership styles (e.g., collaborative, laissez-faire), adjustment to the role of the vice-principalship, decision-making, critical incidents, and exercise of power by the vice-principals, principals, and teachers.

Following the preliminary analyses of the data, I used the following tools for the in-depth analyses of the data: Atlas.ti, matrices, forms, networks (Miles &
Huberman, 1994), and interaction charts (see Appendix E). I reviewed and reanalyzed the preliminary data codes. Next, I used the Atlas.ti program to compile the data by topics, issues, and themes (e.g., the vice-principals’ goals). Matrices were used to compare and contrast critical aspects of the data (e.g., the teachers’ expectations of administrators). The forms included the following: contact (interview) summary form, document summary form, observation form, and interim case study summary.

Networks were utilized to illustrate the links of various themes, issues, and patterns among the data (e.g., linking beliefs about leadership to school incidents). From January to June, I used an interaction chart to record different aspects of the vice-principals’ conversations with the principals, teachers, support staff, and students.

Interpretation of the data, drawing conclusions, and verification of the data were inextricably linked to the analyses of the data. To ensure the credibility and plausibility of the conclusions, I compared and contrasted different aspects of the data. These included the vice-principals’ careers, administrative goals, duties and responsibilities, challenges, teaching assignments, expectations, and leadership styles; teachers’ expectations of administrators, and shared decision-making procedures.

Also, I examined the similarities and differences of the principals’ views about the vice-principalship and their relationships with the vice-principals. In addition, I looked at the themes and patterns in the data and noted relationships between different issues in the data. For example, the links between the vice-principals beliefs about leadership, their interactions with teachers, and decision-making procedures were investigated.
To verify the interpretations and conclusions, I checked to ensure that sufficient data were collected to answer the research questions throughout the study. I constantly reviewed raw data and asked questions of various participants to verify the data I had collected. Several issues became prominent during the research. For instance, the vice-principals' loyalty to their administrative colleagues was a more important issue than I had initially anticipated. Consequently, I asked the assistant superintendents, leadership coordinator, principals, and vice-principals additional questions about loyalty. I searched for confirming and disconfirming evidence in the data. Throughout the study, I engaged in member checking. I asked the vice-principals, principals, and several teachers follow up questions about different issues and incidents that occurred during observations. All of the interviewees were asked to review and comment on the interviews. Furthermore, I asked various participants (vice-principals, principals, teachers, assistant superintendent, and leadership coordinator) questions regarding specific issues, topics, and critical incidents to check the data and confirm or disconfirm the findings. Data that were unconfirmable were not used. The vice-principals responded to questions regarding my interpretations and conclusions. I reviewed the findings of the study with the three vice-principals.

**Quality of Study**

Triangulation, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity determined the merits of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Triangulation involved collecting data through multiple methods and from multiple sources (Marshall & Rossman). In a sense, triangulation was a measure of
internal validity; hence, checking the data was fundamental to research. In this study, triangulation was addressed in several ways. I used the following four different data collection strategies: interviews, observations, participant observations, and document analyses. I interviewed people in several positions and levels of the school district; these included the vice-principals, other vice-principals, principals, teachers, assistant superintendents, and coordinator of the leadership program. I reviewed documents to obtain background information about the schools, district, government, and school administrators (see Appendix A for an overview of observations, interviews, and documents).

Transferability

Marshall and Rossman (1995) defined transferability as “demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context” (p. 145). Lincoln and Guba (1985) urged researchers to provide extensive and detailed reports so the readers can judge whether the findings were transferable. Ample details about the circumstances of the case were required for the readers to use the information and apply it to other situations. Mitchell (1983) maintained that the onus was on the readers of the case to determine whether the findings were transferred to other situations. However, it was the responsibility of the researchers to provide thick descriptions of their studies to engender transferability (Geertz, 1973).

Kennedy (1979) offered a different and complementary view of how to address transferability. He drew a parallel between case study research and case law. A jury and judge based legal precedents on the cumulative effects and findings of other
similar cases, which depended on in-depth investigations and an interpretation of the cases. The process was similar to how social scientists engaged in case study research and then provided a comprehensive report enabling the readers to make a decision as to the relevancy of the report to their circumstances.

**Dependability**

Marshall and Rossman (1995), Platt (1992), and Yin (1994) argued that dependability was providing a comprehensive and detailed plan of the study so that other researchers were able to determine exactly what occurred, when it occurred, and why it occurred. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), dependability corresponded with the concept of reliability in quantitative studies; it was the careful documentation of procedures for gathering and analyzing data. For case studies, Yin suggested that researchers used multiple cases, drew up detailed plans, and utilized several data collection strategies. Timelines, hours of contact, records of interviews, observations, and review of documents were systematically recorded during this study. The links between questions asked, data collected, and the conclusions were explicit. Transcription of notes was completed after each observation. The research plan was detailed and thorough; however, I was open to unexpected events and made changes when necessary (e.g., observing two vice-principals on Wednesdays). See Appendices A and B to review the research plan.
Credibility

Credibility, closely linked to authenticity, was the correspondence between the way the participants actually perceived social constructs and the way the researchers portrayed their views and perspectives (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). The researchers maintained that authenticity was the responsibility of researchers to present the perspectives, views, and beliefs of the participants. Member checks were used for this criterion. Credibility was achieved by extensive and sustained contact between the researcher and the participants (Stoecker, 1991). I achieved this through the number of days and hours I engaged in observations. Persistent observation, checking with interviewees, critical questioning, and sustained analysis throughout the investigation were necessary. Field notes were written after each observation; questions were generated from the field notes and were used to prepare for subsequent visits. I engaged in regular and consistent observations for eight and a half months, for 62 days, for a total of 360 hours.

Confirmability

According to Schwant (1997), confirmability was minimizing the biases of the researcher. Member checks were critical to the quality of the study (Schwant). Interpretations and conclusions were logical and the connection between the conclusions and the data was explicit. Searching for disconfirming evidence countered the critique of researcher bias. The vice-principals provided feedback regarding interpretations of events, observations, and interviews. They were asked to comment on the analyses and findings of the study. All of the interviewees received a
transcription of the interview within 10 days of the interview. Although they were asked to provide feedback and comments, only a few of the interviewees responded to the request. During the study, I examined my own biases that were related to my experiences as a first-year principal. I used the literature on first-year administrators to help me frame and reframe the study.

Ethics

Soltis (1990) argued that all investigators must uphold a code of ethics throughout the research. He maintained that these were related to moral values and professional issues. Honesty, fairness, respect for persons, and goodness were ethical values. Professional issues that dictated the conduct of researchers were privacy, avoidance of deception, confidentiality, and informed consent. I followed the procedures of the ethical review committee at the University of British Columbia. All of the participants of the study received and signed consent forms, which stipulated confidentiality and anonymity as conditions of the study (see Appendixes O, P, Q, R, S, and T to review the consent forms for interviews and permission to visit the schools).

For some researchers, reciprocity was an important aspect of qualitative inquiries. Researchers were able to complete dissertations and write papers, articles, and reports because educators allowed them to conduct research in their schools. Reciprocity was the intent of the researchers to give back to the participants and the schools (Schwant, 1997). Reciprocity was extremely important to me. During this study, I reciprocated in ways that did not interfere with the study. For instance, I
counted newsletters because the secretary was unavailable due to an emergency. On another occasion, I demonstrated how to locate Internet websites for two vice-principals. At one school, I led an effective use of time workshop to a group of teachers during a professional development day. In addition, I presented preliminary findings of my study to a local group of administrators. One vice-principal in the study attended the presentation as well as three of the other elementary vice-principals that I had interviewed. Fourteen months after I completed the study, I met with the new coordinator of the leadership program in the Evergreen School District to share the findings of my research.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Several limitations affected this study. First, the study was restricted to three schools, in one public school district, in one province in Canada. The findings are not generalizable to all elementary schools in Canada, but they might be transferable to other school situations and settings. The readers of the study determine if the findings are transferable to other situations. Detailed descriptions of the schools, district, and primary participants are provided to aid the readers’ determination of transferability.

Another limitation of the study was related to the complex and dynamic nature of organizations. Vice-principals were involved in countless events, conversations, exchanges, activities, and interactions during a typical school week. It was impossible and unfeasible to observe everything they did. Furthermore, I visited the schools about one day a week. Although I observed many different activities and events during the study, I could not observe everything. My observations were limited due to the
parameters of the study and limitations on my time and ability to be in different places at different times.

The Evergreen School District appointed seven female and two male first-year vice-principals during the year this study was conducted. In the initial design of the study, I sought the participation of both male and female vice-principals. Three female vice-principals participated in the study. One male vice-principal did not want to participate in the study. I did not invite the other male vice-principal to participate in the study because his area of the district and the type of school where he worked were already represented in the study. However, I did interview him as one of the non-focal vice-principals. On a few occasions, I asked questions about the gender of the vice-principals; however, the three vice-principals maintained that the individual characteristics of the person were more important than the gender. Consequently, I did not explore it further.

There was a limitation in the data collection procedures. Although I conducted a substantial number of interviews and observations, it was difficult to verify the interpretations about specific issues to the extent that all uncertainty was removed. However, conversations, interviews, observations, and review of documents produced similar findings to the extent that interpretations were replicated in the responses of others, the observation of events, and pertinent documents. Therefore, the results can be seen as robust because they were obtained from various sources.

A delimitation was the exclusion of students, parents, and support staff from the study. The focus of the study was how the vice-principals understood administration and school leadership as it related to their duties and their relationships
with teachers and principals. Specifically, I was interested in the daily lives of the vice-principals inside the schools. Consequently, I did not consider interviewing children, parents, or the support staff. The secretaries, supervision aids, parents, and students might have provided insights or information that teachers and the principals could not.

In chapters four, five and six, I report the findings of the data collection regarding the three vice-principals. The tasks and duties of the vice-principals, relationship between the vice-principals and the principals, the relationship between the professional staff and the vice-principals, and the micropolitics of schools are analyzed.
Although many educators deemed the vice-principalship challenging and difficult, Gina, Celeste, and Hannah were eager to tackle the duties and responsibilities of their new administrative assignments. In the first section of this chapter, I introduce the vice-principals and review their goals, expectations, and beliefs of school leadership. Background information about the three schools is provided. Then, I describe the vice-principalship and its position in the school hierarchy, provide details of the traditional roles of the vice-principals, and discuss the teaching assignments. I briefly summarize other challenges the vice-principals encountered. The details of the experiences of the vice-principals were drawn from the interviews with the three vice-principals, five other first-year vice-principals, the school principals, teachers, and assistant superintendents; field notes, and documents.

_Gina and McCleery_

When I met Gina for the first interview, she reminded me of a young business executive. She was about 30 years old, professionally and stylishly dressed, assertive, and knowledgeable. Throughout the interview, Gina was articulate, gregarious, and passionate about various school issues. She was intense and serious about her new role in administration. Gina had specific reasons for becoming a vice-principal. She believed a formal school leadership position would enable her to affect the education of children beyond a single classroom. She expected to accomplish this through
involvement in school-wide activities. Gina explained, “Because I saw you could make a difference. I’ve done parental involvement in my own classroom, but now I can actually do this with a school-wide model. One classroom doesn’t make that much of a difference.” Her intensity towards her new job was noticeable throughout the interview. Gina reported that she worked long hours and committed herself to many school projects and activities.

Gina underlined the partnership between administration and teachers. She believed teachers should take ownership of school decisions and school activities. She advocated a “bottom-up” or shared decision-making leadership style. Gina explicated this approach to leadership:

I think there are two types of administrators; there are the top-down and the bottom-up. I mean teachers want you to be the bottom-up type of administrator where they’re consulted. Everybody likes, most people would prefer that type of administrator. I happen to be. Both Harry [the school principal] and I are like that. We don’t want to make all of the decisions.

Gina identified initiating new activities and proposing new ideas to teachers as obligatory for administrators. She claimed that teachers expected administrators to perform this function. Gina also believed her transition from teaching to administration would be unproblematic because she had worked in seven schools over a ten-year period. She talked about adapting to a new school: “I’ve had to do that all along. The seven schools in ten years, because you have to learn to adapt to certain ways of doing things.” Gina was certain that she would make a difference at McCleery Elementary.

At one point in the interview, Gina reflected on her age and appearance. She stated that she did not look like a “typical” vice-principal. At the beginning of the school year, comments by students and parents reinforced this perception. According
to Gina, they were surprised she was a vice-principal. Gina wanted to project a professional and mature image to the school community. She wanted the parents and students to see her as an administrator. She talked about her concerns:

Yes, that’s why I dress up. If you notice, I do quite a bit. I’m comfortable wearing those clothes anyway, but I’ve bought more suits because I also look it [like an administrator] a little bit more. And in this community, there is a little bit more respect of authority, of teachers, administrators, and I feel more the part.

Gina was assigned to McCleery School, which was located at the corner of tree-lined streets in a middle-income, multicultural neighbourhood. The school’s mission statement emphasized the reciprocal and cooperative relationship between the school and the local community (McCleery School Profile, 2000). Chinese New Year and Diwali (Hindu festival) were celebrated to honour the cultural diversity of the students and families. In another effort to recognize students, the teachers acknowledged the good deeds or academic improvements of students at the monthly McCleery Star assembly. The students’ art and class work were displayed throughout the hallways of the main school building. In addition, teachers offered many extracurricular activities to the students (e.g., basketball, volleyball, track and field, cross country, strings program, and chess). A teacher conveyed her pride in McCleery Elementary: “People are friendly and considerate of each other. The parents are respectful of the teachers and the students. Overall, I think the culture of the school is a very pleasant environment to work in, to learn in.”

The majority of the McCleery teaching staff was mature and experienced; however, several younger teachers had joined the staff during the past several years. The professional staff seemed friendly toward each other; a social committee
organized the Christmas and end of year parties, and teachers shared treats on Fridays.

Teachers tended to associate with the same colleagues. The primary teachers (Kindergarten to Grade 3) were a close-knit group. The intermediate teachers seemed to be divided by age and by teachers who coached sports. The resource teachers were the least cohesive group; several of these teachers did not blend in with the group.

With the exception of a few teachers, the McCleery staff seemed to get along well with one another. A teacher aptly described the teacher culture at McCleery:

There certainly doesn’t seem to be deliberate clique-ness or exclusion of anyone. I think we tend to sit in little groups, but it doesn’t mean you couldn’t join a group if you felt like it and be welcomed and feel welcomed in it.

The staff were concerned about the McCleery school leaders. Harry, the school principal, was appointed to McCleery at the same time Gina was appointed to the vice-principalship. Both the principal and vice-principal were new to the school. According to several teachers, the previous principal had been authoritarian, anti-union, and traditional. One teacher seemed to capture the views of the majority of teachers regarding the previous principal:

He did not suffer fools gladly. I think that would be the way to put it. His view was—get on with it. And because he was a top-down leader, basically, he told you this was the way it was going to be done. That’s not my idea of a leader.

Because of the principal’s leadership style, a group of McCleery teachers contacted the area assistant superintendent to request a principal who would be collaborative, collegial, and innovative. They did not want someone who was going to retire from McCleery Elementary within a few years of the appointment. This seemed to be the trend for the principals sent to this school. Instead, the staff wanted someone who was
energetic, enthusiastic, and innovative. By the second term, it appeared that Gina possessed more of these traits rather than the new principal, Harry.

**Celeste and Ashland**

Celeste, who was approximately 45 years old, was friendly, personable, and humorous. She asserted that her assignment to Ashland was a good match. She knew the school community because she had worked at a neighbourhood school for ten years. Early in the school year, it was obvious that many of the teachers liked Celeste a great deal. Her jokes on the public address system caused ripples of laughter in the staff room. Celeste greeted and talked with the teachers in a casual, relaxed manner. Teachers visited her office not only to discuss school issues, but also to chat about other topics. Her rapport with the staff was in stark contrast to the previous vice-principal.

During the first interview, Celeste talked about her reasons for becoming an administrator. Celeste succinctly explained that it was time to "move on," to do something other than teach after teaching for twenty years. Celeste expressed a desire to engage in professional growth and different types of challenges; her new administrative role afforded her these opportunities. Celeste discussed her goals as a first-year vice-principal. She wanted to get to know the teachers and to become familiar with the school culture and history. She believed it was important to develop a trustful relationship with the staff.

Celeste was aware of the tumultuous school atmosphere when she was assigned to Ashland Elementary. Feelings of animosity and divisions among some
teachers and the previous vice-principal had festered during the past few years. All of
the teachers interviewed discussed this situation. Celeste was aware of the stormy
relationship between her predecessor and a group of teachers. However, since Gil was
appointed to the principalship the year before Celeste was assigned to the school, the
attitude of the staff and the relationships among the teachers and between teachers and
administrators had improved considerably. Gil addressed this issue in his interview:

Initially when I came to this school, they had gone through two years of trying
times with regards to the staff-administrative relationships. There had been
some administrative transfer of a long serving teacher here that split the staff
down the middle. There were some personality clashes between the
administration and certain people in the school. There wasn’t a lot of trust
between the administrators and the staff.

Celeste wanted to support and contribute to the positive atmosphere that was
beginning to take root in the school. Celeste believed that was one reason she was
appointed to the school: “They want someone to support the staff. Maybe that’s one
reason [I was sent here]; I can get along with people. I can see myself working on just
improving the tone and the communication.” Celeste hoped to help improve the
relationships between the teachers and administrators.

Ashland, an inner-city school, was located in an economically disadvantaged
neighbourhood. The school offered free and reduced breakfasts and lunches to the
students. The mission statement of the school reflected the challenges that the students
encountered in their everyday lives. The school goal was to provide the students a safe
and respectful environment, which would support their academic, social, and physical
development (Ashland School Profile, 2000). The teachers were dedicated to the
children. They planned many events (e.g., art presentation, camp, walkathon, and
multicultural dinner) to expose the children to life experiences that they might not
otherwise enjoy. In addition, the teachers offered extra curricular activities (e.g.,
basketball, badminton, softball, badminton, homework club, and choir) to the students.

A large student enrolment was a major problem that affected the staff and the
administrators throughout the school year. The capacity of the main buildings was
about 600 students. Six additional portable and small buildings housed the remaining
175 students. Every assembly was held twice because the gym/auditorium was too
small to accommodate all of the students. Based on my estimation during the school
visits, almost 800 students ate lunch in the school basement, which had a seating
capacity of 400. During an intense 25-minute period, wave after wave of children
crashed through the lunchroom. It was noisy, crowded, and chaotic. Celeste had the
daunting and challenging task of supervising the lunchroom every single day with the
assistance of four supervision aids.

Hannah and Woodlawn

Hannah, who was in her late forties, was self-confident and introspective as
well as being easy-going and even-tempered. These qualities were evident in her
approach to her role as vice-principal and her relationships with the students, teachers,
and principal throughout the school year. Hannah’s career as a counsellor was
reflected in her demeanour and her interaction with others. Hannah displayed a
professional attitude in all aspects of her job. She was kind and respectful towards the
students and staff. Hannah’s style of dress—business casual—reflected her personality
and her leadership style. An assistant superintendent asserted that assigning Hannah to
a school was uncomplicated because she was able to work with many of the school
principals. He claimed that most vice-principals and principals were matched based on
personalities and skills (e.g., computer skills).

During the first interview, Hannah talked about her goals as an administrator. She emphasized her responsibility to support teachers, to make the jobs of the teachers easier to perform. Hannah reasoned that supporting teachers, by obtaining resources and materials for them, would allow the teachers to focus on the education of the children. Hannah shared her views:

I see my role as supporting the staff and the teachers to do the best they can teaching kids. That’s a general concept that I have. And in terms of specific duties so far it’s been supplies and equipment, etc...

Hannah claimed that facilitation was an important function of vice-principals, thus she espoused a facilitative theory of power to enhance the performances of teachers. This view concurs with the literature (e.g., Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). As a formal school leader, Hannah explained that another objective was to put the larger processes in place in schools. Hannah explained her point:

As an administrator, you see the picture as a whole. As a teacher, you only get segments of people who talk with you; you kind of just know about a few things or a few issues. I get a really good sense of all of the issues that are out there.

Affecting the education of children beyond a single classroom was a primary motivation for her to become an administrator. Hannah commented on how she would support the students:

My main goal is to support and help build a community where kids are learning what they need to be learning at appropriate times, in their intellectual, social, and emotional development. So, you know to provide that environment, to help supporting how that environment is built. And you know the immediate goals for me are to learn as much as I can about how to do that.
Hannah had a broad, but clear view of her administrative roles. Hannah maintained that her Master’s degree program in leadership had provided her with a solid foundation for the vice-principalship and school leadership.

Hannah had worked as an elementary school counsellor the previous year; however, she had worked primarily at the secondary school level throughout her career. Consequently, Hannah maintained that adjusting to an elementary school was challenging as a novice vice-principal. She emphasized the differences between the two levels:

Because I know how secondary schools work. They all have their idiosyncrasies and stuff, but it’s more like fun to me. It’s much more my comfort area than elementary. It’s different. To speak to an assembly of elementary kids is very different than speaking to secondary kids. I’m always thinking, ‘okay how do I do this?’ It’s not second nature like it would be if I was in a secondary school.

Hannah became the vice-principal at Woodland School, which was located near a city park in a stunning, natural setting; trees surrounded three-quarters of the campus. The Woodland mission statement focused on personal development, life-long learning, the diverse ethnic student population, and the connection to the physical setting of the school (Woodlawn School Profile, 2000). About 30% of the student population were international students; consequently, there were student transfers every year. Hannah was a good match for the school because she utilized her counselling skills when working with the students. As the year progressed, the principal and teachers valued her counselling expertise and experience.

The main Woodlawn Elementary building was five years old; two portable buildings were constructed due to the growing student enrolment. To an outsider, the main building was skilfully designed and physically striking. Because of its many
windows and high vaulted ceilings, sunlight flooded the building. Although the main building was relatively new, many of the teachers complained because the structure of the building caused sound to reverberate off the walls and ceilings. It was extremely noisy when students congregated in the long hallways, particular at lunchtime.

The building was the legacy of the previous principal who oversaw the construction of the school. She remained a controversial figure for some of the staff even though Jane, the current principal, was in her third year at Woodlawn. The staff articulated different perceptions of the previous principal. Several long-term teachers claimed the negative influence of the principal still affected the school culture. Some teachers felt Jane’s predecessor was distant, directive, and authoritarian. A few teachers claimed she was a visionary leader, but was misunderstood by the staff. The previous principal had a pronounced effect on the staff. Jane talked about following in her footsteps:

So mine was healing the animosity the staff had towards the previous principal. Until you dealt with that nothing else was going to happen. And then so I was just really, I don’t hold my cards against my chest. That is what I’m doing, interpersonal relations.

Besides the legacy of the past principal, Woodlawn teachers were known to be independent and outspoken; they frequently expressed opposing and diverse views on many issues. One teacher described the school atmosphere:

I think it’s a fairly good one [school]. It’s not an easy school. You have a lot of diverse personalities as you would have on any [staff], but you also have a very challenging clientele. It’s not easy so you have to have someone that is quite efficient and doesn’t get bogged down in issues, yet gives you the feeling that it’s not just a snap decision.

Several teachers commented that the teachers were not collegial even though the quality of teaching was very good.
Section Summary

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah talked about their philosophies and goals of leadership. Gina articulated specific beliefs about school leadership. She wanted to affect the education of all of the children in the school. Gina claimed that administrators must be innovative; it was their role to initiate new ideas and activities. She believed that teachers needed to be involved in school-wide decisions and take ownership of the decisions. Celeste talked about building trustful relationships with the teachers. She wanted to become familiar with the teachers, and the culture and history of the school. Professional growth as a novice administrator was one of Celeste’s goals. Hannah stressed supporting teachers by obtaining resources and materials. This would enable the teachers to serve their students. Hannah wanted to influence the education of the students by helping to build a school community. Based on the first interview and initial observations, Gina, Celeste, and Hannah advocated facilitative leadership. The three vice-principals articulated *power with* rather than *power over* philosophies. Moreover, supporting teachers was a primary goal. Gina, Celeste, and Hannah maintained that working with and collaborating with teachers were important aspects of administration.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah were assigned to schools where there had been problems between some teachers and the previous administrations. All of the teachers interviewed chatted about the difficulties with the previous administrations. Based on my conversations with teachers and administrators, the McCleery staff seemed to be the least affected by the previous principal. He had been authoritative and a top-down decision-maker, but most of the staff either ignored or acquiesced to his style of
administration. The atmosphere at Ashland had been the most debilitating, but had improved considerably under Gil's leadership. The Woodlawn staff seemed the most fractured throughout this study. The independent and non-collegial nature of the staff and the legacy of the previous principal contributed to the school culture.

The Vice-Principalship

Researchers maintain that the vice-principalship is the typical entry position for educators who are aspiring administrators (Calabrese & Adams, 1987; Marshall, 1992; Norton & Kriekard, 1987). In addition, the vice-principalship, which is the lowest rung of the administrative ladder, is difficult and trying. In fact, Evergreen District educators (vice-principals, teachers, principals, and assistant superintendents) at all levels of the school system viewed the vice-principalship as onerous and demanding; they expressed analogous views of it. They claimed it was the most challenging and unrewarding position in the school district. The vice-principalship lacked the prestige and status attributed to higher-level administrative posts, specifically the principalship. Marshall (1992) reported similar findings in an earlier study.

The vice-principals were aware of the exigent characteristics of their new roles. Another first-year vice-principal and colleague of Gina, Celeste, and Hannah cogently described the position:

I've had friends who were vice-principals who just complained non-stop; it was the dog's breakfast. And I would look at the job. Oh, my goodness you're teaching 60% minimum; you're administering 100%. You're in charge of the discipline and the furniture and the old books and things like that. I just thought, do I really want to bog myself down? For a number of years, I thought of applying, but didn't.
Harry, the principal of McCleery, expressed similar concerns and commented on the dual roles of the vice-principals:

> I believe even in the best of circumstances the vice-principal’s job has got to be one of the nastiest in the system. You’re neither fish nor fowl. You’re not a real administrator; you’re not a real teacher and yet there are expectations from both sides that you are.

Teachers talked about the tedious tasks and duties that consigned vice-principals to “Joe jobs,” the sundry tasks or inconsequential roles in the schools. A teacher offered this view:

> I think the vice-principals have a hard role because some of it depends on the principal and what they are willing to give them. I think vice-principals get given Joe jobs and gofer jobs so they don’t have anything substantial in the school. They are sort of a clerical worker.

James and Bob, assistant superintendents in the Evergreen District, contended that survival was the primary goal of a first-year administrator because of the demands of the job. Managing their time and adopting an administrative perspective were objectives of first year vice-principals as well. James, an assistant superintendent, talked about first-year elementary vice-principals:

> Realistically, survival is number one. It really is because it’s a tough, tough year. Survival from a personal and physical sense. Two, I think at the end of it, they have to have some sense of what the job entails now.

Vice-principals were expected to learn the fundamentals of administration and school leadership during their tenure in this position. In the Evergreen School District, vice-principals usually became principals within four to six years of their initial appointment according to the Ashland principal, assistant superintendents, and the Evergreen leadership coordinator. The position of vice-principal was viewed as a

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9 To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in this study, pseudonyms are used for the assistant superintendents.
prerequisite to the principalship. Bob, an assistant superintendent, articulated the position of district regarding the first year of the vice-principals:

It’s a really hard job. It’s very demanding, but you have to have that one goal there all the time. Prepare yourself to become a principal, have that as your objective. So you can get over this difficult demanding time.

Gil, principal of Ashland, attested to this view of the vice-principalship: “The purpose of being a vice-principal is to prepare yourself to be a principal.”

In addition to working in a challenging situation for several years, Evergreen vice-principals were mindful of how they presented themselves to their superiors. Georgina, the coordinator of the Evergreen leadership program, discussed her advice to new administrators regarding their first year. She maintained that the vice-principals should be knowledgeable and aware of their rank and status in the district hierarchy. Georgina conveyed that their status was low. She cautioned vice-principals to avoid negative attention:

Know who all the players are, how all the players are. How the power structure works because there is a power structure. I would be wrong to say there wasn’t. But you need to understand it before you make yourself known out there [in the district]. So, stay low for that first year. That’s what I always tell them.

Vice-principals needed to exhibit appropriate and acceptable behaviours to their superiors if they wanted to be promoted to the principalship in the future.

A vice-principal, who was appointed the same year as the three vice-principals in this study, talked about a conversation he had with his principal. Early in the school year, the principal informed him that if he wanted to be promoted to a principalship, he needed to be unequivocally loyal to her and not the teachers. The vice-principal

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10 The Evergreen leadership coordinator had many other responsibilities; this was not her main role in the district.
stated that his principal’s blunt attitude affected his relationship with the teachers. He maintained that he was not friendly or open with them. This was an unfamiliar position for the vice-principal because he had had amiable relationships with teachers in the past.

Vice-principals were admonished to think about their careers beyond their first year in administration. They needed to be aware of the impressions they made on the assistant superintendent and the superintendent. In the Evergreen District, it seemed that the vice-principals needed to conform to the Evergreen administrative image and avoid negative attention. They needed to monitor their behaviour when they were around their superiors. Loyalty to management was as important to promotion as learning the skills and knowledge about administration and school leadership.

Also, the vice-principals felt the pressure to demonstrate their competence and effectiveness to the teachers and principals. James, an assistant superintendent, discussed the situation in elementary schools:

"Because again elementary teachers, with smaller schools, you spend more time with those teachers and very quickly they can assess competence. And they don’t appreciate, and I’m not sure that is the right word, but maybe they appreciate competence and ability of the admin officer to help them, to provide for them, to guide the school without being the dictator. So, you’ve got to find experiences in a whole range of things that makes you look like when you walk in that job that you’re a competent leader."

At the end of the first term, Celeste contemplated about knowing the teachers’ expectations of vice-principals. She commented on her situation:

"The most challenging is balancing it all. Because it’s always she [the vice-principal] should be doing this; she should be doing that. What are we doing? So, the most difficult thing is knowing what people’s perceptions are and what it ought to be like."

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11 James was not a supervisor of any of the schools or vice-principals in this study.
She was concerned that she did not know how to respond to teachers in some situations.

**Roles of the Vice-Principals**

Vice-principals taught 60% or three days a week; the remaining 40% of their time was allocated to management and leadership responsibilities. This schedule was based on a school day that began at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 3:00 p.m. However, the vice-principals in this study worked three to six additional hours per day. The management duties of the vice-principals were comprised of the supervision and discipline of students, traditional tasks, and "Joe jobs." The Joe jobs will be discussed in more detail in another section of this chapter.

At the beginning of the school year, the vice-principals were adjusting to the pace of the job, volume of work, its fragmented and piecemeal nature, and its numerous responsibilities. The vice-principals reported feeling overwhelmed and stressed with their new roles during the first term. A colleague of the vice-principals spoke about the demands of the job:

I'm here between 7:00 and 7:30 in the morning and I'm usually here until 7:30 at night. Now that's my choice, but in order for me to feel like I'm organized, because it does affects me. It affects my stress level if I go away, knowing that everything is mixed up. My head stays mixed up.

Researchers have reported similar findings for the past 20 years (Black, 1980; Garawski, 1978; Kaplan & Owings, 1999). Additionally, the vice-principals had to adjust to working with and interacting with more people as administrators as opposed to when they were not administrators. The first-year vice-principals encountered more diverse and varied responsibilities and tasks. At times, Gina, Celeste, and Hannah felt
they lost control over part of their time because of the demands of others. To some extent teachers, staff, students, and the principals dictated what the vice-principals did because of requests and needs.

Another aspect of the professional lives of vice-principals was attending school and district level meetings — a basic feature of administration (see Appendix G for meetings the vice-principals attended). The vice-principals attended more meetings as administrators than they did as teachers. School level meetings usually included the monthly staff advisory committee (SAC) meetings and other committee meetings, such as professional development, resource, budget, fundraising, literacy, school-based team, inner-city, and parent. The SAC was the primary meeting in the schools because the administrators and teachers made most school-wide decisions during these meetings. Also, teachers chaired this meeting, not administrators. I will discuss the SAC in more detail in chapter six.

The bi-monthly superintendent meetings and the monthly assistant superintendent meetings were district level meetings attended by elementary and secondary administrators. To some extent, the vice-principals were exposed to the leadership expectations of the Evergreen superintendent and assistant superintendents. These meetings helped the vice-principals adopt and assimilate the perspectives and ideas of administrators. The vice-principals had to leave the school campus to attend the district administrative meetings. From one point of view, these meetings prevented the vice-principals from supporting or working with teachers for almost a half-day every month.
In general, Gina, Hannah, and Celeste performed similar management and administration duties; however, there were some variations among them (see Appendix D for the daily schedules of the vice-principals). For instance, Gina, who was a classroom teacher, did not supervise students. Hannah was the only vice-principal who evaluated a teacher during the school year. Celeste was more involved in the daily management of the school and discipline of students than either Gina or Hannah.

The vice-principals lacked knowledge and information to answer questions, solve problems, and make decisions early in the school year. Moreover, there were few, if any, resources, guidelines or information about the individual schools. The vice-principals had to constantly ask questions about school procedures and events. Gina talked about her frustration with the situation at McCleery: “The first year, unfortunately I had to change things because there wasn’t a lot for me to look at. How can I do things the way they’re supposed to be done when the information wasn’t there for me?” During several observations, I observed the vice-principals spending an inordinate amount of time calling the school board office and colleagues obtaining information to perform many of these tasks. Although the school personnel were helpful, another novice vice-principal, talked about the predicament of the vice-principals:

Trying to navigate the bureaucracy and the people, the departments, the names. It’s just immense. It would take several phone calls to find out what to do in certain situations or who to talk about a certain topic, whereas now I know who to contact. It’s only one phone call away rather than four or five phone calls.

The vice-principals needed easy access to information about the schools and the district early in the school year to perform some of their tasks.
Teaching assignments.

The most difficult challenge for many vice-principals was balancing their teaching assignments (60%) with their management and leadership responsibilities. The time (60%) vice-principals allocated to teaching was not a condition in the EETU contract. The superintendent and assistant superintendents decided the amount of time the vice-principals taught. The vice-principals’ teaching assignments were based on the needs or teaching openings in the individual schools. The vice-principals in this study were enrolling teachers, resource teachers, or preparation teachers. An enrolling vice-principal taught a class of students at a specific grade level. Vice-principals, who were assigned to resource positions, provided academic support to students. These vice-principals were English as a Second Language, learning assistance teachers, and project coordinators. Vice-principals, who were preparation teachers, provided class coverage for the teachers’ two weekly planning periods. This coverage was a stipulation in the collective agreement. The preparation teachers taught various subjects (e.g., music, art, computer, physical education). According to Harry, approximately nine vice-principals in the district were enrolling teachers because of a provision in the collective agreement between the Evergreen Elementary Teachers Union (EETU) and the Evergreen School Board. Because a percentage of teachers were assigned to resource positions, some vice-principals were classroom teachers.

The teaching assignments of Gina, Celeste, and Hannah varied in ways that affected the time they engaged in their administration duties and school leadership.

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12 Classroom teacher and enrolling teachers will be used interchangeably. Resource teachers provided extra academic instruction to students.

13 A pseudonym is used for the teachers union to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in this study.
roles. Gina who was a classroom teacher had the most challenging job of the three vice-principals. The major differences between enrolling and non-enrolling vice-principals were greater time demands, additional classroom responsibilities, and an inflexible class schedule. Gina’s intermediate class of 24 students demanded considerable attention. Allocating time for preparing lessons, marking papers, writing report cards, and conferring with parents added to her workload because she needed to complete her administration tasks as well. Gina worked 10 to 12 hour days to complete both her teaching and administrative work. She added to her workload by coaching girls basketball and volleyball during the autumn term. Not surprisingly, Gina was exhausted with the pace and volume of her work.

Gina taught language arts, social studies, and science, which required more time to plan and mark students’ work than math and music, which were taught by her teaching partner. Working with a partner also presented some dilemmas for Gina. For instance, she claimed it took extra time to get organized in her classroom, find her materials, and begin to teach because the other teacher had a different way of organizing class materials.

Gina reported that she did not use some of the teaching units and programs that she had in previous years. For example, in the past Gina had developed and instituted a comprehensive school-home reading program. Gina usually supplemented the basic curriculum with enrichment activities and fieldtrips. Parents, who were fixtures in her classroom for many years, were not invited to volunteer. As an enrolling vice-principal, Gina eliminated most of these activities because she lacked the time to plan or coordinate the activities.

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14 Grades four to seven are intermediate grades.
Several times throughout the school year, Gina was concerned about the quality of her teaching. She felt the students in her classroom were short changed because she could not sustain her standard of teaching of past years. During some class observations, Gina was visibly frustrated and exhausted when she was teaching. At times, she was inconsistent when she disciplined the students. A class rule was enforced one day and overlooked on another day. At other times, I observed a talented and gifted teacher. Gina was dynamic and innovative, and the children responded to her lessons and enthusiasm. She articulated her concerns about being a classroom teacher and a vice-principal:

You don't have the time as an enrolling VP; you're in your class 60% of the time. When you're in your office you're trying to go through your mail, deal with the few behaviour problems really quickly because of course you have one period in the office. And it doesn't work.

On occasion, Gina claimed she had difficulty maintaining continuity in her teaching program because of her staggered teaching and administration schedules (see Appendix D). For example, she taught from 8:30 a.m. to 10:10 a.m. and again from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on two days during the week. The demands of administration interrupted and interfered in her teaching and vice-versa. Gina was late for several classes because she had to deal with a discipline problem, a faculty request, or a parental concern. She could not ignore or overlook these problems and return to her classroom. Additionally, Gina explained that splitting her time according to her contract; that is, 60% to teaching and 40% to administration was impractical and impossible. Gina remarked on the demands of the double roles of teaching and administration:
What’s been challenging, and I started off thinking this, is realizing that you can’t be the teacher you want to be and you probably can’t be the administrator that you want to be. Both are compromised and I think that’s why you look forward to being an administrator full time, which means being a principal.

As an enrolling vice-principal, Gina faced many challenges. According to Gina, the quality of her instruction was compromised because of her administrative responsibilities. Gina commented on her desire to be a resource teacher rather than a classroom teacher: “I was there today grabbing stuff to do my planning over the weekend because of course I have curriculum to teach. I would love to be in a resource position.” Resource teachers had fewer students, thus there was less preparation and outside class work. Gina believed her workload would be reduced if she were a resource teacher.

Harry, the principal of McCleery, was concerned about the administrative and teaching workloads that Gina tried to manage. He expressed apprehension regarding how much work Gina could handle given her teaching assignment:

I guess Gina being brand new to the job, I’ve been... the word isn’t wary or cautious or anything like that, but I just haven’t felt that I’ve been able to do the degree of coaching or mentoring because of the teaching assignment. I certainly would have been and I’m certainly looking forward to next year. Her being in a non-enrolling situation; she will have the opportunity to do a lot more.

Harry continued: “I don’t think you can plan a classroom program and teach a classroom program and still do the kind of job you can be doing as a vice-principal.”

From Gina’s perspective, Harry could have helped to reduce her workload. Gina talked about another enrolling vice-principal who was supported by the principal. According to Gina, the principal reduced this vice-principal’s workload by instructing the teachers to see him about specific problems rather than the vice-principal. This vice-principal was not beleaguered with her dual roles of teaching and administration.
Principals, assistant superintendents, and vice-principals agreed that vice-principals who enrolled classes were in demanding and trying situations. All eight of the vice-principals who were interviewed for this study confirmed that enrolling vice-principals had the most difficult and challenging assignment as compared to the non-enrolling vice-principals. The two assistant superintendents acknowledged the difficulties of enrolling vice-principals. Bob, an assistant superintendent, conveyed his views:

Also, sometimes the teaching load doesn’t quite match what they have. The vice-principal in the school that has a non-enrolling position is in a far better position than the vice-principal who is in an enrolling position to adjust and address concerns that are coming at you.

The challenges of the enrolling vice-principals were well known in the Evergreen District. Given the situation and the contention that the quality of education of the children was compromised, appointing vice-principals to enrolling classroom positions was problematic.

Unlike Gina and Hannah, Celeste did not have an established teaching schedule. She was a project coordinator. Her role was initiating, coordinating, and monitoring activities that supported student learning at all grade levels. For example, Celeste organized fundraisers to purchase books for the school, planned a Halloween book raffle for the students, and organized a multicultural dinner for the school community. The teachers, students, and their families gathered for dinner at school. In addition, she supervised a student walkathon to raise money for the student spring camping trip. Celeste worked eight to ten hours a day. This was typical for first-year vice-principals (Bognar, 1996). Her duties included student supervision during recesses and lunch.
Celeste never taught when I observed in the school. In fact, she reported teaching only a handful of classes throughout the school year. The benefits of her “teaching” assignment were considerable. Celeste was able to spend approximately 85% of her time in her office because of her project coordinator position. Celeste was more accessible and available to the staff than either Gina or Hannah. Early in the school year, she was able to develop relationships with many teachers because five to fifteen teachers visited her office every day. Furthermore, she had access to the principal and spoke to him several times a day when she visited his office. During most observations, Celeste talked to the principal between two and five times a day. Celeste engaged in more administration and management tasks than the other two vice-principals because she had more time for these endeavours as opposed to teaching 60% of the time. Essentially, Celeste was a full time vice-principal; most of the staff viewed her as a full time vice-principal.

Hannah taught English as a second language (ESL) at Woodlawn. In addition to her teaching duties, Hannah supervised students during lunch and recess everyday, and she frequently monitored the playground area before and after school. Her teaching and supervision duties required a considerable amount of her time. Hannah typically worked from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. She arrived at school early and stayed late so she could talk to the teachers.

Woodlawn School had a large and transient population; consequently, there was always a considerable number of non-English speaking children enrolled in the school. From 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 2:50 p.m., approximately 20 of these children left their homeroom classrooms to work with a (ESL) teacher.
Hannah taught intensive English instruction to groups of five to eight students from this ESL class. Because Hannah worked with children from this ESL class, cancelling a class was not a problem for her. When Hannah cancelled classes, the children returned to the ESL classroom rather than homeroom classroom.

During several observations, Hannah cancelled classes to attend different meetings. Hannah was able to tend to student discipline cases and emergencies because the ESL teacher supervised the children in his classroom. Hannah ruminated about the situation: "He’s [ESL teacher] really good about it. If I’ve got school-based team [meetings] or something like that, he keeps them. He’s very open to doing that and I really appreciate that." The children did lose intensive instructional time if Hannah had to cancel classes. However, the classroom teachers did not seem to object when Hannah cancelled classes because the children went to the ESL teacher; they still received ESL instruction. A Woodlawn teacher explained why teachers might become frustrated if the children were returned to their homeroom classrooms when the classes were cancelled:

I think they [vice-principals] get a lot more respect if they are good teachers and dependable. And you probably run across a lot of vice-principals doing non-enrolling positions. So, what teachers hate is when their timetables are constantly being changed because the administrator is gone to do something else. So the administrator, because you’re non-enrolling you can send the kids back to the class while you deal with whatever.

Hannah’s situation was different because the children did not return to their homeroom classrooms when Hannah cancelled classes.

For Hannah, the teacher-related tasks for ESL were minimal. She did not have to complete report cards; instead, she wrote abbreviated reports for her ESL students. Furthermore, Hannah met with few parents during the parent-teacher conferences.
Hannah worked hard and was a conscientious teacher. She spent extra time planning lessons because she had no ESL teaching experience or credential. Hannah’s lack of ESL training and experience should have, but did not influence her vice-principalship placement.

The Joe jobs.

Another goal of the vice-principals was to learn the skills and knowledge that enabled them to perform and function competently in their new roles. Hannah, Gina, and Celeste spent a considerable amount of time performing the traditional tasks or Joe jobs such as organizing and distributing class supplies, ordering materials, obtaining furniture, and planning events. These were typical tasks of elementary and secondary vice-principals (Bognar, 1996; Gorton & Kattman, 1985; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; NASSP, 1991; Reed & Himmler, 1985). Jane, the Woodlawn principal, claimed that vice-principals performed these tasks because of budget cutbacks in the Evergreen District during the past several years. Before the budget reductions, clerical workers completed these tasks. Because of the shortage of clerical staff, Gina, Celeste, and Hannah were in charge of many of the Joe jobs.

I observed the vice-principals performing these tasks throughout the school year. Celeste allocated a substantial amount of her day working on the school supply order for the following school year during three observations in October. Hannah organized rides for children who attended a district-sponsored gifted program at another school. She spent time calling parents and talking to teachers to ensure the
children had transportation to the classes. Gina devoted several days organizing the stockrooms before school began in September.

Initially, the vice-principals conscientiously and dutifully completed these tasks because they were fundamental to their roles. In October, Gina commented on this aspect of administration:

I also think as vice-principal, it's customary to deal with supplies and furniture. The kinds of things the principals don't want to deal with. Tradition has said that certain jobs are vice-principals' jobs. Things like stock, all VPs do stock; that's basic.

Jane, principal of Woodlawn, explained why the vice-principals were in charge of the Joe jobs:

There are some jobs that are muscle work. It's put the supplies away. Someone has to do it and it ends up being the administration that does it. And usually it ends up being the vice-principal does it, only cause it kind of works that way. One of the things the vice-principals have to learn is to order supplies for the school. And you need to know the process it goes through. You need to do it from beginning to end. So, that becomes the vice-principal's job, but it doesn't really matter who does it.

Bob, an assistant superintendent, had a different concern. He worried about the possibility that some principals limited the vice-principals to performing only these minor jobs:

My biggest concern is that the vice-principal be given the opportunity to be the principal in absence of the principal. Not to be a glorified secretary or something of that nature. To be able to do meaningful, professional development activities and so forth. To have the freedom to use the skills that they have to prove themselves, not to be a pencil pusher that counts stock.

Gil, the Ashland principal, offered his interpretation of the relevance of the tasks to the vice-principals' first few weeks in their new roles: "But it is a doable job and when you start working somewhere, there's got to be some things that you feel, hey, I can do this." He believed that performing these tasks accomplished two things:
(a) the vice-principals did complete the tasks, thus building their confidence; and (b) it was an opportunity for the vice-principals to interact with and get to know the school staff.

The teachers viewed some of these tasks as insignificant, but they expected the vice-principals to perform them effectively and efficiently. A teacher offered the following remarks:

Taking the tasks that teachers need them [vice-principals] to take on. Like looking after the supplies and making sure it’s taken care of. That’s important otherwise we have to do it. Whatever their administrative tasks are, to do that well and do that efficiently so things are running smoothly at the school.

Towards the end of the year, the vice-principals deliberated that other staff could perform some of these minor tasks. Hannah voiced her frustration during the last interview:

You saw me at the end of the year, I was reorganizing and I still have to reorganize more, a whole bunch of cupboards. It’s great to do it and it feels good to have it done and set up differently so that the teachers can get their supplies better, but I’m high-priced clerical help.

Hannah was perturbed that she was spending a considerable amount of time organizing the supply cabinets. She acknowledged that it was an important task and the teachers appreciated her efforts. Hannah did not feel the work was insignificant, but she felt she was high priced clerical help.

The vice-principalship was a low status position in the district hierarchy. In a way, moving from teaching to the vice-principalship was a loss of prestige and power for Gina and Celeste because they had been influential teachers in their previous schools. Celeste reminisced about her past teaching position:

I was absolutely powerful. I had the most wonderful job because I had the total support of the teachers. The administration would let me do what I wanted to do and I had no responsibility. It was the dream job.
The vice-principals spent a substantial amount of their time performing the Joe jobs at the beginning of the school year. These tasks contributed to the stress and work overload the vice-principals faced. Additionally, the Joe jobs contributed to the loss of influence and prestige that these vice-principals had possessed as teachers. The vice-principals gradually became frustrated with performing the Joe jobs, and they believed the jobs were less important than other responsibilities. The Joe jobs limited the vice-principals from engaging in other activities such as assuming more leadership responsibilities. As administrators, the vice-principals needed to be familiar with the procedures for ordering and obtaining supplies and furniture. However, other people could order the supplies and furniture (e.g., secretary) and distribute the materials to the teachers (e.g., volunteers and students).

Summary

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah articulated several similar administrative goals, but emphasized different objectives as novice vice-principals. At the beginning of the school year, they were overwhelmed with the workload, long hours, and adapting to their new roles. The vice-principals performed many of the traditional tasks and Joe jobs. At times, the vice-principals reported that these tasks were less prestigious and lower skilled than their previous teaching/counselling assignments. However, they were expected to perform these tasks and others as competent and efficient administrators. The teaching assignments affected the vice-principals in different ways. Gina faced the most challenges balancing her teaching assignment with her administrative duties. Hannah had fewer challenges because she was a resource
teacher. Celeste was able to attend more school level meetings than either Hannah or Gina because of her limited teaching schedule. Celeste was more like a full time vice-principal.
CHAPTER FIVE: THE VICE-PRINCIPALS’ RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS

In this chapter, I discuss the relationships of the three pairs of vice-principals and principals: Gina and Harry at McCleery, Celeste and Gill at Ashland, and Hannah and Jane at Woodlawn. Each principal had been an administrator for about 12 years. The principals, Jane, Harry, and Gil, were long time educators; individually they had worked for the Evergreen School District for approximately 30 years. In addition to examining the principal and vice-principal relationships, common themes and patterns among the three pairs of administrators are discussed. These include loyalty to administration, training, learning by trial and error, acting principals, and mentoring. In the last section of the chapter, I highlight some aspects of the relationships between the vice-principals and the assistant superintendents. The data in this chapter were drawn from the vice-principals, principals, assistant superintendents, and leadership coordinator interviews, field notes and observations.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah emphasized that having good, working, and collegial relationships with the principals was crucial. At the beginning of the school year, the vice-principals were content with their appointments to the schools because they shared similar leadership beliefs as their respective principals. The three pairs of administrators rejected an authoritarian, dictatorial, top-down, *power over* style of leadership. They believed having a positive school atmosphere and collegial relations with the staff were vital to a successful school. They were committed to shared-decision making and collaboration with teachers. Teacher leadership was important to the principals and vice-principals. Jane discussed teacher leadership: “You have to use
the strengths of the staff and try and give staff the opportunity to display the strengths that they’ve got. To be supportive of their risk taking and just support.” Supporting teachers was a part of the philosophy of leadership articulated by the principals and vice-principals.

Gina and Harry at McCleery

Gina and Harry were new to their school; hence, neither administrator had intimate knowledge of the school staff, culture, nor school community although they met briefly with the outgoing principal the previous spring. Since McCleery did not have a vice-principal the previous school year, Gina had no one to contact for information regarding the McCleery vice-principal position.

During the initial interview, Gina reported that she and Harry were well matched and like-minded because they shared a similar philosophy of leadership. Gina asserted that they wanted to work closely with teachers and involve them in school-wide shared decision-making and planning activities. Nevertheless, Gina agreed with Harry that administrators must take on leadership roles in schools. She asserted that, “they look to us for leadership. Harry’s point is we’re supposed to be leaders. We’re not supposed to be paper pushers. We want to take on the visionary things.” She intended to be an active and innovative leader, and she expected the teachers would embrace her ideas because she was an administrator. It seemed that Gina believed the teachers would be receptive to her initiatives because of the legitimacy of her administrative position in the school hierarchy.
Early in the school year, Harry claimed he and Gina were equal partners as administrators; he would support any decision Gina made. Gina described what transpired between them:

When I first came in, one of the first things he said to me. He sat me down; he said “you’re an administrator, I’m an administrator. Whatever decisions you make even if it’s what I wouldn’t have made, who cares. You need to understand that you need to make whatever decision.” He treated me as an administrator the first day. He gave me full rein on everything.

Harry did not discuss what roles, duties, or tasks Gina performed; he placed no restrictions on her. Clearly, Gina was in charge of the supplies and furniture; however, she took on many other tasks and responsibilities. In October, Gina described her situation:

I just instantly took on all of these responsibilities because Harry said, “We’re both administrators. Whatever comes our way, comes our way. You deal with it; that’s your role; we’re a team.” He didn’t delegate certain things. He just took stuff on and I took stuff on. It’s not that I sat down with Harry and he said, “you do this, I do this, you do this.” And some people have had that, I haven’t. Whatever comes your way, comes your way. It’s a much more open-ended approach because he’s not a control person either.

Gina was extremely busy during the fall term. She taught 60% of the time; coached two teams, initiated new activities (e.g., Canada-thon, pizza fundraiser, and presentation on academic disabilities), and was the acting principal for three weeks in December. While Gina was free to choose various tasks, she was attentive to the power of the principal. Harry claimed they would work as a team, but Gina was aware of his power over her. She did not take on roles that Harry claimed for himself even though he chose to lead few activities. For example, Gina expressed an interest in working with the parent advisory committee (PAC), but she did not pursue this interest because Harry took on this obligation. Early in the year, she did not transgress
the boundaries between the principal and vice-principal. She discussed her decision to defer to Harry:

'We did have a PAC [parent] meeting. I would have loved to get that organized, but I felt I was overstepping my bounds in a way because you can’t take on too much. If I was the principal, yeah, but he has to initiate it.

Towards the end of the first term, Gina pointed out that she and Harry had not discussed her administrative or teaching roles in the school. Harry had offered little advice or guidance on activities in which Gina became involved. They engaged in casual conversations about minor school incidents or problems, but there were no in-depth or reflective conversations about being a school leader or the expectations of new administrators. Gina wanted to meet with Harry at regular intervals because she believed more guidance was essential to her development as a new vice-principal.

Gina discussed her concerns:

Harry sometimes gives me too much leeway. Maybe I need to be pulled in a little bit more. I need to share some of my thoughts. It needs to be that, but that doesn’t happen much. I would appreciate a bit more direction, but I’m happy I have the opportunity.

Gina attempted to pursue a mentor relationship with Harry in January. She requested a weekly meeting with him to discuss the events in the school and receive feedback on her performance. Harry and Gina met once or twice. The meeting that I attended lasted less than ten minutes. Harry seemed inattentive to the conversation, and he ended the meeting abruptly by answering the telephone and engaging in a conversation.

During the April interview, Harry discussed his relationship with Gina and described his approach to leadership. Harry, who had been a principal in five different schools, claimed that he was well known in the district for training and mentoring vice-principals. Harry claimed, “I’ve always tried, after getting to know my VPs, to
step back and let them step forward and take a leadership role, whether it be in
conducting an assembly, a staff meeting or whatever.”

Based on my observations and conversations throughout the school year, Harry
was an inattentive mentor and supervisor. Gina pursued working on numerous
activities and initiatives. I frequently asked Gina about Harry’s mentorship and
guidance. Gina always responded that Harry was a good person to work with because
he allowed her to do whatever she wanted. Gina focused on her freedom to engage in
different activities rather than Harry’s indifference to mentor her. His approach to
training seemed to be based on a “hands off” policy rather than a mentoring
relationship. Although Harry boasted about his ability to train vice-principals, he
argued that some people were natural leaders. Harry contradicted himself when he
discussed successful school leadership:

I think they need to make the mistakes on their own. I believe that in many
respects the old saying leaders are born and they’re not made is very, very true.
I think you have a personality or a belief system that allows you to do this job
either well or poorly.

Harry asserted that he had nothing to prove as administrator, but he stressed
that he was a leader, not a manager. Harry described his leadership style:

I believe strongly that I am more like a conductor of an orchestra trying to
bring all of the pieces together and everything working together as a group and
as a whole rather than somebody who is a manager or somebody who is
authoritarian.

If Harry were the conductor of an orchestra, he did not always use his batons to lead.
His vision of the school leadership seemed vague and ambiguous, and he exhibited a
laissez-faire leadership style. Harry equated successful school leadership with giving
teachers the opportunity to talk about issues. He did not articulate a complex picture of leadership:

Everyone has to have the opportunity to share their feelings and talk about what’s not working for them and see if something can be done. I don’t know what else. I really don’t think there is too much more to this job.

Furthermore, he rarely performed management tasks; instead, he delegated work to other people. Harry viewed management tasks as minor and insignificant. He exhibited behaviour that reinforced this image during my observations throughout the school year. In September, Harry refused to award the children certificates at the monthly McCleery star assembly in recognition of good deeds and academic achievements. He claimed that it did not matter whether the principal or teachers handed out the awards. Many teachers were surprised by his response. At the Diwali assembly in October, Harry dismissed 435 children from the gym by waving his hands. I witnessed a chaotic scene when over 400 students stood up simultaneously and headed for the same exit. Gina remained behind and with the assistance of a few students put away the chairs, benches, and sound equipment.

Harry missed several staff advisory committee (SAC) meetings throughout the school year. Several times, Gina was the only administrator at the staff advisory committee meetings. During a (SAC) meeting I attended, she was not able to respond to some of the teachers’ concerns because of her lack of administrative experience and knowledge. Harry claimed the principal did not have to attend the meetings because the teachers could make the decisions. This was not necessarily true because the principal possessed different types of power than those held by the teachers. Teachers needed Harry to exercise his positional authority in the school district. Towards the
end of the school year, Harry cancelled an evening PAC meeting because his car
needed service. Gina discussed Harry’s relaxed approach to leadership:

Harry hasn’t set any boundaries really. But you have to, I don’t know. I just
think that Harry is a little too easygoing and lackadaisical for my style. The
principal needs to have a little bit more of a handle on who’s going where,
when. He’s just too nice. Accommodating, that’s the word.

Harry talked about his relationship with the teachers and his leadership at
McCleery Elementary. Harry acknowledged that some McCleery teachers were not
accustomed to or receptive to his management style. He explained the reactions of
some teachers:

I’ve had people come in and be quite snippy and angry and say, “Well if we’d
known you weren’t going to do it, we’d have done it ourselves.” So, you deal
with them too. I’ve just simply said to people as they come, I guess people will
soon realize that I do not see myself as a manager. I don’t see myself as
someone who orders pencils.

He attributed the reactions of some of the teachers to his predecessor: “I’ve certainly
gone through my growing pains around here because I followed someone who was
very much a manager and an autocrat.” Although some teachers were concerned with
Harry’s leadership style, other staff viewed Harry as friendly. He was outgoing and
sociable, and he used humour to develop relationships with staff members. On several
occasions, I observed teachers congregated in Harry’s office because he was sharing
jokes with them. After working with Harry for five months, a teacher made the
following observation:

I haven’t had a lot of time with Harry to say this for sure, but if you don’t tread
on toes and you don’t alienate anybody on the staff, you’re going to get
probably a more happier staff and more output from people. They’re going to
feel happier about coming to work. He is actually a very jovial type of person.
Harry’s easygoing personality and relaxed attitude toward administration seemed to protect him from the criticisms of the staff. Based on the teacher interviews, they preferred a principal who left them alone as opposed to someone who was authoritarian and controlling.

Harry’s laissez-faire approach to leadership affected Gina because she was part of the administrative team. She willingly took on many responsibilities and tasks that Harry did not perform. For example, Harry usually arrived at McCleery at 8:30 a.m. and left by 3:00 p.m. During several of my school visits, he arrived at 9:00 a.m. and left at 1:30 or 2:00 p.m. As a result, Gina regularly dealt with problems that occurred after school (e.g., phone calls, children left at school, and playground problems). This limited the time Gina used to complete her work. Furthermore, Harry did not always follow through on tasks. For instance, Harry offered to purchase school items for Gina because she was inundated with work. A few minutes later, Harry delegated the task to an office worker.

In May, Gina became frustrated when she faced a discipline problem. Instead of taking care of the situation because she was teaching, Gina sent the students to Harry. Since Harry was leaving the school at 1:30 p.m., he sent the students to his office for the remainder of the day. The school secretary supervised them. These types of incidents occurred frequently during my school visits. Harry’s assertion that Gina was an equal partner did not correspond with the circumstances I observed throughout the year. Gina was the workhorse in this partnership; she took on more than her share of the work.
Assuming so many responsibilities and tasks eventually caused problems and additional stress for Gina and affected her relationships with teachers. An incident that occurred in December but was not resolved until April highlighted how Harry influenced Gina's work. When Gina was the acting principal in December, an itinerant teacher informed her that the McCleery resource teachers were not writing reports for students who received extra academic support. Gina immediately approached the resource teacher chairperson to discuss the situation. Although the chairperson believed that the reports were updated, in fact, the resource teachers had not completed the reports. Consequently, they scheduled a January meeting for the resource team to discuss the student reports. Gina proceeded to gather information from school district personnel to share and discuss at a meeting with the teachers. She kept Harry informed of the proceedings because she was facilitating the resolution of this problem.

Unexpectedly, Harry exercised his administrative authority in January when he sent a survey to all of the enrolling teachers seeking their opinions regarding the quality of teaching by the resource teachers. Harry had not consulted the teaching staff before he distributed the survey. He had reacted to a complaint from an outspoken classroom teacher who was also an acquaintance of his. He explained his actions:

I'm hearing rumblings and grumblings and they have to be addressed or they're going to blow up in our face. So, we find out what the problems are and we fix them. So, we talk about them and we fix them. So, we go on an information gathering expedition.

Harry contradicted his pledge to involve teachers in school-wide decision-making by sending out the survey. The resource teachers were disconcerted with the development of events. They held the administrators responsible for escalating tensions among the resource teachers and some enrolling teachers. The problem was
twofold: the resource teachers had not met to discuss the student reports, and they were distressed because the classroom teachers had criticized several of the resource teachers.

The tension intensified among some of the teachers because the January meeting was rescheduled for March. Harry did not attend the March meeting because he was absent from school. At this meeting, the group decided that they needed to write academic reports. During a subsequent observation, Gina reported that the teachers were hostile towards her during the meeting because they believed the administrators had caused unnecessary enmity among some staff members. The resource teachers eventually apologized to Gina for their aggressive behaviour.

From my perspective, Harry caused a minor situation among a few people to expand into a major conflict that affected many teachers. Moreover, he did not help to resolve the situation nor did he support Gina. Gina received the brunt of the criticisms even though she resolved the situation. It seemed the teachers expressed their frustration to Gina rather than Harry. Gina was more available and visible in the school, and she was involved in more school activities, events, and committees.

Another event occurred at the end of the school year involving Gina, Harry, and the teachers. During one of my school visits, Harry informed Gina that she might be a resource teacher the following school year. Gina’s teaching workload would decrease substantially if she were assigned to a resource position. Harry asked Gina to write a report justifying why she should be a resource teacher. Gina spent a considerable amount of time writing a report because she had some experience, but she did not have the requisite credentials for this position. When she presented her
case to Harry, he informed her that she would be the preparation teacher instead of a resource teacher. Preparation teachers provided class coverage for the teachers’ two weekly planning periods that was stipulated in the collective agreement. The preparation teachers taught various subjects (e.g., music, art, computer, physical education). Gina was assigned to this position because the current preparation teacher decided to become a full time classroom teacher instead of teaching music. Because of her seniority in the school, the preparation (music) teacher had the right to become a classroom teacher. Another teacher had been assigned to the resource position because she had the necessary credentials. Gina was disconcerted Harry had not informed her sooner because he had known for several weeks.

The aforementioned situation continued to cause problems for Gina when Harry informed the staff that Gina was the preparation teacher for the following school year. The teachers expected her to teach music because the current preparation teacher was teaching music. Gina refused to teach music because she was not qualified; instead, she decided to teach social responsibility. This meant that classroom teachers would teach music to their own students. During the May staff meeting, several teachers aggressively questioned Gina about her refusal to teach music. With the exception of the current preparation/music teacher, the other teachers were not aware of the details of the situation. According to Gina, Harry did not support or explain the mitigating circumstances to the teachers. Gina shared her concerns about Harry:

But I did go into his office and said, “I really want that discussed. I want you to explain why this has come up, why I’m in this position.” I think the teachers like to know and like to be heard and once they’re heard, they’ll feel better. And it’s not my responsibility; it’s the principal’s responsibility to set those meetings.
Since the teachers were distressed, the chairperson of the SAC also urged Harry to explain the situation to the staff. However, it was not resolved before the summer holiday; the teachers remained opposed to Gina teaching social responsibility for the preparation classes. Gina was troubled by what transpired:

I need to speak to Harry and just firm up more or less what I’m going to do, and I have to stick with it. Like right now, things are so up in the air about prep. We have to decide on what steps with the admin team and stick with those without compromising myself too much.

In April, Gina was frustrated about her dual roles of administrator and enrolling teacher. She asserted that Harry should have supported her by talking to the teachers to reduce her workload. She articulated her concerns:

I would have liked if Harry took that role a little bit more. Because at this other school where I know someone is enrolling [a class], I know the principal was very clear about stating that “they [the vice-principal] have an enrolling class; it’s very difficult. We need to support our vice-principal by not [going to her].”

The end of the school year was difficult for Gina, but that did not dampen her enthusiasm for administration. Gina assessed the school year and offered the following explanation for some of the difficulties that she experienced:

No because there wasn’t a vice-principal there last year, and because both of us were new. If one person, if the administrator [principal] had been there, he would have known and it would have been a lot easier. The last administrator did leave us a couple of notes about McCleery Stars and the agenda, but not a month to month about what happens in the school and how it’s organized and contact names and who is in charge.

Gina expected her second year to be different because she and Harry were familiar with the school and knew the staff. Gina reported that she was meeting with Harry before school began in September to discuss the school year:
So, Harry and I are meeting in August and create a calendar of all of the happenings at McCleery and we’ll be better prepared. Well you know everything went well. I mean I have to focus on that. It was a successful year, it really was, but it will be less stressful next year because we know what to expect.

Harry’s approach and beliefs about school leadership and administration affected Gina from September to June. Initially, Gina and Harry articulated similar beliefs about leadership. They supported collaborative relations with teachers and maintained that teachers needed to be involved in school-wide SDM. In fact, their views of leadership were very different. Harry had a laissez-faire approach to administration; he was content with stepping back and allowing things to happen. He did not seem to engage in any type of leadership activities and administrative tasks. Harry believed the administrative tasks were insignificant, and overlooked these aspects of school leadership. Gina maintained these tasks were important, and she worked diligently on this aspect of the job. Gina believed school leaders were initiators and innovators; she implemented many new activities. She made the following observations about Harry’s performance:

I think he’s a leader; he doesn’t manage as much. He’s not a loose ends person. He’s very good at delegating. He’s very good at having things happen by others taking on the roles. I mean you have to do a lot of that. Unfortunately, I have to pick up the loose ends.

Early in the year, Harry claimed that he and Gina were equal administrative partners. Indeed, Harry did not restrict Gina’s participation in any activities. Consequently, Gina took on more of the administrative duties and tasks than Harry. On the surface, they were equal partners in decision-making. It was unlike Harry to reverse Gina’s decisions; however, he did not always support her (e.g., incident with preparation teacher). Moreover, Harry interfered with Gina’s handling of the situation
with the resource teachers. From my vantage point, Harry did not exert any power over the teachers. However, Harry exerted his power over Gina by what he did not do rather than what he did do. Gina was affected by his refusal to act. Harry affected Gina’s behaviour and actions during the school year.

Furthermore, Harry did not mentor and rarely offered guidance to Gina even though she was a novice administrator. He sent confusing messages about training and mentoring. Harry asserted that he was recognized as trainer of vice-principals in the Evergreen District. He may have been viewed as a trainer because the vice-principals with whom he worked performed most of the administrative work. Then, he stated that leaders were born and not made. Gina needed a mentor, someone to direct her to prioritize her work and to give her feedback about her progress so she could develop her leadership skills. Harry did not provide this for her. However, throughout the school year, Gina maintained that working with Harry was beneficial because of the freedom she had to pursue many activities and introduce new initiatives.

Harry’s laissez-faire approach to school management and leadership combined with Gina’s willingness to assume many responsibilities and her eagerness to exhibit her leadership abilities caused Gina to be stressed and overwhelmed at different times during the school year. Harry was concerned about the teachers’ views of him. From one vantage point, Gina’s problems with the teachers diverted their attention away from Harry’s lack of leadership.
Celeste and Gil at Ashland

Celeste and Gil, the Ashland principal, had several brief meetings in September to discuss her tasks and responsibilities as a new vice-principal. Celeste talked about their conversations:

We’ve started. We’ve gone through lists. He gave me some things I needed to do. He said, “You’ve got to do this and you might want to think about these things, the furniture.” When I see him, he says, “What’s on for today?” I give him a list; I find him easy to talk to.

Celeste performed the typical tasks of vice-principals, such as ordering and obtaining supplies, resources, and furniture for teachers. In addition to the traditional tasks of vice-principals, Celeste took on many roles that her predecessor had performed. She supervised students during recess and lunch, and she attended to most of the student discipline in the school. As the project coordinator (teaching assignment), Celeste planned many school activities that supported the students throughout the school (e.g., reading contests, Halloween and Remembrance Day assemblies, translators for parent teacher conferences, silent auction fundraiser, and food donations for needy families). Celeste reported that Gil allowed her to engage in any activities and attend any meetings she chose.

Gil, the Ashland principal of two years, was highly regarded, respected, and trusted by the staff. He was shy and reserved, but exuded a quiet confidence. Gil was instrumental in improving the school atmosphere and the relationship between the teachers and administrators that had been marred by hostility and distrust for the past several years. All of the teachers interviewed conveyed this view. One teacher commented on his influence in the school: “Now at this time, people have a lot of
respect for Gil because he knows how to reach them, he knows how to approach them. So, they react to his style of administration where it’s more of consultation.”

When Gil spoke at the SAC meetings, the teachers were attentive and respectful. Several teachers commented on how the tone of the meetings had changed since Gil became principal. He talked about transparent and shared decision-making during an October SAC meeting that I attended. According to several teachers, he was the first Ashland principal who informed the teachers how much money was in the school budget.

During the first term, Celeste was impressed with Gil’s ability to work collaboratively with the teachers. She described how Gil interacted with the teachers and how he included them in the decision-making process:

Gil pays attention to the big picture. He’s very adept at pulling people together. He’s great in the leadership department; he always uses “we and all.” He’s a role model; he thinks about how he is going to present things. He comes with plans and opinions. He asks for feedback and goes with something.

Celeste remarked on his efforts to encourage teachers to participate in various activities in the school. Celeste offered these views:

I think with Gil, he’s been open about procedure and he’s good at giving information. He allowed discussion time at staff meetings. I think he is good as much as possible at letting people have control of what kinds of things they want to happen and gives out responsibility.

Gil used facilitative power to support the staff and to involve them in SDM. This contributed to the trustful relationship he had built with the staff. Moreover, Gil trusted and supported teachers who were in leadership positions (e.g., chairpersons of committees) to be successful in their roles.
Even though Gil was collaborative and supportive, Celeste maintained the staff recognized that he would exercise his positional power in the school because he was the principal. Celeste stated, “They see him as having the final say. I think they do. I think they know, no means no.” Based on the teacher interviews, Gil used his influence to pressure the teachers to take action on only one occasion. Over a two-month period, Gil asked the teachers to change the lunchtime SAC meetings to an after school time period. It was difficult for him and Celeste to attend the lunch meeting because they supervised the students at this time. The SAC chairperson supported this change. Gil had developed enough trust with the staff that they voted to change the meeting time even though a teacher informed me that several teachers were not happy with the change.

At the end of October, Celeste claimed that she was not meeting Gil on a regular basis to discuss her tasks, responsibilities, or school leadership. Instead, she had brief exchanges with Gil because she visited his office several times a day to ask him questions about various school incidents. She stated, “I think Gil sees that I’m really busy. When I first started, we thought we would meet more often and problem solve.”

During the January interview, Celeste talked about her relationship with Gil. Celeste recognized the power Gil possessed as school principal and his authority over her as vice-principal. However, Celeste claimed that she and Gil worked well together. On numerous occasions, I observed a professional and respectful relationship between Gil and Celeste. She stated, “I think I’ve developed a good relationship with Gil and I think he allows me to be an equal partner in decision-making.” Celeste and Gil had a
respective and friendly relationship. They were equal partners in terms of the administrative duties, tasks, and responsibilities because two full time administrators were required to run a school the size and complexity of Ashland. Gil supported Celeste’s involvement in different committees and activities. Throughout the school year, Celeste attended various meetings and reported or shared the information with Gil.

During the January interview, Celeste talked about her upcoming January meeting with Gil. She expected Gil to give her feedback on her performance because he had asked her to do a self-assessment before they left for Christmas holidays. In mid-January, Celeste approached Gil to set up the meeting. Gil responded that the meeting was unnecessary because Celeste had not “strayed far from the [administrative] path” during the first term. Gil maintained that she was doing fine and had not made any major mistakes. Celeste was disappointed because she wanted Gil to evaluate her job performance so she could improve, particularly since she was a new administrator. Celeste shared her frustration: “But what I need now are VP meetings with Gil just to say where we are actually going.” Instead of asking Gil to meet, Celeste seemed to depend on her brief daily visits to his office. Gil and Celeste talked about school issues, but they did not discuss her administrative abilities. Based on my observations and informal conversations, Gil believed Celeste’s was performing very well as a first-year vice-principal. Most likely, he did not think Celeste needed his guidance or mentoring.

Student discipline was a major and controversial issue at Ashland throughout the school year. The classroom teachers and principal held different beliefs about
disciplining students. Gil opposed the heavy-handed style of discipline that was
instituted by Celeste’s predecessor during the previous two school years. Celeste’s
predecessor had a specific punishment for every behaviour infraction, and she applied
rules uniformly; no exceptions were made for any student. The teachers appreciated
and supported how the previous vice-principal handled student discipline because they
believed that student behaviour had worsened since she left the school. However, Gil
advocated an individualized approach to discipline. He did not want to apply the same
set of rules to all situations and students. Instead, he wanted to find out the causes of
the behaviour first, rather than immediately punishing them.

Celeste was affected by this policy more than the staff because she handled
most of the discipline cases. Based on my observations and interviews with Celeste,
everyday after lunch recess there were four or five students waiting in the main office
for Celeste to return from her supervision duties. Celeste found herself at the centre of
the quagmire because her approach to discipline was similar to the approach of her
predecessor. Privately, teachers asserted that if Celeste were in charge of discipline,
the behaviour of the students would be better. She agreed with the teachers’
assessment of the situation. Although Celeste claimed she argued for a stricter school-
wide discipline policy, she did not openly oppose Gil. Celeste might not have shared
her views about student discipline with Gil. Based on my observations of and
conversations with Gil, he appeared to be receptive to Celeste’s ideas and suggestions.

Celeste was distressed with all of the discipline cases she handled, particularly
since no school guidelines existed. The student discipline issue persisted until June.
Gil, the school counsellor, and several teachers attended two presentations on school-
wide behaviour systems at other schools. Celeste was frustrated that she had not been invited even though she had not asked to attend the meetings. From my viewpoint, Gil would have welcomed Celeste's presence at the meeting if she had requested to attend. During a June SAC meeting, the teachers rejected the adoption of a school-wide behaviour system because they believed this specific method was too time-consuming to implement. They opted for a less stringent system.

Throughout the last term of the year, Celeste was more concerned with Gil's leadership style than she had been earlier in the school year. She described two incidents to support her views. At the end of February, Celeste claimed Gil was frequently away from the Ashland campus; he was usually attending district-level meetings. As the acting principal, this was problematic because Celeste could not make some decisions without the approval of the principal. Without the permission of the principal, she could not suspend several students who had vandalized cars in the staff parking. Celeste was frustrated with this situation because she was responsible for the school, but she lacked authority to perform certain tasks. The authority of the principal was not transferred to the vice-principal during his absences. Although Celeste was frustrated with the situation, she seemed to overlook the experiences and knowledge she gained as acting principal. She was exposed to experiences that enabled her to learn more about school leadership and administration.

The second incident was related to the work of the early literacy committee. The school staff had engaged in a school-wide assessment the previous spring. Because many primary students were not performing well in reading, a committee was struck to review and implement a new reading curriculum to improve their reading.
About 20 primary classroom and resource teachers and the vice-principal were members of the literacy committee and attended the meetings. During the school year, the teachers visited schools to observe different types of reading lessons. They attended workshops, reviewed reading programs, and discussed various ways to improve the reading abilities of the primary students. Towards the end of the school year, Celeste expressed concern that the literacy committee did not come to a consensus in choosing a reading program. Different groups of teachers advocated different ways to teach and improve reading. Celeste expected Gil to intervene and persuade the teachers to choose one course of action. She believed the teachers would listen to him because they respected him. Celeste was surprised and confused when the principal was reticent to use his influence or authority. Gil did not become involved in the discussions or suggest any solutions. No major changes were made in the reading program. Celeste did not discuss the situation with the principal. Gil contended that the teachers had to make the decision because that was the only way a program would be successful. He was adamant during his interview with me that the teachers had to support the changes; otherwise, the changes might not be implemented. He argued that administrators could not force teachers to make changes.

Celeste talked about Gil's leadership style. She stated that administrators should provide structure for decision-making and they should use their influence with teachers to solve problems. She asserted that Gil did not use his power to pressure the teachers to resolve school issues:

He's reluctant to use his [influence]. He has an amazing reputation. Well I think he's more, "let's let it evolve and see how it goes." And in some ways that's great, but you get to the point with the committee, where everyone the whole thing was getting fractured.
She claimed she would have closely monitored the work of the early literacy committee. It seemed Celeste was willing to exercise her administrative authority in the school. Based on her own accounts, she had been a powerful and influential teacher. Celeste shared several stories about her ability, as a teacher, to persuade her colleagues to participate in various activities. It appeared that Celeste hoped to become influential as a vice-principal. At this point, it was difficult to accomplish this because she did not know the staff as well as she had in her previous school.

Celeste described an exchange she had with Gil that reinforced his view of shared decision-making: “Gil says, ‘We’ll see what the staff thinks.’ I think you need someone with influence. He says, ‘You can’t boss them around.’ I don’t want to boss them around. I think they have to be charmed into it.” Gil’s unwillingness to make decisions contrary to the wishes of the staff frustrated Celeste. Based on her comments during the school year, Celeste seemed to be willing to use power over strategies to make changes in the school. Celeste stressed that her approach to the problem would have been different:

I feel if I was in charge of it, I would take a little more control of it. That I would be the one scheduling the meetings. That I would be the one saying this must be done, that must be done. I would be a little more insistent about things, whereas I think he is more, “let’s let it evolve and see how it goes.” But you get to a point and we got to that point with the reading committee where everyone, the whole thing was getting fractured. I think I would like to have a little more close contact and overview. I don’t think he is well enough aware of what the staff wants or needs.

Gil did not waver from his convictions about leadership at Ashland except for changing the SAC meeting time. The Ashland teachers were involved in most of the decisions that affected them. This was an appropriate strategy considering the recent
history of the school. If Gil had used his positional authority more often than he did, the distrust and animosity between the teachers and administrators might have continued. Gil used facilitative power to support the teachers, and the teachers felt empowered working with Gil. Moreover, Gil and the teachers did not have different goals. In fact, Gil aligned his goals with the teachers’ goals rather than imposing his own on the staff.

During his interview in April, Gil talked about his leadership experiences as a principal in four schools. He maintained that he used a different leadership approach in each school because the teachers possessed different backgrounds. He believed the experience level and the educational philosophy of the teachers influenced the leadership styles he utilized. For example, one school had a child-centred philosophy, but a fractured staff. Therefore, Gil felt that this staff needed to engage in extensive dialogue to resolve problems. Additionally, Gil contended that collectively the teachers had more knowledge than he did so it was logical to engage in shared decision-making with the staff. Gil claimed that he tried to do things as a principal that he wanted done when he was a teacher. Gil used a directive, top-down approach in another school because the staff was inexperienced and needed more guidance.

In terms of his relationship with Celeste, Gil maintained that Celeste performed like an experienced vice-principal. Consequently, he did not have to provide her much guidance. Gil seemed to be unaware of Celeste’s wish to engage in critical conversations with him.
Gil discussed how important it was that the principal and the vice-principal worked together in the school and presented a united front to the teachers. Gil explained the importance of the vice-principal and the principal supporting each other:

> There is an importance, as principal and vice-principal. Whatever you decide; you know not everyone is going to like it; you stick together. We’re not second-guessing our decisions. It doesn’t accomplish anything by second-guessing. Unless at some point you really think that and this isn’t the case of a minority or obscure point of view. But if there is something that you really did overlook, of course you have to have another look at it.

Gil talked about his power and formal authority over the vice-principal even though they were colleagues in the schools. He recognized that vice-principals were careful and cautious because the principals were critical to their careers. Gil stressed this aspect of the relationship: “A lot of VPs are not willing to talk because they’re afraid if they’re having a bad experience, they don’t want to tell anyone because they think it could harm their opportunities for being promoted.” A recommendation by the principal was essential for the promotion of the vice-principal. Moreover, he claimed the vice-principals were justified in their actions because the vice-principals and principals did not know each other before they were assigned to work together. Gil talked about the trust between the principal and vice-principal:

> I didn’t know Celeste at all. I’d seen her a couple of times, but I didn’t know her at all. So, she doesn’t know whether or how I’m going to react or what trust level is there, it is not a given. They’re not going to trust you, just because they think they should. It doesn’t work that way; you’ve got to get to know someone first.

During the April and May observations, Celeste talked about Gil’s leadership. Celeste claimed that Gil was not proactive in the school, and he did not use his authority as principal. Celeste reported that some teachers were coming to her more than Gil to solve problems during the latter part of the school year. Based on my
observations throughout the year, it did seem that more teachers had gravitated towards Celeste. There were several reasons why this might have occurred. Celeste had gradually taken on most of the management tasks during the year because previous Ashland vice-principals performed these tasks. Because many teachers needed support in these areas, it was logical for them to talk to Celeste. The staff went to Gil for the school-wide issues (e.g., possible strike of support workers).

Additionally, Gil was less visible than Celeste. He worked mostly in his office because of the amount of administrative tasks that required his attention. He maintained that Ashland was more like a high school than an elementary school because of the large student enrolment, diverse programs, and numerous school problems. Besides, teachers were drawn to Celeste because of her gregarious personality. A few teachers reported that they were reluctant to approach Gil because he was reserved and quiet.

Gil and Celeste had very different personalities. While Gil was quiet and shy, Celeste was outgoing and witty. Celeste seemed to relate well with the teachers on a personal level, whereas Gil was reserved and remained distant from several teachers. These factors might have influenced some teachers to talk to Celeste rather than Gil during the last few months of the year.

At the end of the school year, Celeste requested a meeting with Gil to discuss the school year and plan for the following year. Gil replied that he did not start planning for next school year until August. Celeste described her disappointment:

I said I would like to do some sort of end of year discussion, just a little review of the kinds of things we did this year. I’m not even talking about our relationship. I’m talking about what happened and what we see happening next school year. He said to me; he was a bit off putting. He said, “I don’t really think about those things until the middle of the summer. If you think of anything, phone my voice mail and leave a message.”
Although it appeared that Gil had rejected Celeste’s request, it seemed that he needed time away from the pressures of the job before he began to prepare for the next school year.

Celeste and Gil had a professional and respectful relationship throughout the school year. Gil supported Celeste throughout the school year, and he felt she was a capable and competent vice-principal. Celeste was able to become involved in many activities, and she attended most of the committee meetings because Gil did not restrict her in any way. Eventually, Celeste coordinated many of the school events.

Although their beliefs and goals about leadership seemed analogous early in the year, some differences were noticeable as the school year evolved. Overall, Gil was a democratic and facilitative leader who supported teachers. Gil facilitated the decision-making process by ensuring that the teachers were able to discuss school issues and make decisions. He was interested in the process; he rarely used his authority or influence to force a particular decision. The Ashland teachers made many of the school-wide decisions during the SAC meetings.

Celeste’s goals were supporting teachers, getting to know the staff, and contributing to a positive school atmosphere. During her last interview, Celeste commented that she would be “more in control of it” if she were the principal. Furthermore, Celeste asserted she was willing to use administrative authority and influence as well as facilitative power when working with the staff. Celeste believed administrators should provide direct guidance so the staff could achieve school-wide goals. In other words, Celeste would use power over strategies more readily than Gil.
Hannah and Jane at Woodlawn

Hannah was content with her assignment to Woodlawn because she and Jane, the school principal, held similar beliefs about education and school leadership.

Hannah asserted that supporting and working with the principal were her primary goals in her relationship with Jane. Hannah offered these sentiments:

With Jane, it wasn’t difficult because I did want to support her. If I had a principal I didn’t agree with, I don’t know if I could do the job. Like, if our values were different, not just a difficult person I could manage that probably, but really different values – I don’t know.

Hannah described Jane as a leader who cared about the children, teachers, and parents.

When Jane transferred to Woodlawn, there was money in the school budget that the previous principal had not spent. Jane proceeded to purchase resources that the teachers and the school lacked. Hannah admired what Jane did:

She [Jane] is a good educator. She knows what the kids need. She tries to provide it [resources] to the teachers so they can give it to the kids. And she cares about their parents and she cares about the teachers. She is a very human person.

Of the three pairs of administrative teams, Jane and Hannah articulated and demonstrated the most similar beliefs about school leadership. Hannah and Jane had a friendly, professional, and courteous relationship.

Jane, in her third and last year as Woodlawn principal, was energetic, animated, intense, and frank. During my school visitations, I observed Jane constantly working and involved in some type of activity. I frequently saw her in the school hallways moving equipment or supplies, supervising students, and conversing with the staff. A chief concern of Jane and Hannah was supporting teachers. They were most interested in facilitating and helping teachers achieve their goals.
Hannah commented on the relationship between the staff and the principal: “I think Jane for the most part [the staff] really like her. There was a vibrancy and an energy and a willingness to pull the staff into whatever was going on. A lot of forthrightness, directness.” Jane talked about her leadership approach: “You nudge in the background, but never, you don’t confront. To me confrontation doesn’t get you anywhere but in an argument. You can’t do anything draconian because you pay for it.” Jane believed that supporting the teachers was critical to school leadership.

The teachers contended that the school atmosphere had improved since Jane was assigned to Woodlawn.

She is very human and has worked hard to create a sense of trust because it was tense. Personally, I feel supported; I feel acknowledged as a professional and I have autonomy that I make decisions that are professional, make sense, and are worthy. I like that and I feel appreciated that way. I don’t feel it’s difficult at all to go to administration about any concerns or problems or ways that I liked to be supported in the classroom or with particular kids.

Jane discussed the power she possessed because she was the principal. She acknowledged and succinctly described the power of principals. She commented: “No matter what, as a principal you have a lot of powerful force. And if you say something, it happens.” Hannah also talked about the power of the principal and the reaction of the teachers. She remarked that Jane did make difficult decisions, if necessary. Hannah observed, “On most issues [teachers decided], but she can also take a stand, which is important for most teachers to see, too.” According to Hannah, the teachers were responsive to and accepting of Jane’s authority and leadership. Hannah reported that Jane was viewed as a facilitative leader who focused on supporting and working with the teachers. A teacher discussed the collegial and supportive approach of the principal:
A good administrator can. Like our administrator; there’s discussion and then she will say something that no one has thought of or bring it all together. Or she will have thought about it all night, and worked on it and come back. We don’t have the time to do that. She’ll have a brilliant way of looking at it. That’s the way you lead, I think. You facilitate what’s going on or the potential of what’s going on.

Hannah talked about her vice-principal role at the beginning of the year. Although she had some specific duties, other responsibilities of her job were vague. Hannah talked about getting resources and supplies for teachers, working with the students on discipline and social issues, and supporting the principal.

For Hannah, the three major issues in the fall were the administrative work, time to converse with Jane, and problem solving. In October, Hannah was concerned that she was not carrying her share of the administrative workload. She felt she should be doing more to help Jane. During a November observation, Hannah talked to Jane about taking on additional tasks and assuming her share of the “administrative workload.” Jane responded that it was impractical for her to do more given her teaching responsibilities.

Hannah maintained that she had few opportunities to discuss school issues with Jane during a typical school day. Because of Hannah’s teaching schedule and vice-principal responsibilities, they rarely had lengthy conversations. Instead, they talked to each other on the “fly.” Hannah explained the situation: “You know Jane, she is there. There is stuff happening all the time that she is involved in, and for her to try and fill me in on it, it takes longer.” She and the principal interacted when Hannah was not teaching or during lunch supervision because they performed this duty together. During two observations when Jane was absent from school, Hannah had lengthy phone conversations with her. Hannah wanted frequent and comprehensive
conversations with Jane because she wanted to benefit from Jane’s years as an administrator.

From the beginning of the school year, Hannah was involved in problem solving with students and staff. Hannah worked with student discipline because of her expertise and background in counselling. Jane recognized Hannah’s ability to work with students. In October, Hannah assisted an intermediate teacher to obtain extra academic support for students in her classrooms. Hannah observed the class, arranged a meeting with three resource teachers and the principal, and she facilitated the discussion to develop a schedule to assist the teacher. Jane deferred to Hannah’s leadership during the meeting.

In January, Hannah was still concerned about the lack of dialogue between herself and Jane. She requested that they meet on a regular basis to discuss school administration and leadership and Hannah’s performance at Woodlawn. Hannah explained why she made the request:

There is so little time that she and I have together. So last week I said to her, “It would really help if we could set some time aside for just the two of us to touch base once in a while.” For me to get a sense of feedback from her about what’s happening and what’s going well with me and what’s not going well as a new VP. She does kind of say, “you’re doing fine.” And she thought about it and said, “Let’s have dinner once a month.”

Jane and Hannah met during an evening in January, but this was a rare occurrence.

In February, Hannah recognized that her inexperience and lack of knowledge as an administrator affected her when Jane was absent from school. During a SAC meeting, the teachers complained that neither the principal nor the vice-principal was on the school campus one morning. The teachers were concerned that if an emergency had occurred, no one possessed the authority to make decisions. The principal had not
appointed a teacher to assume this responsibility when she and the vice-principal were not at school. The vice-principal believed the teachers had a legitimate complaint. Hannah talked about the challenges of being by herself in the school and not being able to respond to the teachers. Hannah was concerned because she did not have the experience or possess enough school information to respond to the teachers. This situation occurred several times. Hannah explained her frustration about the lack of information:

So, if people came to me with something as the acting principal, I couldn't put my hands on it anywhere. If she hadn't told me, I didn't know it. And that happened over and over again. Now Jane will know exactly what's happening, but she hasn't written it down which she won't have. And she hasn't told me. So, it's lost knowledge.

Although Hannah and Jane did not meet on a regular basis to discuss school issues, leadership, and administration, they were a team and worked well together. Hannah shared the following observations:

I see a lot of my job is to be the other part of the admin team, so Jane doesn't feel like she is out there on her own. For example, I'm always looking to cue off her. Like today, before I left and I'm running out the door. I said, "There is a staff meeting tomorrow. Is there anything that we need to talk about before?" But she said, "We'll just wing it." So what I do then basically is wait for her to open her mouth before I open mine.

In the springtime, Hannah felt more confident about the decisions she made in the school because she gained knowledge, information, and experience. From January to June, Hannah assumed even more responsibility for working with students who had social or behaviour problems. Jane recognized and appreciated her expertise and knowledge in this area. Jane commented on the patience that Hannah had working with students. During a meeting with a parent and a team of teachers, I observed the vice-principal facilitate the meeting because the principal left at the beginning of the
meeting. Later, I asked Jane why she left the meeting. Jane explained that Hannah was better than she was working with this parent.

During my interview with Jane, she stated that Hannah was more like a principal in waiting than a vice-principal in training. She believed Hannah was ready to become a principal, and she encouraged her to apply for a principalship at the end of her second year in administration. Jane commented that Hannah had the experience to be a principal and that the paper work was a minor part of the job. Jane offered her views:

Hannah is unique in the kind of things she has done. She’s had to deal with all kinds of situations that you need to deal with as a principal. The only thing she doesn’t have yet is some of the paper work stuff. I’m not teaching her how to be a principal or a vice-principal. She already knows that stuff.

Jane treated the vice-principal as an equal rather than a subordinate. To some extent, Jane was unaware of the problems Hannah encountered as a novice administrator because she believed Hannah was performing like a veteran administrator. Hannah was concerned because Jane felt she had as much knowledge about administration as Jane did. Hannah did not benefit fully from Jane’s administrative experiences because of Jane’s views. Hannah discussed the principal’s perceptions of her abilities:

One of the things that I realized and really affected me throughout the whole year is Jane had this assumption of me that was wrong. And the assumption was that I knew almost as much as she knew or something like that. So, I don’t think she thought twice about leaving the school with me as a brand new VP. But it was hard for me.

As the school year evolved, Hannah began to discuss the differences between her and Jane’s approaches to leadership even though their philosophies were similar. Hannah maintained that Jane worked very well with the teachers most of the time, but
every so often Jane got “revved up” and overexcited about an issue. Occasionally, Jane reacted to people and situations rather than anticipating problems. Sometimes Jane’s reaction exacerbated the situation. On several occasions, Hannah intervened and helped keep things calm.

For example, a problem arose between two intermediate teachers regarding a field trip. Jane approved a two-day fieldtrip for a grade level team even though one teacher on the team had not been invited. When several other teachers, who were not involved with the trip, became aware of what had occurred, they criticized the teacher who had excluded her colleague. This caused hostile feelings among the staff and between two intermediate teachers. A few days after the trip, Jane contributed to the tension by publicly supporting the teacher who went on the trip. The negative feelings lingered until the end of the school year. Jane had not anticipated that her decision would affect the staff, nor did she realize the discord that grew among some teachers. Hannah attempted to help the teachers resolve the dilemma by talking with the teachers. She tried to arrange a meeting so the teachers could discuss the situation. The meeting was never held because the teachers refused to meet.

During a visit in May, I attended an impromptu staff meeting Jane called to discuss the distribution of $10,000 contributed by the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). Jane became frustrated when the teachers complained about the allocation of the money. The conversation became heated because the teachers wanted the money divided evenly among all of the teachers rather than on a first come, first serve basis. Jane insisted that the decision could not be reversed because the budget committee, chaired by a teacher, had met and set the criteria. When Jane left the meeting, several
teachers gathered around Hannah, and continued to criticize how the money was to be distributed. The teachers also complained about the lack of money to purchase basic school supplies and paper at the end of the school year. Hannah skillfully and calmly defused a potentially explosive situation by listening to and addressing the teachers' concerns. Two or three similar situations had occurred during the year. Hannah maintained that she would have acted differently by anticipating the problems or making a different decision earlier in the process.

Throughout most of the school year, Jane and Hannah had few in-depth conversations about administration. However, Jane shared some of her knowledge about teacher evaluations and the school organization during several of my observations in May and June. Hannah was completing an evaluation of a primary teacher. Jane described the process of teacher evaluation and gave her evaluation materials and notes to Hannah. Jane stressed that administrators should not force evaluations on teachers if the teachers were anxious about the evaluators and the evaluations. She also advised Hannah to discuss the positive aspects of the observations with the teachers first, and then gently share the criticisms.

In June, the school organization was developed for the following school year. This entailed placing students in classrooms. Assigning the children and the teachers to classrooms was a challenging and precarious endeavour. If the school organization was not done correctly, there could be problems for teachers, students, and administrators the following school year. It was critical that the class size limits and formulas for placing special needs children in classrooms were strictly enforced. For teachers, the problems were combined classes (e.g., fourth and fifth graders in the
same class) and tenure. Assigning teachers to classes was based on teacher seniority in
the district and in the school. Jane and Hannah worked on the school organization
independently, and then met to discuss it. When they completed the school
organization, they shared it with the teachers. Jane stressed that they should approach
teachers individually to discuss the classroom compositions and grade levels because
some teachers might be upset. If teachers objected, Jane maintained that they would
negotiate with the staff and make changes. The principal and vice-principal had to
make changes on the school organization, but eventually it was completed.

Towards the end of the school year, Hannah talked about Jane's ability to
persuade people to do things without upsetting them. Jane had convinced a teacher to
take on a different teaching assignment in the school for the following school year.
According to Jane and Hannah, this move was beneficial to the students.

Hannah enjoyed an equal, collegial, and professional relationship with Jane
throughout the school year. However, Hannah was surprised when this changed during
the last few weeks of the school year. She explained what occurred:

But it was really interesting because the last month was the first time that I
really felt quite irritated with the relationship between Jane and I. I think partly
irritated, but there was frustration. What the behaviour was happening, I was
doing something and she had to be involved in it. But just to touch base in it.
Kind of mix it up a little and leave a little. I became really aware that nothing
was clearly my role and never really had been. What I got a sense of was there
just weren't any clear boundaries around the role of principal and vice-
principal in our situation.

Jane's behaviour might have changed at the end of the year because she was leaving
Woodlawn School. In fact, she was facing a career milestone and an important
transition in her life.
Based Jane’s behaviour at the end of the school year, Hannah maintained that it was critical for vice-principals to remember that the principal was the ultimate authority in the school. She stressed the importance of the vice-principal and principal relationship:

One thing that I learned is the VP is not the leader of the school and they’re not really the second leader of the school. I think it’s more like the principal is the leader and the vice-principal is their helper. And just try and figure out communication between you and the principal. That is a big one. It’s very much in the middle position. You know you really do have to be loyal to your principal and you have to be loyal to the school board.

During the last interview, Hannah discussed what she had learned about administration and school leadership from Jane. Hannah talked about their similar philosophies, but emphasized their different approaches to school leadership:

I can really understand her style, but I think we are quite different. For me there is a certain amount, I’m pretty flexible, but within certain parameters I’m flexible. I mean I’m much more of a logical sequential thinker, and she is much more of a creative, free flowing can go anywhere kind of thinker. So I think when she said we had similar styles, I think actually what it was, was we could work together.

Hannah compared herself with Jane. She maintained that she and Jane were adept at solving problems. However, Hannah noted that she needed to make a decision, whereas, Jane was comfortable if a problem was not resolved. Hannah analyzed the differences in their approaches to problem solving:

Well there’s kind of a laissez-faire, it will happen. It will come together and in many ways it does. But for some of the people the process that leads up to it finally coming together is really hard on them. I think I’m much more of a planner. I like to know there is a general plan. I don’t need to micromanage stuff, but I do like to know there is a general plan.

Hannah commented that Jane did not always anticipate the consequences of her decision-making, nor did she realize that some of her actions upset some teachers:
I think the other thing that I can do much better is I think I can anticipate what to do before it [crisis] gets bigger. That’s one of the things I learned from Jane because I didn’t see her often anticipating. I saw her often missing the anticipatory part.

Except at the end of the school year, Jane and Hannah were administrative partners at Woodlawn. Of the three pairs of administrators, their beliefs about leadership and schooling were most alike. They were facilitative leaders; their primary goal was to support and assist teachers in their work with the children, and they promoted collaborative and collegial with the teachers.

Jane asserted that Hannah possessed most of the requisite skills and the abilities to be a successful principal. Hannah assumed leadership roles in many situations because Jane believed she was a capable leader. However, Hannah also wanted someone to coach her, to provide critical feedback, and to help her evaluate her administrative actions so she could develop into a successful school leader. Jane believed Hannah did not need a mentor because she was already a very good vice-principal.

Although Hannah was involved in problem solving, decision-making, and assumed leadership roles in different situations, she was mindful of the power of the principal in the school. At the end of the school year, Hanna maintained that her roles and responsibilities had, in fact, depended upon the principal.

Summary

The vice-principals were originally satisfied with their assignments because they believed they had similar philosophies of leadership as the principals. Presumably, the three pairs of administrators rejected an authoritarian, dictatorial, top-
down, *power over* style of leadership. All six of the administrators believed having a positive school atmosphere and collegial relations with the staff were vital to a successful school. Supporting teachers was a component of the leadership approaches articulated by the principals and vice-principals. Early in the year, the vice-principals acknowledged that the principals listened to the needs and concerns and they were accessible to the staff. Later in the school year, there was dissonance between Harry and Gina and Celeste and Gil regarding their beliefs about school leadership. The problems arose in the execution of their duties. Because Harry was a laissez-faire leader, Gina took on a lot of work. Celeste was concerned because Gil was focused on the SDM processes, and he did not pressure the teachers to take specific actions. These differences affected the vice-principals’ performances and their relationships with the teachers. Harry’s actions contributed to some of the difficulties Gina encountered with some teachers.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah discussed the responses of the principals to problems that arose in the schools. Gina and Celeste seemed willing to exercise their formal authority and influence when they worked with the teachers. Hannah talked about being influential because the staff trusted her judgment as the school year evolved. She maintained that anticipating problems was a crucial ability of administrators. Occasionally, Hannah felt Jane was reactive rather than proactive.

Hannah, Gina, Celeste, and the other five novice vice-principals interviewed for this study acknowledged the power of the principals over them. Another first year vice-principal talked about her power: “I think the fact that my principal is so willing to allow me to take on responsibilities, to make decisions. [I am] as powerful as the
principal allows me to be.” Georgina, the district leadership coordinator, readily acknowledged the power of the principals over the vice-principals. Georgina elucidated on the relationship between them:

But obviously if you don’t have a good relationship with that principal, then your advancement chances are going to be a little bit harder and a little slower until you’ve had a number of people who have been able to work well with you. So, it is a crucial relationship for the vice-principal.

The principals were crucial to the nascent careers of the vice-principals; they evaluated them and they would be instrumental in the vice-principals’ promotions to principalships.

*Circumstances That Affected the First-Year Vice-Principals*

Gina, Hannah, and Celeste became involved in different activities and encountered different problems in their respective schools. However, several issues affected the three vice-principals and their relationships with the principals and their understanding of school leadership and administration. In this section of the paper, I review the following themes: loyalty to administration, learning through trial and error, mentoring, and vice-principals as acting principals.

*Loyalty to Administration*

The principals were concerned that the vice-principals recognized the importance of their allegiance to their new administrative colleagues. They worried that the vice-principals might be susceptible to the influence of the teachers or encounter difficulties separating themselves from teachers because of their recent membership in the union. According to these administrators, adapting to and
assimilating an administrative perspective took time. Gil talked about the difficulties first-year vice-principals experienced:

So, the teachers will vent stuff like that to the vice-principals. It makes it tough on the vice-principals because they have to be careful about what they can say and can’t say. They can’t say “yeah you’re right that idiot – that’s really stupid” because if they start to do that, they’ve just indicated that they can be lobbied and any decision that goes on, that they [vice-principals] can become an advocate for someone other than the administration in the school.

Gina did have difficulties seeing herself as an administrator early in the school year. She grappled with her transition from teaching to administration:

The biggest thing, in the beginning of the school year, I considered myself more a teacher and I connected more with the staff because I wanted to still be one of them. And then when the months went by, especially when I took on the acting principalship. And then by January, no, I’m an administrator.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah acknowledged their commitment to their new colleagues and to the school board. The vice-principals knew they were expected to demonstrate their loyalty to other administrators before they were appointed to the vice-principalships. Hannah described the situation of the vice-principals in the Evergreen School District:

I could do it because the expectation is that you support your principal and you support the school board as the administrators. And that is very different than being a teacher. It’s a real shift. You can no longer openly agree with teachers when they’re ranting on about this policy or that policy. Even though you think, “yeah, you’re right, it stinks.” You really have to keep your mouth shut. That was something I had to learn. I don’t think I made any major mistakes.

Although the principals were concerned that vice-principals demonstrate allegiance to administration, the vice-principals expressed their loyalty to their administrative colleagues during the school year.

The vice-principals attended a district meeting at the beginning of the school year where the assistant superintendents emphasized that the vice-principals were
members of the Evergreen District management and legal representatives of the board. When Hannah, Gina, and Celeste became vice-principals, they relinquished their membership in the Elementary Evergreen Teachers Union and the BCTF. The division between administrators and teachers occurred 15 years ago. Until the late 1980s, the teachers and administrators were members of the same associations. In 1987, the BC provincial government passed the Teaching Profession Act (Bill 20), which affected the relationships of teachers and administrators in British Columbia (Fris, 1987).

Before the legislation, the BCTF and the local teachers’ associations were professional organizations; they were not unions. Bill 20 forced the teachers to choose between unionization with full bargaining rights or to remain an association with limited bargaining rights. The teachers voted for unionization. The principals, vice-principals, and curriculum directors’ memberships in the local teachers’ associations and the BCTF were terminated. They were designated administrative offices (AO) by law, and they became members of management and representatives of the school boards.

There were contradictions and tensions regarding the degree to which the vice-principals juggled their allegiance to management while trying to work collaboratively with teachers. Gina, Celeste, and Hannah realized they needed to support their principals because the principals had power over the vice-principals’ careers. They would evaluate and recommend the vice-principals for promotions. Because the vice-principals were part of management, they could not publicly disagree with district policy, rules, or regulations. They were aware of the legal implications of being administrators in British Columbia.
The vice-principals were expected to simultaneously separate from and cooperate with the teachers. The teachers expected the vice-principals to be part of management and separate from them. The vice-principals faced tenuous situations. They were expected to work closely with teachers because the district supported a consultative decision-making process at the district level. The area superintendents advocated shared decision-making at the school level. However, the district expected the vice-principals to support administrative viewpoints and implement policies; they could not disagree with the school board. The vice-principals needed to balance their power with goals and philosophies with their power over administrative positions.

Working With and Training the Vice- Principals

Although the principals and vice-principals had courteous and professional relationships, the vice-principals believed they were not receiving sufficient guidance, training, and feedback from the school principals about management and leadership. The vice-principals and principals met early in the school year to discuss the tasks (e.g., ordering and distributing supplies and resource, student supervision and discipline) the vice-principals would perform; however, the vice-principals reported that for the remainder of the school year they rarely discussed their roles with the principals. Gina, Celeste, and Hannah talked about the lack of training and guidance they received from the principals, but they appreciated the freedom the principals gave

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15 The Evergreen School District offered weekly optional in-services to administrators. The purpose of the in-services was dissemination of information on different topics (e.g., suspending students, evaluation of teachers, and computer programs).
them to engage in numerous school-wide activities. Hannah attempted to describe her role early in the school year:

Well, I haven’t really sat down and gotten a clear role description, yet. So at this point, my role has been, a lot of it has been providing support to the teachers around resources. Getting resources, supplies. I worked with students around discipline issues, social difficulties that they’re in and working with them. Supporting the principal whatever it is she is doing.

At the end of the school year, Hannah was still concerned about the lack of administrative information that she received from the principal.

My concern is because she keeps an awful lot of what’s going on up here [in her head]. She is not a highly organized record keeper. So I’m always saying, “How do you do this or where is this?” It’s somewhere. So, my fear is when she moves on, a lot of things are going to go with her and it’s going to be in her mind. I’m kind of trying to get that, but again there is no time.

Training and guidance were constant sources of anxiety throughout the school year because the vice-principals were unsure if they were experiencing all of the necessary duties, tasks, and responsibilities to be successful administrators and school leaders. Harry, Gil, and Jane discussed training the vice-principals. Although they identified some of the roles and functions of the vice-principals in the schools, they maintained that the vice-principal roles varied and were unique to each school situation. Based on my observations in the three schools, the roles of the vice-principals were more similar than they were different.

The principals claimed that there were no district guidelines for principals to work with the vice-principals. Gil remarked on the absence of procedures for working with vice-principals: “No one has written out any guidelines on how anyone is supposed to work with your vice-principals. Tradition has said that certain jobs are vice-principals’ jobs. Things like stock, all VPs do stock; that’s basic.” He claimed that he and Celeste decided which tasks and duties they performed based on the
demands of the school and the expertise of the principal and vice-principal. Jane argued that the paperwork was insignificant compared to other administrative responsibilities. She contended, “Most of the things having nothing to do with paperwork. The most important things are still the people things. And it depends on the strength of your vice-principal.”

Gil maintained that he worked with his vice-principals based on what he did as a vice-principal; he was also critical of the district preparation of school leaders. He reflected on the issue and offered his opinion:

Most of it is based on my experience and what my experience was as a VP. What I liked about it, what I didn’t like about it. What I thought was useful. What I thought I would have changed. That’s been my philosophy. But I think way too little time is spent in this district supporting leaders and potential leaders and developing leaders. I’ve never sat down with another administrator to talk about how we work with our VPs. No one has ever brought the topic up.

Gil talked about the difficulty of developing a comprehensive leadership program for vice-principals in the Evergreen District. He implied that this decision would come from the superintendent, not from the principals. Gil explained the situation in the district:

But how are we going to plan it? Who has time to plan it? In fact, someone has to acknowledge that “gee, this would be a really good thing if someone did this.” A principal of a school is not likely to phone up the superintendent and say, “I have a great idea for putting on a workshop for vice-principals, and I would like to do it on how to organize a class.” That’s not likely to happen. Unless it comes the other way [superintendent suggests it]. And someone says a lot of our principals don’t seem to know how to organize a class.

James, an assistant superintendent, acknowledged the shortcomings of the district’s preparation for vice-principals:
Formal, is that they, I guess we rely on their supervising principals, first off. That’s the person who is closest to them, the person who supervises them on a daily basis. And I have to say, I’m not sure as a profession we’ve done a very good job at training people to be effective supervisor mentors.

The assistant superintendents maintained the principals were responsible for mentoring and training the vice-principals. The principals alleged they trained the vice-principals as best they could. Vice-principals reported the training was inadequate. Training was an issue that had not been adequately addressed and examined in the Evergreen School District.

**Learning by Trial and Error**

The vice-principals were under pressure to perform competently and efficiently by the principals and teachers. Moreover, the district expected vice-principals to prepare themselves for the principalship. The principals maintained that the most effective ways that vice-principals learned about administration and leadership was by making mistakes and experiencing various types of situations. Gil made the following observations:

I think no matter what, we react because of who we are. I think if you don’t have those skills the only way you can be taught is by making those mistakes and having someone help bail you out. Well, you learn by making mistakes. By having some good people you can phone. By having a lot of skills before you ever get there.

Vice-principals had opportunities to face many new situations because their principals allowed them to perform many tasks. Generally, the vice-principals decided which tasks, responsibilities, and activities they dealt with. Harry suggested specific functions and activities the vice-principals should undertake:
First, I think there’s got to be some experience in committee work or drawing people in to get some kind of program or something implemented so you get the experience of getting something like that off the ground. I think the whole idea with working with parents, working directly with staff in some sort of large project. Reading report cards and the whole assessment and evaluation process. I think in terms of community involvement.

Furthermore, Harry contended that the vice-principals should deal with whatever happens because administrators did not always anticipate what would occur.

Gil acknowledged that it would be difficult for the vice-principals to approach the principals when they encountered problems or needed feedback about mistakes they had made. Novice vice-principals were trying to prove their competence, not their incompetence to the principals. Gil shared the following observations:

There is this fear amongst VPs that they’re supposed to know all of these things even though they’ve never been taught or had exposure or the experience to learn them. Somehow in their minds “I’m a VP now, I should know all this. So, I’m not going to go in there and ask him [the principal] how to order tables or get the lights for the assembly.” Whatever it may be because they think when the time comes for me to be principal, someone is going to call the person who supervised me and tell me about so and so.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah agreed that they learned the most about administration and school leadership through their experiences. The vice-principals did not systematically learn about administration; they received little or no guidance or training from the principals.

*Acting Principals*

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah learned a great deal about administration when they were acting principals. This occurred when the principals were not on the school campus. The vice-principals were in charge of the schools; they handled the emergencies or problems that arose. Gina was the acting principal for three
consecutive weeks during the first term and approximately 10 additional days during the second term of the school year. Hannah and Celeste were acting principals for 10 to 12 days from February to June.

The vice-principals faced some challenging predicaments when they were acting principals. Hannah was the only administrator on campus during an earthquake, whereas Celeste dealt with a serious vandalism problem on school grounds. Hannah talked about the magnitude of the responsibilities for the well-being and safety of the children. Hannah commented that she needed to think carefully and more cautiously about the decisions she made as acting principal. The teachers and children expected the vice-principals to be in control of all situations; the vice-principals were pressured to make correct decisions during emergencies because the school community was affected. Celeste was the acting principal for one week in May. She recorded her daily interactions with teachers, students, and parents. She was the main problem solver and decision maker in the school. As acting principals, the vice-principals experienced a high level of responsibility, even though it was temporary.

Gina, who was acting principal for the longest time of the three vice-principals, noted several differences between the roles of the principals and the vice-principals. Gina had more time to become involved in more administrative issues and attend to more school-wide activities because she was not teaching. As a result, Gina dealt with discipline problems in a proactive rather than reactive manner. She raised her visibility in the school by visiting several classrooms. She talked to classes about anti-bullying on the school campus. Gina noted that principals received more information than vice-principals: “One thing I discovered as the principal you get the information. You’re
knowledgeable because you’re in the know. You get all the information.” Gina commented on how much she learned and experienced as the acting principal. She looked forward to becoming a principal; she described the advantages of the principalship:

I can’t wait to be principal because you are a principal full time. You’re in there 100% and you can deal with; you can be much more proactive, you can go into the classrooms to visit more. You can do all the things and you have the time. You have the right to phone the school board to chat with whomever, people that are in higher positions.

Gina continued to discuss her experiences as acting principal. She commented on the formal authority of the principals:

It really is the principal’s school. You know, it’s not the principal’s school; it’s everyone’s school, but what I mean is you have a sense of if you want to do anything, you just don’t have to worry as much about pleasing other people. You’re much more in control and you can do what you darn well please, in light of obviously not stepping on anyone’s toes.

The vice-principals benefited from the experiences as acting principals; they encountered a different level of responsibility than they did as vice-principals. These circumstances helped deepen their understanding of school leadership.

**Mentoring the Vice-Principals**

According to Osterman and Kottkamp (1993), mentorship occurs “through communication and collaboration; individuals become more effective, assume greater responsibility for their own performance, and engage more closely and more productively with others in the workplace” (p. 185). Mentor relationships include the following stages: initiation, collaboration, inclusiveness, coaching, reciprocation, development, separation, and modeling (Calabrese & Tucker-Ladd, 1991). Mentoring was an important issue to Gina, Celeste, and Hannah. The vice-principals wanted a
mentoring relationship with the principals. Hannah spoke about the importance of self-evaluation, self-knowledge, reflection, critical feedback, and mentoring as ways for her to learn more about leadership and administration:

I think people need ongoing self-reflection and coaching. I think that’s the biggest way leaders learn. They also need the Pro D on all those different things, legal the discipline and all that stuff. And that’s when you have to have your own stuff together. And the only way you’re going to get that is through really looking at it.

Throughout the school year, all three vice-principals emphasized the lack of critical discussions with the principals about their work.

During the interviews, the principals felt strongly about mentoring the vice-principals even though they articulated narrow and partial definitions of mentoring.

Harry described how he mentored vice-principals:

I see myself in the role of being a mentor. I see vice-principals as being principals in training. I believe vice-principals should be doing every aspect and facet of the job. Anything we do, the vice-principals should be experiencing exactly the same thing.

Gil discussed his mentorship of vice-principals; he illustrated his point by comparing first-year administrators to new drivers:

VPs are learners with an “L” [learner] on their car. They need to experience everything they’re going to experience, but in a mild sort of way. So that they’re never left on their own totally. They can always ask for help or advice. There is a safety net somewhere in there; they’re not going to fail. I’m not going to let you fail, but you’ve got to try. I try and stay out of the way as much as possible.

Jane shared her thoughts on mentoring: “Mentoring is also standing back. It isn’t always in their face. Sometimes it’s not doing anything. I think I’ve mentored other people’s vice-principals more than I’ve mentored my own.” Gil also claimed that he mentored other administrators rather than his own vice-principals:
There are several people I know throughout the district who are vice-principals and even some principals who are more likely to phone me for help or advice than they are to ask anyone in their own school because they feel safer doing that. I don’t know why, but they do. More so than people I’ve worked with directly.

Gil acknowledged that it would be difficult for the vice-principals to approach the principals when they encountered problems or needed feedback about mistakes they had made. It might have been difficult for the principals to mentor their own vice-principals because the vice-principals might have had to expose their lack of knowledge and experience, and reveal their problems and deficiencies. The principals recognized that this would be difficult even though the vice-principals were learning on the job. Novice vice-principals were trying to prove their competence, not their incompetence to the principals.

The principals equated mentoring with learning through experiences and making mistakes. Gina, Celeste, and Hannah asserted that coaching, which was the one aspect of mentoring, was missing in their relationships with the principals. According to the vice-principals, they did not perceive the principals as mentors. In fact, the vice-principals were concerned about the absence of reflective discussions and critical feedback from the principals on school leadership and management. The vice-principals did not have in-depth, reflective, comprehensive conversations with their principals. The findings in Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd’s (1991) study supported the experiences of these vice-principals; the researchers found that mentoring by the principals was important to vice-principals, but it rarely occurred.

If a novice vice-principal requested a mentor, the Evergreen Elementary Administrators’ Association (EEAA) matched them with an experienced vice-
principal. Celeste requested a mentor, but she spoke to this person only twice during the school year. Celeste met her by chance at two district meetings. Even though the EEAA assigned mentors, the district did not schedule time for them to meet; the district did not provide information or comprehensive training on mentoring relationships.

James and Bob, the two assistant superintendents, assumed that the school principals were mentoring vice-principals. When I pressed the assistant superintendents for evidence, they were uncertain if the principals were actually mentoring the vice-principals. Instead, Bob highlighted the power of the principal over the vice-principal’s career when he discussed the relationship: “I think primarily it falls on the supervising principals to be an effective mentor and an effective supervisor. And make sure that they get the word out on this person’s strengths and attributes and that kind of stuff.” Mentoring took on a different meaning for the assistant superintendents. They defined it as advocating and supporting the vice-principals’ promotions to principalships. The assistant superintendents discussed how the principals possessed power over the vice-principals.

In January, I asked the vice-principals how their participation in the research had affected them. Individually, the vice-principals claimed that I was their mentor. They viewed me as a support person, someone who asked questions, who caused them to reflect on various aspects of their jobs. Each vice-principal discussed why she saw me as a mentor. Gina commented, “It’s been rewarding having you there because you’ve been a mentor and that’s been very rewarding. But that doesn’t exist for
everyone.” The vice-principals discussed aspects of their jobs with me. Hannah noted that she was isolated in some ways:

I really think that you helped me the most because I could sit and self-reflect with you. And you give me questions. I saw you as a coach in a coaching role. I didn’t have anybody else. Jane didn’t do that for me. And certainly senior management doesn’t do that.

Celeste shared similar views:

I think it’s made me know that first I have someone to talk to about all these things. It has also given me a chance to reflect. Like right now, what are you going to do because the job is so fast-paced? It’s just like gone.

Gina pointed out that I was not in a position to evaluate her; therefore, she shared her thoughts without worrying about repercussions:

It’s given me a chance to reflect on things I may not have thought of. Also, I can tell you things I can’t talk about to other people in [Evergreen District]. I love you being there because I can say whatever I want to you because you’re nobody, you’re not part of that [supervisory] group.

They explained they were able to discuss their roles with someone who asked perceptive questions and who was not evaluating their performances. It was a safe relationship for them to discuss their concerns and struggles as well as their successes, and I visited them on a regular basis. Celeste maintained that she looked forward to my visits so she could share some of her experiences. Because the research lasted until June, I continued to observe and question the vice-principals; hence, they continued to view me as their mentor.

The mentoring relationships that developed between the individual vice-principals and me were unintentional. The relationships evolved over time. At the beginning of the school year, I observed the vice-principals in action, supervising and disciplining students, teaching, and responding to the requests of teachers. During the first term, I asked many basic questions about their jobs. As I learned more about the
roles of the vice-principals, their schools, and the challenges they encountered, I asked questions that were comprehensive and analytical. The inquiries allowed and gave the vice-principals opportunities to examine and discuss their performances and reactions to various circumstances they had as novice administrators. The discussions and questions led to more questions and conversations, and to the vice-principals viewing me as a mentor.

Support for the Vice- Principals

The vice-principals encountered many challenges during their first year in administration. At various times, they identified those people with whom they could talk about their experiences. Hannah, Gina, and Celeste claimed that their friends and families were supportive, but in different ways. On the one hand, their families and friends provided the vice-principals an opportunity to talk about and to escape the pressures of their jobs. On the other hand, they felt their jobs put undue pressure on their personal relationships because it reduced the time they spent with their families and/or friends. The other five first-year vice-principals interviewed for this study shared similar opinions.

The vice-principals talked about colleagues, both teachers and administrators, who were friends before they became vice-principals. Gina, Celeste, and Hannah reported that they contacted these colleagues to obtain information about some of their administrative tasks and duties.

The Evergreen School Board hired nine new elementary vice-principals during the year that I completed the study. Gina initiated and organized three or four meetings
during the year for the first-year vice-principals to share their experiences, give each other feedback, and support each other. Of the nine first-year vice-principals, five or six usually attended the gatherings. Georgina, the coordinator of the leadership program, maintained this group was the best support system for the vice-principals. She declared that their group was “second to none.” Although the vice-principals enjoyed the gatherings, they emphasized that they could not share confidences about the problems they encountered as novice administrators because they did not know each other well enough. Celeste represented the opinions of the vice-principals:

> It’s interesting because people say you’re part of the support group and all that stuff. I can’t imagine getting to this level of discussion or exposing yourself in this way with any support group. I like [the other vice-principals] but I, we’d never have this conversation.

Being hired for the same position and at the same time did not guarantee openness and trust among the vice-principals.

The Evergreen Elementary Administrators’ Association (EEAA) was an important support group for first-year vice-principals. The EEAA was the professional organization for all elementary principals and vice-principals. The EEAA executive committee worked closely with the Evergreen District on issues and problems that directly affected the principals and vice-principals. The president contacted the novice vice-principals during the first week of school to welcome them into the association. Every week the association sent supportive and informative messages to all elementary administrators. The eight EEEA dinner meetings during the school year were opportunities to socialize and get to know other colleagues.

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16 A pseudonym is used for the Evergreen Elementary Administrators’ Association to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.
Hannah and Celeste attended most, if not all of the eight meetings from September to May. Gina missed several meetings because of school-related obligations.

_Influences of Assistant Superintendents on Vice-Principals_

Although the focus of the study was the daily, internal, activities of the school, the assistant district superintendents and the superintendent affected the roles, responsibilities, and careers of elementary vice-principals. The two assistant superintendents discussed the knowledge and skills that the vice-principals needed to obtain to become successful administrators. The Evergreen School District was in the process of developing leadership documents for elementary and secondary principals and vice-principals during the year I conducted this study (see Appendix I for a brief overview). James, an assistant superintendent described personal characteristics, skills, and styles of leadership:

We [the committee] outline basically three main areas: the attributes of leadership – what are precise skills that people need, from political astuteness to hard work to an ability to work collegially. Those attributes to some extent or another that most leaders have. We looked at the dimensions of leadership; they were much more specific and more precise. They [the committee] looked at aspects of the job from school organization to various leadership attributes. Finally, we looked at leadership style and while we could come to no consensus on the exact style, preferred style, we did look at various styles that people need to examine and contextualize for themselves.

As mentioned previously, district level administrators were extremely influential in the careers of the vice-principals because they were involved in the selections, school assignments, and promotions. The vice-principals were mindful of how they interacted with and presented themselves to the assistant superintendents.
The first-year administrators had the most contact with the assistant superintendents at the monthly area meetings. All of the principals and vice-principals in the four district areas attended these area meetings, which were chaired by an assistant superintendent. The primary purpose of the area meetings was the dissemination of district policies and information to the administrators. Another first-year vice-principal viewed the meetings as an opportunity to meet and converse with her administrative colleagues. Georgina, the leadership coordinator, advised the first-year administrators not to speak before their principals had spoken. The novice vice-principals reported that they were expected to be attentive listeners and silent observers during the meetings.

In addition to the monthly meetings, the vice-principals had few opportunities to interact with the assistant superintendents during the school year. At the beginning of the school year, the district administrator met with the school principals and vice-principals to discuss their goals for the school year. All three vice-principals reported that their goals were not discussed, nor did they contribute to the conversation during the meetings. In fact, Gina reported that she sat quietly throughout the meeting. Another prospect for dialogue occurred when the vice-principals were acting principals. Hannah, Gina, and Celeste reported talking briefly to the assistant superintendents two or three times during these periods.

Hannah claimed that, as vice-principals, they seemed to be unimportant to the assistant superintendents. According to Gina, the assistant superintendent in her area talked about administrators working together and being on the same team, but he rarely spoke to her. Celeste commented that Bob, her area superintendent, was affable

\[17\] The assistant superintendents for McCleery and Woodlawn schools were not interviewed for this study.
and always inquired how she was doing. Celeste had a standard response: "I'm learning; things are good. I'm working with a group and being cooperative. Things are fine." Celeste would never discuss any difficulties because she believed it would affect her chances for promotion. Another first-year vice-principal contended that the principals were the school contact person so there was no reason for the vice-principal to talk to the assistant superintendent. The superintendent of the schools had no contact or verbal exchanges with the three vice-principals even though they attended the bi-monthly superintendent meetings.

Summary

Initially, the philosophies of the vice-principals and principals seemed to be similar. As the school year evolved, the differences between Harry and Gina, and Gil and Celeste were noticeable. Hannah and Jane's leadership philosophies were compatible throughout the school year.

The relationships between the vice-principals and principals were multifaceted and complex. Although the vice-principals had the freedom to become involved in different types of activities, the principals had considerable impact over the vice-principals. The vice-principals did not interfere or take on tasks that the principals oversaw. The vice-principals were aware of the power the principals held over them. Furthermore, the vice-principals were expected to support and demonstrate their loyalty to the principals and their new administrative colleagues.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah were concerned about learning and understanding their new roles. They agreed that they needed more guidance, mentoring, and training
about administration and school leadership than the principals were providing. Although additional guidance might have been warranted, the principals asserted that vice-principals learned considerable information and gained substantial knowledge about their roles through making mistakes. The vice-principals seemed to gain experience, knowledge, and information when they were acting principals.

Although the vice-principals’ interactions with the assistant superintendents were limited, the vice-principals were aware that assistant superintendents were able to influence the vice-principals’ future careers. The assistant superintendents determined the school placements for the vice-principals, and they would be instrumental to their promotions to the principalship.

In chapter six, I examine the micropolitics of the schools. The focus is the relationships among the vice-principals and the teachers.
CHAPTER SIX: THE MICROPOLITICS OF THE SCHOOLS

Simmel (1950) claimed that followers had as much influence on their leaders as their leaders had on them. He contended that leaders needed to function in the culture of the organizations, and in order for the leaders to be successful, the followers had to respect their authority. Barnard (1948) argued that leadership depended upon the leader, followers, and the situations. He maintained there was interdependence among the three. Follett (1942) emphasized the need for people to work together to achieve their objectives. Follett defined power with as "jointly developed power" where people worked together to achieve their goals.

In this study, I addressed the relationships between the vice-principals and the teachers. The focus was the micropolitics of the schools — how the vice-principals and teachers used their formal and informal power to affect each other. The interests, goals, and beliefs of the educators, and the strategies used by vice-principals and teachers were central elements of micropolitics. In addition to the micropolitics of the schools, shared decision-making, and teacher leadership were important features in the McCleery, Ashland, and Woodlawn Schools.

In the first section, I provide background information on shared decision-making and teacher leadership. After that, the vice-principal and teacher relationships are discussed. The data are presented as follows: Gina and McCleery teachers, Celeste and Ashland teachers, and Hannah and Woodlawn teachers. The information presented includes descriptions of several critical incidents that characterized the first
year of the vice-principals and their relationships with the teachers. The findings were based on the vice-principal and the teacher interviews, and school observations.

Shared Decision-Making

The schools in this study operated within a model that was similar to administrative controlled site based management (SBM). According to Murphy and Beck (1995), the following conditions were present in administratively controlled SBM schools: (a) the school principals were the key figures in the schools; (b) the central office transferred complete or partial authority to the principals; and (c) the principals possessed the ultimate authority to make decisions, but they were expected to engage in shared decision-making and seek the input of teachers and parents.

In this study, the school board and superintendent made major policy decisions. However, the Evergreen School District had delegated some power to the school principals. The school principals were responsible for school related issues, and they were the ultimate authority in the schools (BC Ministry of Education, 2000). Hannah provided a pertinent and critical description of the relationship between the school district and the school principals:

It's a big district. I think it has changed in the last little while. I think what they expect from their administrators is pretty much everything to do with the school. Running, handling, setting goals, setting vision, mission. You know the whole shebang, make it happen. There used to be a lot more central, much more of a centralized model. It's very decentralized now. So there are many, fewer resources in terms of the district level, and the school level. So I think they expect administrators to deal with it. Whatever is happening, deal with it. Use the staff and the resources that you have to satisfy whatever your [school] needs are.

Even though the principals were the formal school leaders and responsible for the management and leadership of the individual schools (BC Ministry of Education,
the principals and vice-principals articulated support for shared decision-making (SDM) and teacher leadership, and collaborative and collegial relations with teachers.

Several other factors contributed to the changes of school governance. The unionization of teachers, changes in leadership theory and practice, and the reform and restructuring movements of the 1980s and 1990s contributed to the changes in school leadership. A McCleery teacher, who was a strong union supporter and activist, discussed the transformation of leadership in the Evergreen District:

Well it’s really changed the power structure in the schools considerably. When I first started teaching, I think there was a union committee, but the principals and vice-principals had a lot of power. And there was not a lot of recourse for teachers if decisions were made that they weren’t very happy with. The school board and I guess management theories changed. And the school board actually felt very positive about a collegial decision-making process. So that and conjunction with the union, wanting teachers to be more involved in decision making, that came through.

The archetypical, top-down, authoritarian, controlling school leader did not exist in the three schools in this study.

Moreover, since teacher unionization in 1987, the EETU (Evergreen Elementary Teachers Union) has negotiated several collective agreements with the Evergreen School District. The British Columbia Teachers Federation negotiated with the British Columbia Public Employees Association (BCPSEA). A stipulation in the Local Collective Agreement (1998-2001) supported and engendered collaboration and SDM between teachers and administrators. Based on the collective agreement, teachers had the right to advise the administrators on instructional assignments, teaching and learning conditions, school regulations and routines, school philosophy,
planning and evaluating school curricula, timetabling, the school organization, and staff concerns.

Findings in one study and information in anecdotal articles demonstrated that the provincial teacher contract was an area of concern to some BC administrators (Cosh, 1997; Gunn, Holdaway, & Johnson, 1987; Ion, 1998; Mang, 1998). Researchers found that union contracts altered the balance of power between teachers and administrators (Gunn, Holdaway & Johnson; Iannaccone, 1991). According to these researchers, some administrators perceive the shift in power from administrators to teachers as detrimental to administrators because it undermines their ability to perform their jobs and to make decisions. The collective agreement between the teachers and school districts did compel the administrators to work with, listen to, and respond to teachers. However, these were not divisive issues in the Ashland, Woodlawn, or McCleery Schools.

During their interviews, Jane and Gil emphasized that the collective agreement with teachers was a document that was shared by both management and teachers. They did not believe that the document should be used to cause division between teachers and administrators. Jane expressed strong views about the collective agreement:

But the collective agreement is on both sides. See the collective agreement is not for one, it’s not for just the teachers. It’s the teachers and the school board, and it’s been agreed to by both parties. It is good for us and good for them. I have never found that if you look at the collective agreement and do what it says, that you get in any trouble or that there is a problem because that is what the collective agreement is there for. It’s to decide the things that need to be decided that could be contentious. And sometimes you win and sometimes you lose.

Harry did not offer a view on the collective agreement.
Based on my interviews with the teachers in the three schools, the teachers identified several conditions that they expected to exist in their relationships with administrators. Teachers expected the principals and vice-principals to engage in SDM and maintain collegial and collaborative relationships with them. Teachers believed the primary role of administrators was to support the teachers. Administrators supported teachers by obtaining resources, assisting teachers to achieve their goals, and taking care of problems outside of the classrooms. Teachers expected administrators to be facilitative leaders. They did not expect administrators to use their formal authority to force teachers to act or respond in ways that contradicted the educational beliefs of the teachers. Teachers did not want administrators to take over the SDM processes; they wanted them to ensure the structures were in place to discuss issues and then make decisions. Teachers wanted administrators to be synthesizers of ideas, and to work with the staff on the school vision and goals.

Overall, the principals, vice-principals, and teachers engaged in SDM in McCleery, Ashland, and Woodlawn Schools. The following definitions were applicable to this study. Taylor and Bogotch (1995) defined SDM as teachers engaged in decision-making about issues that affected their job assignments or activities. Weiss (1993) defined shared decision-making as “a formal system for the representation of teachers in a decision-making body” (p. 69).

Researchers report that certain conditions were necessary for teachers and administrators to achieve success engaging in SDM. School principals are crucial to the success of SDM (Lunsford, 1993; Stine, 1993; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994). Ingersoll (1996) and Taylor and Bogotch (1994) found that teachers need to be
involved in decision-making beyond their classrooms for SDM; they need to be 
involved in decisions about school-wide issues and policies. Wohlstetter, Smyer, and 
Mohrman identify several SDM criteria: support (finances and time), knowledge, 
power (structures, role of principal, devolved power), information, rewards, and 
instructional improvement. Wagstaff (1995) reports that preparation and guidelines for 
SDM, training before implementation, support from the district for training, and time 
to engage in SDM were critical.

Some of the conditions in the McCleery, Ashland, and Woodlawn Schools 
were congruent with schools that engaged in successful SDM. The principals and vice-
principals expressed support for SDM and collaboration with teachers. The principals 
had delegated power to subcommittees. The staff advisory committee (SAC) was the 
focal point of SDM between teachers and administrators; the collective agreement 
provided some parameters in terms of which issues required SDM. Based on my 
observations and interviews with vice-principals, teachers, and principals, the teachers 
engaged in SDM with the administrators on most school related issues. The three 
schools in this study experienced several problems with SDM that were described in 
several studies (e.g., Weiss, 1993; Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994). The 
guidelines for SDM seemed to be vague. On a few occasions, administrators made 
unilateral decisions even though the situations warranted SDM. In one school, 
decisions were made, but there were no follow-up activities or conversations.

According to the Woodlawn SAC chairperson, the EETU provided workshops for 
engaging in SDM, but the Evergreen School District did not. Not all information was 
shared with the staff. In the next section of the paper, a description of the main
decision-making committee is provided. The success and/or failure of SDM will be discussed in the vice-principal and teacher section of this chapter.

**Network of School Meetings**

The network of committee meetings was the mechanism that engendered and supported SDM in the schools. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss and make decisions related to the schools. The SAC and administrative meetings were the two main meetings in the schools. The principals had the authority to schedule monthly administrative meetings (BC Ministry of Education, 2000). When these meetings were held, the principal set the agenda and chaired the meetings. During the school year that I conducted this study, the principals, Harry, Gil, and Jane, seldom called administrative meetings. In fact, only two or three administrative meetings were organized in each school from September to June. For example, Harry called an administrative meeting at McCleery to discuss changes in school safety regulations. Gil, the Ashland principal, discussed school vandalism at an unscheduled administrative meeting. Jane discussed the allocation of money at an administrative meeting.

The SAC meeting, chaired by a teacher, was an important committee in the school. All members of the professional staff were members of the SAC. Most major school decisions were made at the SAC meetings. According to the chairperson of McCleery, it was the ultimate decision-making body in the school.

In addition to the SAC, professional development (Pro D) and hiring committees were permanent or standing committees in Evergreen schools (Local
Collective Agreement 1998-2001). The members of the Pro D committee coordinated the agenda for professional development and teacher in-service days. Pro D meetings were usually held every month, but could be held more frequently if the committee was planning a workshop for the staff. An administrator, union representative, and several teachers served on the hiring committee. They reviewed applications, and interviewed and hired teachers for the schools. The hiring committee hired teachers who were already employed by the Evergreen District. This committee was usually active at the end of the school year. The Pro D and hiring committees reported to the staff advisory committee, but the Pro D committee had the authority to make decisions.

The administrators and teachers established subcommittees based on the needs and interests of the educators in the schools. These included, but were not limited to fundraising, resource, budget/finance, camp, health and safety, environment, behaviour/discipline, computer, early literacy, and social committees. The committees were open to all staff members. See Appendix G for committees in the schools.

The SAC was the forum for the dissemination of information, delegation of issues to subcommittees (e.g., fundraising and resource) for further investigation, and discussion and decisions of most school issues. The chairperson of the SAC was responsible for assembling the agenda and facilitating the meeting. The goal was to ensure that people shared their views and that the staff followed democratic procedures. The SAC chairpersons used Robert's Rules of Order (DeVries, 1998) when chairing a meeting. The following is an abbreviated description of the process the chairperson used: the meeting was called to order; the staff voted on the agenda
and/or made changes to it; motions were made to discuss issues and to vote on issues; the majority ruled when voting occurred.

When a topic or issue was referred to a subcommittee for review and discussion, it followed an established process. The subcommittee investigated the issue and gathered information. Most discussions or proposals from the subcommittees were brought to the SAC for approval. The chairperson of the subcommittee presented the information and/or a proposal to the staff at a SAC meeting. When a committee presented a proposal, the teachers and administrators voted on it; the majority ruled. For example, Ashland teachers rejected the proposal of a school-wide behaviour system. Teachers at Woodlawn voted to have a school-wide musical performance. At McCleery, the teachers and administrators passed a motion to develop guidelines for fundraising. The task was allocated to the fundraising committee, who developed guidelines and presented it during a SAC meeting for staff approval. According to the Ashland chairperson and several teachers, 90% of the proposals brought to the SAC meeting were approved. My observations during SAC meetings supported this approval rating.

To some extent, the SAC meeting procedures in the three schools varied. At McCleery, the monthly meetings were held after school on the early dismissal day. The Woodlawn staff held the meetings before school once a month. At the beginning of the school year, the Ashland SAC meeting was held at lunchtime every three weeks on alternative days. In January, the meeting time was changed from lunchtime to after school. Each school used slightly different procedures to set the agenda for the meetings. At McCleery and Ashland Schools, the teachers and administrators wrote
items for the agenda on a form near the daily sign in sheet. These SAC chairpersons reviewed and reordered the agenda with the principals. Jane and Gil actively participated in setting the agendas for the meetings and in the discussions during the meetings. However, neither principal dominated the meetings. The McCleery chairperson spoke to individual teachers about the “importance” of their items so he could limit the length of the meeting by eliminating items. Gil and the Ashland chairperson discussed and set the agenda before the SAC meetings. At Woodlawn Elementary, the teachers and administrators wrote items for the SAC agenda on the whiteboard in the staff room. During the meetings, the order of the items was rarely changed regardless of their importance. The chairperson proceeded to go through the list.

The administrators and teachers expressed support of the shared decision-making model that was in place in the three schools. Overall, they worked together on issues. However, both groups were powerful in different ways. Administrators possessed formal authority because of the School Act (2000). Although the teachers and administrators worked together to make decisions that affected the entire school, the principals still possessed the ultimate authority in the schools. The principals oversaw the school budget, fundraising, ordering, student discipline, school schedules, and other duties. The administrators could reverse teacher decisions or make unilateral decisions. Based on the collective agreement, administrators were required to explain their decisions in writing if the teachers requested explanations. The teachers possessed formal power because of the collective agreement. Both groups exercised
influence in the schools. Teacher leadership and influences will be discussed in the next section.

**Teacher Leadership**

The teachers occupied formal and informal leadership positions in the school. The formal leadership positions included the chairpersons of the SAC committee and subcommittees and the union representatives. More often than not, teachers were the chairpersons of the committees although an administrator was present at most, if not all of the committee meetings. Teachers chaired committee meetings, planned events, reviewed curricula, and made school-wide presentations. A teacher represented teachers at Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings and reported the proceedings to teachers during the subsequent SAC meetings.

Teachers at each school elected a union representative to represent them in the schools. The staff union representatives had the authority to meet with the principals to discuss problems regarding the application and interpretation of the collective agreement, to speak on behalf of teachers, and to monitor what occurred in the schools. The teachers at each school site held union meetings for the Elementary Evergreen Teachers Union (EETU) during this study. The foci of the union meetings were usually district-wide policies and topics rather than issues at the three schools. The meetings seemed to occur when they were needed. The school issues were discussed during SAC and subcommittee meetings. At the district level, teachers elected the EETU union president and executive committee that represented teachers to and negotiated contracts with the Evergreen School Board. The president was the political and professional leader of the EETU.
Based on my observations and interviews with the vice-principals, principals, teachers, and assistant superintendents, individual and groups of teachers informally influenced their colleagues and the school administrators. A novice vice-principal, who was appointed to administration the same school year as Gina, Hannah, and Celeste, succinctly described the range of influence that existed among the school staff:

Oh, there are a few people who are quite influential. They are influential because a) they are very good teachers and well respected, and b) because they’re the squeaky wheel and demand their attention. And they’re influential in solely positive and negative; there has been some animosity between staff members at times when people are trying to get things done that the whole staff may not agree with, but they just go ahead anyway.

Individual teachers were also influential because of expertise, visibility, longevity, and personality. A primary teacher emphasized expertise and knowledge as critical attributes. She explained her position:

Sometimes we’re plagued by a lack of information. For someone to speak up who has experience or background or expertise in that area, of course we’re prone to listen to them. They’ve either served on that committee or they’ve done that particular project, whatever the case may be.

Teachers who possessed expertise and knowledge in specific areas were influential, particularly if they articulated their views in meetings. Visibility in the schools influenced colleagues. These teachers chaired meetings, participated in discussions, and engaged in school activities. The teachers who chaired and were members of meetings could be powerful depending on the status and importance of committees in the school. The SAC chairpersons and union representatives were powerful in all three schools.
Teachers who taught in the schools for long periods were influential if their colleagues respected them. They gained respect by sharing their knowledge of the school history and culture. Other teachers were influential because of their personalities. Gina remarked on the individual personalities of some teachers: “On every staff there are people you’re coming up against. People who have influence just because of the length of time they’ve been here. You come up against people because of their personalities; they have influence.” A third group of teachers continually expressed contrary views; they criticized, complained, or disagreed with most decisions or ideas. These people were influential because their colleagues either supported or opposed them. A few teachers in each school seemed to interact with their colleagues in this manner.

According to several teachers and administrators, and confirmed in the collective agreement, teachers exercised influence with administrators because they possessed the right to a grievance process. The purpose of the grievance process was to protect teachers from capricious or unjust actions and behaviours of administrators when the actions were in violation of the collective agreement. A teacher commented on this right: “Certainly, I think that administrators that used to be more bullying and authoritarian are no longer able to get away with that because people will grieve and win those grievances.” Celeste maintained that when teachers filed grievances against administrators, it affected their careers. She stated, “Yes, I do think it [grievances] and it’s a real caution that administrators have to tiptoe around, and really be careful not to do or say anything that might be controversial in any way, shape or form.”
Teacher groups also wielded influence in the schools. In terms of group alliances, teachers usually aligned themselves according to grade levels (intermediate and primary), teaching assignments (classroom and resource teachers), tenure in the school, experience as teachers, and union activists. Other teacher groups were based on age and interests (e.g., coaching, curricula development). Any of these groups could influence the school atmosphere, colleagues, and administrators.

*Gina and McCleery Teachers*

McCleery Elementary had an ethnically diverse school population of approximately 430 students. Chinese-Canadians and Indo-Canadians were the largest groups in the school. The other groups of students were Vietnamese-Canadian, European-Canadian, and First Nations. The McCleery Elementary School staff claimed there was a respectful relationship between the school and the parents because of the parents’ reverent views of education. The staff members were a mixture of experienced and novice teachers. The teachers naturally associated with particular colleagues, and the atmosphere in the staff room was pleasant and courteous. The primary teachers seemed to have a close connection, whereas the intermediate teachers were less cohesive, but friendly. There was some division among the resource teachers, which became exacerbated during the school year. A situation was discussed in chapter five.

Although there had been some disagreements between the staff and the former principal, there seemed to be no lasting negative effects on the school atmosphere. In fact, the teachers claimed they had productive relationships with previous administrators. A teacher provided background information about the school history:
We’ve been really fortunate in this school. In that since I’ve been here with three, four different principals they have all been very been collegial. I can’t remember any time really when the principal has gone the other way on things. So, teachers feel and take a lot more responsibility and ownership of what goes on in the school. They assume they’re making the decisions.

Gina was content with her posting to McCleery Elementary. At the beginning of the year, the teachers were receptive and welcoming. Gina summarized her expectations of her initial year as vice-principal:

My first year, the biggest thing for me; if I can walk into the school on a daily basis and say I’m so happy to be here. That’s so important to me because it says a lot of things. It says that I’m being accepted by the staff. That I’m doing and meeting their needs to the best of my ability. So, an expectation for me is that I fit into the school culture with the staff. The other thing is that I really get to know the community because every place you work is so different.

Gina socialized with some teachers after school to familiarize herself with the history and context of the school. Gina talked about the importance of becoming familiar with the school culture and staff:

I think the first thing you have to do as a new administrator is to find out about the school culture. You’re trying to make sense of it; so you’re not really doing much of anything that’s beyond the normal operational things in the school. You’re trying to figure out the staff and get a sense of them and a sense of the community, and I think that’s crucial.

Several teachers had similar views of administrators who were new to the school. A teacher eloquently expressed the teachers’ views:

I think you have to come into a school and honour the culture that already exists. You have to absorb as much as possible. Really, try and connect with the staff, but slowly. So I think it’s important to start and make connections with teachers, and appreciate what already exists, to try and pull yourself back and get an overview.

Another teacher suggested that the vice-principal should, “Pay close attention to the staff needs, past concerns, tone, [and] move in small meaningful ways.”
The week before the school year began, Gina worked at McCleery cleaning and organizing the PE storage room, the audio-visual cabinet, book rooms, and other storage spaces in the school. When the teachers arrived in September, several of them commented on the pristine condition of the rooms. The coaches were delighted to find the sports equipment arranged and organized in the storeroom. The teachers were impressed with what Gina had accomplished. Throughout September, Gina worked assiduously to obtain supplies and furniture for teachers and to respond to their requests. Gina used her authority and facilitative power to help the teachers. A teacher commented on Gina’s ability to get things done:

The vice-principal does a lot of like, ordering supplies, getting things for your room. Gina does a very good job at that. She is very quick at getting things that you need, like if you want a heater or you want something looked after. She is very good at getting things done, very quickly, probably the quickest I have seen anyone do that.

The teachers were pleased with how Gina changed the ordering procedures at McCleery. In September, she did not limit the purchases. A teacher offered the following observation:

What I really appreciate about Gina is that she has been great about supplies. During the past few years, teachers fought for supplies. When she came in, it was nothing to say, “Hey everyone, do you want to order this?” Furniture upgrades, whatever people wanted. That has been really good.

Gina worked long hours during her first year as vice-principal. She usually began work at 7:30 a.m. and stayed at school until 6:00 p.m. It was not unusual for her to leave school at 9:00 p.m. During my observations, Gina rarely took breaks or more than ten minutes to eat her lunch. She willingly helped people with various issues, such as student discipline, parents, and obtaining information and resources.
Gina became aware of her formal administrative authority early in the school year. Because of their positions, the vice-principals made requests of school district personnel on behalf of the teachers and staff. The teachers could not approve these orders; their only access to supplies and other resources was via the administrators. Gina talked about an encounter with the custodian that caused her to reflect on the power she gained because of her administration position. The custodian needed Gina’s signature on a form before he could submit a request to the school district office to have furniture moved from the school campus. Gina talked about her perceptions of her authority as a new administrator:

He said, “You’ve got the power to do that, not me.” And I just said, oh. So, it dawned on me that day that I would requisition for someone to come and do that. Then people were coming to ask me things. So I thought, “Yes, I’m the vice-principal.” It kind of happened like that.

On a different occasion, Gina discussed a comparable situation that caused her to pause and think about the power of administrators. She commented on her exchange with a staff member: “A teacher came in and said to me ‘if you sign it, we have a better chance of getting the money.’” The administrators were the link and the gatekeepers to the district office. They possessed this authority because of their positions in the district hierarchy. In these situations, Gina used her facilitative power and positional authority to support the staff.

Two situations challenged Gina early in the school year – the allocation of money and the McCleery Stars. Because Harry and Gina advocated SDM with teachers, Gina created and chaired a resource committee to decide how school monies would be spent and distributed. The teachers responded positively to participating in this endeavour because they had not previously participated in this process. Part of the
school budget was allocated to purchasing classroom books. The primary and intermediate teacher groups individually requested all of the money in this budget to purchase books for their respective grade levels. The primary teachers put forward a good argument for receiving the money. Gina was concerned that the primary teachers, who had already received funds for their literacy program, were aggressive in obtaining these additional funds. The primary and intermediate teachers had similar goals, but conflict occurred because both groups tried to secure the same funds. Several researchers indicated that goals, interests and strategies were elements of micropolitics (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991; Hoyle, 1986a). The teachers used their influence to affect the actions of the school administrators. Gina discussed her reactions to the primary teachers:

They had put in their demands and came into me to say, “I need this and this.” Well, I said, “You just can’t have everything that you want.” The people who are the loud ones and the demanding ones would get everything. There is no equity that way.

Gina felt the funds should be used to purchase textbooks for intermediate students because they had not received funding for books.

Although Harry and Gina believed one group of teachers deserved the money, Harry transferred money from another account to the textbook account so both groups of teachers were able to purchase their books. By taking this action, Harry defused the tension between the primary and intermediate teachers. From my vantage point, Harry made the decision because he was new to the school and he did not want to alienate any of the staff.

Even though the money issue was resolved, the teachers did not work through the shared decision-making process. There was a contradiction between the
administrators' actions and their words. They supported SDM, but did not allow the teachers to work through the process to resolve the conflict. The vice-principal assumed that if the teachers were involved in SDM, they would be equitable about distributing the money. Gina discussed the difficulties of working through this situation:

I have to be very careful to not take sides and not be biased. I always say to them, we’re trying to address everyone’s needs and we want, I would love to make everyone happy, but we only have a certain amount of materials or resources or whatever it is. That’s why we have the learning resource committee rather than me taking on the power position and saying you can get it, you can’t.

In fact, the Harry and Gina used their authority to make a top-down decision. Neither the vice-principal nor the teachers developed guidelines or parameters for the resource committee to make decisions. As a result, the vice-principal and principal used power to resolve the problem. To avoid conflict, the principal and the vice-principal used their authority and facilitative power to enable the teachers to achieve their goals. Because they met the needs of the teachers, the conflict went away. However, if they had not allocated money to both groups, conflict would have continued.

At the beginning of October, Gina faced another difficult situation. For the previous five years, the McCleery staff recognized children who made academic progress or demonstrated good citizenship in school. The teachers chose two or three children from each classroom to receive the awards at the monthly assembly. According to the teachers, the vice-principal coordinated this event, and the principal presented the awards to the children. The teachers assumed that Gina would oversee this activity because one of her goals was to support teachers.
Some staff members were surprised when Gina refused to coordinate the student recognition program. Moreover, Harry refused to award the ribbons to the children at the assembly. Gina recognized that the teachers were unhappy: “They’re disappointed because it was an administration thing before. They think it’s not as special because it’s just the teachers doing it.” Gina maintained that she made the right decision because she did not have the time to coordinate this activity.

Gina argued that the teachers needed to take ownership of events in the school. This was an inherent component of her “bottom-up and teacher ownership” philosophy of leadership. Because Gina was involved with many school activities, the teachers did not pressure her to accept this responsibility. Eventually, two teachers awarded the ribbons to the students because the staff wanted to continue the program.

During the teacher interviews in February and March, several teachers expressed puzzlement that neither the principal nor the vice-principal wanted to be involved in the student recognition program. The teachers seemed to be more concerned that Gina refused to organize the assembly than with Harry’s refusal to present the awards. Hoyle (1986a) discussed how teachers and administrators had mutual, shared, and overlapping goals and interests. One teacher contended that Gina could not always pursue her personal interests, such as coaching sports since she had chosen to become an administrator. The teachers believed that the primary role of administrators was to support teachers. In one sense, by refusing to oversee this activity, Gina was not pursuing her goals to support the staff and become familiar with the culture of the school. In this situation, Gina pursued her own interests and goals rather than the interests and goals of the teachers.
In the fall term, the teachers were impressed with the numerous activities and programs that Gina was initiating. A group of teachers had told Gina that they wanted an energetic and innovative school leader. This attitude seemed to coincide with Gina’s goal to initiate new programs in the school. Gina organized Project Love, a program created to send school supplies to children in Africa. She sponsored a Canada-thon; the students learned facts about Canada and raised money for the school. Gina supervised the visit of a local artist to work with various classrooms of students. She prepared a grant to obtain extra computers for the school community. Additionally, Gina planned a program for intermediate students to learn about students with disabilities. After that, the vice-principal contacted a citywide reading group to provide volunteer readers in the classrooms.

Gina was an active member of several committees; these included the fundraising, technology, professional development, resource, anti-bullying, and parent committees. Gina talked about her leadership abilities: “I would love for people to take more charge and not me be in charge of it all the time. But it seems like I’m the natural leader whenever I’m in a meeting.”

By the spring term, the teachers were feeling overwhelmed by the number of new programs and activities that Gina had initiated. A teacher talked about the projects:

Gina’s done a great job and she’s come in with a bang. She’s come in with a lot of wonderful ideas that are almost on the verge of over programming. There is a sense the staff is getting over programmed. That’s why they started to question a lot of things now because it’s towards the end of the school year and teachers are tired. There’s approachability for sure.
Another teacher commented on how the new vice-principal should work with the staff:

What I would say is stand back and watch and observe for a few months. I would think it would not be the time to make your mark on the place, but observing how the place works and what there is to see. And doing maybe one little thing at a time; that would be my advice.

Gina used her positional authority to initiate new programs. Moreover, Gina felt she was responding to the teachers’ requests for an innovative and energetic leader. Gina expected the teachers to support her ideas and to participate in the activities. She felt she was contributing to improving the education of the children. The staff appreciated that Gina used her authority and facilitative power to assist them in their work. However, during the last two months of the year, teachers started to question Gina’s ideas and proposals because they were beleaguered by them. Some of these activities interfered with their teaching because the teachers had to adjust their lessons to engage in the activities.

In February, Gina had an encounter with Dave, the chairperson of the McCleery staff advisory committee.18 He had assumed the SAC chair by default; the original chairperson took a leave of absence early in the school year. Dave was a controversial figure at McCleery. Many of the McCleery teachers viewed Dave, in his role as chairperson, as difficult and a bully. Several times, I observed Dave being verbally aggressive and disregarding people’s comments during SAC meetings. Dave had tenuous relationships with many staff members.

During one SAC meeting, Dave informed the teachers that the EETU and BCTF wanted teachers on call (TOC) to be assigned to substitution based on the their

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18 A pseudonym is used for the participants in the study to protect their anonymity and confidentiality.
tenure as TOC. The BCTF did not want teachers to call in a specific TOC for their classrooms. McCleery teachers rejected the union’s position and disagreed with Dave. An intense argument between the teachers and Dave ensued although nothing was resolved. On another occasion, Dave asked the teachers to suggest ways to shorten the time of the SAC meetings. When he rejected a teacher’s suggestion, she challenged his authority. Several teachers defended her against Dave’s attack. Dave used his power as the SAC chairperson to affect the teachers.

During an observation in February, I attended a Pro D committee meeting. The members of the committee, which included Dave and Gina, were planning an anti-bullying workshop for the school staff. The committee was going to present a school-wide behaviour system to the teachers at the upcoming workshop. Gina had used this system in her previous school. Dave repeatedly objected to the topic because he claimed the staff had not approved it. The committee members were exasperated by his comments, and they tried to explain that the Evergreen School District had directed administrators and teachers to address bullying in their schools. Gina intervened and bluntly pointed out that he was the only committee member opposed to the topic. When the meeting ended, the other teachers thanked Gina for preventing Dave from dominating the meeting. Consequently, the presentation went on as planned. Except for Dave, the Pro D committee members were pursuing the same goal. Gina used her formal authority as vice-principal to stop Dave from controlling the Pro D committee meeting. Gina was able to resolve the problem among the committee members.

She exercised this power over Dave several times during the school year. Gina talked about working with teachers who had strong personalities:
Are there people that are more difficult, of course. So, you have to be very careful to their needs and their reactions. So, you walk on eggshells a little bit more around them because you know they’re a bit more volatile. So personality wise, you learn different personality traits of people. Sometimes I check with people before it goes to staff.

A few weeks later, I attended the Pro D workshop for the McCleery staff. The first part of the presentation went well because the teachers were receptive to the anti-bullying discussions. When Gina presented her behaviour system, several teachers opposed its implementation. These teachers wanted to discuss the need to implement the program because they believed the student behaviour at McCleery did not warrant a sweeping change. Gina was surprised because she had expected the teachers to approve the program and agree to send the information to parents. From Gina’s perspective, she was responding to a board directive to institute anti-bullying policies in the schools. Gina was visibly exasperated by the situation. The teachers and Gina had similar interests; however, they used different strategies to achieve their goals. She pressured the teachers to accept the behaviour program. Gina did not respond to the content of the teachers’ concerns. Instead, she responded to their opposition to the school-wide behaviour program. From my perspective, Gina pressured the teachers to implement the program even though there was opposition to it. It appeared that Gina was not abiding by her philosophy regarding collaborative and shared decision-making.

When I interviewed teachers during February and March, they discussed collaboration, bottom-up leadership, decision-making, and teacher ownership. Most of the teachers viewed Gina and Harry as working with them; they did not see them as top-down administrators. A teacher represented the views of other teachers:
But I don’t see either of them not wanting to work with the staff. I don’t think either of them want a huge division between administration and the staff so I don’t think you’re going to see that here. I hope not. Gina is brand new so I hope she’s not leaning that way.

A teacher stated that: “I think this year we’ve been empowered. There is a strong feeling administration is looking toward us for direction.” I observed Gina successfully use her facilitative power and positional authority to support teachers on many occasions.

Other teachers were puzzled by the bottom-up leadership and teacher ownership beliefs expressed by the administrators. Several staff members equated teacher ownership with more work for teachers. A teacher shared her frustration:

We’re hearing that if the teachers want to do something they need to take control of this and do it. We don’t have a lot of time to take control and do a lot of things. It’s making us work even harder.

The teacher was frustrated that the principal and vice-principal wanted the staff to take on more responsibilities. She also criticized the SDM process in the school by describing several incidents that contradicted the administrators’ pledges to engage in SDM. The teacher reported that Harry had purchased a new office desk without consulting the teachers. She also stated that the Pro D committee had spent a considerable amount of school money on TOCs without consulting the staff. The teacher was frustrated because she felt teachers were taking on more work—work that administrators should perform.

The teachers maintained that their focus was the children in their classrooms. Because they were extremely busy teaching the students, they expected administrators to tend to the areas and take care of things beyond the teachers’ classrooms. The teachers felt strongly that administrators were their supporters. They expected the
administrators to use their authoritative and facilitative power to assist the teachers in achieving their goals. They also wanted administrators to listen to and give positive feedback to the teachers. Teachers wanted administrators who were accessible, approachable, and sympathetic to teachers.

In June, Gina wanted feedback from the teachers about her first year; however, she decided not to survey them because of the problems at the end of the year with her assignment as the preparation teacher for the following school year and her problems with several intermediate (grade four to seven) teachers at the end of the school year. She explained her decision:

I actually wanted to give out an evaluation; I really wanted to do that, but in light of our June and how stressful it was and how other evaluations were being handed out for feedback for the resource team, for our library, and programs there. But I would have liked feedback, but because there was a lot of stress and anxiety and a bit of friction in June, I didn’t think giving out the evaluation would have been beneficial.

During the last interview in June, Gina evaluated her school year. Overall, she felt successful. She felt that the staff recognized her dedication to the school:

I feel supported by the staff and they feel supported by me. I know I’ve accomplished what the principal set out for me to do. I think I went in and did a bit too much. And that was my fault because the teachers would have liked to maintain a bit more of the status quo.

Gina talked about her relationship with the teachers. Gina commented on the difficulties she encountered working with some of the teachers:

I think it’s individual based and how you understand people and their personalities and how it affects your ability to deal with people. I think we need a lot of conflict management skills. A lot of dealing with the problem employee.

Gina voiced her frustration about the amount of work she had taken on and the expectations of teachers during her first year:
This year whenever they wanted me, they had me even though I was in my classroom. It just came to the point where they just expected me to deal with everything there and then. I was a full time administrator in their eyes when I was really only 40%, I was 150%.

She also discussed her reactions to the teachers when she was stressed:

I learned that I made many mistakes. Well some mistakes in losing it, my patience with people. Because when I get stressed out and I’m very clear about showing people that I’m stressed out. “I’m stressed now.” I even say it. And rather than being too much of a perfectionist because I want everything to work out nicely for everybody. When I was stressed, I should have just left everything and come back to it another time because you can’t be productive when there is too much stress. I learned a little bit about overbooking.

Gina emphasized the prerogatives of the teachers to be involved in the decision-making in the school. She believed if the teachers articulated their concerns, the problem would be resolved. Gina shared her view: “So, if you do it in a way where they feel supported and included, and they feel their voices are being heard, you’re going to have them on board.” Gina also talked about the influence of the teachers:

So, they [teachers] are definitely influential; they lead the staff meetings. But they definitely have a lot of power and say and they should because they should. There needs to be trust built and there also needs to be a time where you say, “Listen you have to trust me,” and they should.

Gina stressed that administrators must be leaders in the school because the teachers expected them to suggest and initiate innovative ideas and new activities. She explicated her view of school leadership:

They do because they look to you as the person who does have the answers. You know, whatever I wanted to take on, for instance, the welcome back to school fun night. It’s expected that we come up with these ideas in a way, and they’re supportive of it. They’re happy I coordinated it, organized it. They look to us for leadership.

Gina worked diligently and conscientiously throughout the school year. Gina used facilitative power and positional power to obtain resources and supplies for
teachers. The teachers appreciated her hard work when she used her position to support their work in the classrooms. Initially, the teachers were impressed with her energy and innovative ideas. Gina had definite views about her role as school leader. She maintained that administrators were expected to be leaders. Consequently, she expected the teachers to be responsive to her ideas because she was an administrator.

Although Gina articulated her support for collaboration and SDM with teachers, she did not consistently use this process to resolve differences with the staff. At times, her management style was top-down and authoritarian. Problems arose between the teachers and Gina when she pursued different goals. On several occasions, conflict was the result. She seemed to exercise her positional authority when she encountered resistance. From my perspective, Gina occasionally encountered problems during her first year because she used her administrative power in ways that seemed to pressure or force teachers to react. She lacked an awareness of how to utilize the four types of power she possessed as the vice-principal. This first year was a transitional period for Gina.

**Celeste and Ashland Teachers**

Ashland Elementary School was a large urban, inner-city school with a multicultural and multi-lingual student population. Of the 775 students, the largest groups in the school were Chinese-Canadians, Indo-Canadians, First Nations, Vietnamese-Canadians, and Filipino-Canadians. There were multiple languages spoken in the school. These included the following: Arabic, Bulgarian, Cambodian, French, German, Gujarati, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Urdu, Turkish,
Kurdish, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and Singhalese (Ashland School Profile, 2000).

The Ashland staff consisted of 60 members; there were 29 classroom teachers, and 10 to 12 resource teachers. The counsellor, First Nations worker, a Youth and Family worker, an urgent intervention worker, and neighbourhood liaison made up the inner-city team that met every week to discuss children who were having social or behaviour problems. Although the school tone had improved, there were some divisions and conflict among some teachers. For example, several resource teachers and classroom teachers did not work well together. Although the resource teachers provided a valuable service by supporting students academically, some classroom teachers were unhappy about the disparities of their respective workloads. An enrolling teacher at Ashland, commented on the discord that existed among some resource and classroom teachers:

I think it's particularly important; it's kind of a controversial thing here, probably controversial in most schools. There is kind of a gap between, some friction between our classroom teachers, enrolling teachers, and teachers who don't enrol classes, in terms of perceived workload and that sort of thing.

Some staff members did not like the SAC chairperson. Several of the teachers interviewed for the study did not support the SAC chairperson. About a third of the teachers felt he wielded too much power in the school. At SAC meetings, he added his opinions to the discussions, which interfered in his role as chair. He did dominate some of the discussions during meetings. I observed this behaviour during the four SAC meetings that I attended. Even though there was some dissent among the staff, the teachers viewed themselves as strong and influential in the school. A teacher discussed the staff:
Ashland, since I’ve been here, there have been a lot of changes, different administrators and most of them wanted to include teachers. We are and still are a strong staff so they knew they were in for trouble if they didn’t consult. So why not consult and make it easier.

At the beginning of the year, Celeste stressed that her major goals were to a positive school climate. In October, Celeste felt she had made progress: “I think that’s the one thing I do have. I think by just taking the time to talk to people, giving them the idea I’m approachable.” Celeste conversed with teachers in her office and the staff room throughout the school day. Many teachers viewed Celeste as receptive and accessible.

During my visits to the school, Celeste updated me on school events; she usually talked about the teachers and her experiences since my previous visit. Celeste had categorized the staff into several broad groups of teachers. The “old guard” was a group of about six to eight teachers who had taught in the school for more than five years. The “new” teachers and several younger staff members were another group. Celeste used her facilitative power to support these teachers because they tried different approaches to improve student learning. She obtained resources for them and advocated for them during meetings. Celeste always discussed the inner-city team. This group was unique because they worked with the students who had behavioural, social, and emotional problems. Celeste was concerned about the relationships between the inner-city team and the rest of the staff because they initiated activities without informing the homeroom teachers. For example, a Valentine Day dance was planned without the support or endorsement of the teachers.

The school atmosphere was positive although Ashland had a recent history of difficulties between the teachers and administrators and among some teachers. Celeste
was aware of the problems before her appointment to Ashland. She had discussed the school situation with her predecessor the previous spring. All of the teachers interviewed commented on the problems regarding the previous administrators and the split among the teachers. They voiced strong pro and anti sentiments towards the previous vice-principal. Celeste commented that the style of her predecessor was “her way or the highway.”

The old guard was the dominant group of teachers in the school during this study. Celeste was aware of the influence this group of teachers exerted in the school. Celeste described how these teachers exercised their influence:

They’re vocal on committees. It’s interesting because of course they’re on committees where there’s influence. I think the people who sit on committees are the people who always want their opinions heard. They want to make sure they’re in a position of influence.

When Celeste interacted with these teachers, she tried to influence the teachers by emphasizing the dissimilarity between her style of leadership and the style of her predecessor. She talked about her efforts to distinguish her leadership from the style of the previous vice-principal:

I think with the Lennys, Johns, the Joses, the Lils and Kates, I think what I tried to indicate with them was that this would not be a military dictatorship, and you’re in charge and I’m not going to overrule you.

The union representative was part of this group. Celeste regularly kept her abreast of school changes and other information because Celeste recognized how influential she was in the school. The union representative was powerful because of her position, and she was influential with the teachers and the principal. Celeste was mindful of these influential teachers, and she worked diligently to gain their support and trust. She built influence by sharing information and supporting the old guard.
Celeste faced challenges similar to those of the other vice-principals. In November, Celeste claimed she was overwhelmed with the number of tasks and the pace of the work. She reported that she was always “putting out fires.” She claimed the teachers treated her like a veteran administrator and came to her for various reasons. Celeste talked about working with the teachers: “It’s very interesting; the teachers expect you to know everything. They ask you questions like you wouldn’t believe.” She was concerned that she did not know how to respond to teachers in some situations. Celeste contemplated about the expectations of teachers:

The most challenging [thing] is balancing it all. Because it’s always she [the vice-principal] should be doing this; she should be doing that. What are we doing? So, the most difficult thing is knowing what people’s perceptions are and what it ought to be like.

The teachers had specific expectations of Celeste because she assumed a traditional vice-principal position. That is, Celeste was in charge of the management tasks and responsibilities in the school. The past vice-principals had taken care of these duties; consequently, the teachers expected Celeste to do the same. The teachers expected the vice-principal to use her authority and facilitative power to support the teachers in their classrooms.

Celeste was frustrated with the insignificant duties and responsibilities of the vice-principalship. She offered the following observation: “I think the teachers see the VP a lot as the disciplinarian, the person to get furniture exchange, the tasky kinds of stuff. But the real educational leadership and school-wide leadership is the principal.”

Celeste had two major problems with the teachers throughout the school year. The first incident occurred at the beginning of December while I was observing in the school. Celeste had organized a silent auction to raise money for the school; it was
held during the parent teacher conferences. About a week before the fundraiser, Celeste realized there was a shortage of items. She decided to pressure the teachers to donate additional items for the silent auction. Celeste created a list of items, and then she directed two students to visit every teacher to ask them to donate an item on the list. Several days later, a teacher informed Celeste that the teachers were upset by her actions. The teachers confronted Celeste about her actions. Many teachers felt Celeste was too aggressive in attempting to force the teachers to donate to the fundraiser. They believed Celeste was using her administrative authority to coerce teachers into donating to the fundraiser. During this incident, Celeste quickly realized what caused the problem, and she retreated from her position. Moreover, the number of teachers who refused to respond to Celeste’s request affected her reaction. Celeste was politically astute and attentive to the teachers’ responses. The Ashland teachers rejected Celeste’s use of her administrative authority.

This incident highlighted how Celeste was adjusting to her administrative role. According to Celeste, she had organized similar activities and had acted in a similar manner in her previous school. Celeste reported that she had been a powerful and influential teacher. Moreover, the teachers at her previous school had not objected when she used a comparable approach to engage teachers in activities. Celeste believed she was using her personal influence and not her positional authority.

Celeste talked about her relationships with the teachers during the January interview. Celeste maintained that the teachers had more influence and power than administrators. Celeste talked about her power as a vice-principal. She claimed that
she could influence minor things, but not major things in the school. Celeste described her influence with the teachers in the school:

   Yeah, how do I influence those people? I think pretty well they have their own agenda and my own influence can be used if I think their agenda makes sense and kind of support them. Get them together. I'm powerless actually.

Celeste continued to discuss her formal authority in the school. At times, she felt powerful; however, she perceived some of her tasks as inconsequential. She discussed her frustrations:

   They [teachers] asked me permission to go out. I'm like an arbitrator here. It is a powerful position because people actually think I can help them by getting them stuff or changing their situation. You do have the power to get stuff, but you're also counting pink and white erasers.

She claimed that administrators influenced the teachers, but only when the teachers acquiesced to administration. She explained her position:

   The bottom line is that administrators have the final say on most the committees; however, as administrators you know that unless you do what the staff want, you have no backing. You can tell them “this is what we’re doing,” but you’ll have fifty-five of them that will just not comply. So it’s the lowest level compliance.

   Celeste recognized that her accessibility to the principal enabled her to increase her influence with different teachers. She commented that she was the link between some teachers and the principal:

   In some ways it’s a Joe job and in some ways it’s influential. I see a lot of people come to me in hopes that I will intercede with the principal. It is a powerful position because people actually think I can help them by getting stuff or changing their situation.

   Celeste’s comments during the interview indicated her analysis and understanding of how she used power in the school. Celeste also seemed to grapple with the teachers’ use of influence in the school. However, her comments contradicted
her successful efforts to build influence with the teachers. I observed Celeste use specific micropolitical strategies to achieve this goal during many visits. Celeste used her humour and wit to develop relationships with the staff. She was responsive and available to the teachers. Celeste publicly contrasted her style of leadership with her predecessor's approach to leadership. During a SAC meeting I attended, Celeste asked the teachers to vote on sponsoring a December craft fair. She gained the support of the old guard because she ensured that they made the decision. Celeste gained influence with the new teachers because she used her facilitative power to help them achieve their goals. Additionally, Celeste did not want other teachers to think she was favouring certain teachers so she discouraged a few teachers from visiting her office. Celeste was visible in the school; she attended many committee meetings. She began to gain influence with and support from teachers at the end of the first term. This trend continued until June because Celeste was attentive to building relationships with the teachers.

After the Christmas holiday, Celeste assumed more responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. Because Ashland was a very large elementary school, Celeste gradually took over the coordination of many school events. Celeste gathered information about events and activities by talking with the teachers. She increased her influence with teachers by providing resources or assistance for events and activities.

In February, all of the teachers interviewed expressed optimistic attitudes and positive views of Celeste. One teacher complemented Celeste on her participation in school activities:
I love how Celeste initiates projects, I love the multicultural dinner she is doing; the walkathon is partly hers. I like it when they [VPs] can bring their fun experiences, especially fun things to a school and we can do school-wide activities initiated by them. I love her humour; I love her craziness. I love her willingness to get up and make a fool of herself.

The teachers appreciated her sense of humour and her hard work. One teacher wrote a humorous report card assessing Celeste’s first term as vice-principal. The report included the following remarks:

Missy [Celeste] is an outgoing and talkative member of the class. She has made friends and generally is able to interact positively with others. She enjoys roaming the hallways while others are working. Missy’s goal will be to learn how to manage her time wisely and recognize that when it is dark it is time to go home.

The teachers expressed favourable views about the vice-principal and the principal. A teacher represented the views of most of the teachers on staff when she shared the following comments:

But I think that because of the atmosphere we have in our school, the positive feelings are on the increase. The administration would more or less feel free to introduce new ideas, lead us along a certain direction if they so chose.

Another teacher declared that the administrators were responsible for the upbeat school atmosphere. He described the influence of the principal and vice-principal on the school:

I think it’s very good in general. It’s much better than it has been in the past. Our new administration has made a big difference. We’ve had our struggles here; I’m sure that you’ve heard. It was very bad both among the staff and between some staff and administration. I’m personally delighted with the situation the way it is now because I think it’s as good as one can ask for in school.

In June, Celeste committed her second major mistake with the teachers. Due to the redistricting of the school boundaries, about 100 Ashland students were transferring to other schools. This was an opportunity for several teachers to move
from the portable buildings to classrooms in the main building. Without consulting anyone, Celeste used her positional authority to reassign several teachers to new rooms for following school year. Celeste discussed the room assignments with me before the teachers were informed. She maintained she had considered the length of time teachers had been in the school and what grade level the teachers taught before reassigning them to new rooms. This caused furore among several teachers; they were upset about the process and vehemently opposed to the classroom assignments. This was an important issue to these teachers; they expected to participate in the decisions. Celeste had caused the conflict that arose between the teachers and administrators because she had circumvented the established SDM model that existed in the school. These teachers used their formal power and informal influence to change the classroom assignments. They approached the union representative to discuss the situation and to talk to the administrators on their behalf. Celeste was taken aback by the reactions of the teachers. Celeste expressed her surprise by what had transpired:

> Yet it still blows me away when I do something like that room thing that was well thought out and based on all the right stuff and then you get an outburst of me’s. There are a lot of me’s in this job, too.

After a tumultuous week and several meetings to negotiate a resolution, the union representative and the principal and vice-principal came to an agreement. They changed the room assignments for the teachers according to a plan devised by the teachers. The teachers achieved their goal. After the situation was resolved, Gil and Celeste discussed what had occurred. Gil stressed that it was important for the teachers to be involved in the decision-making in the school. Celeste thought that the staff would accept her decisions because she had gained influence with them. Although
Celeste was upset with the reactions of the teachers, she reflected on the situation and assessed her role in it.

During the June interview, Celeste reported that she had a successful first year. She claimed the year was not as difficult as she had expected. She appreciated the positive comments she heard from the teachers:

I think the most rewarding thing was that people started coming to me and giving me positive feedback. And saying, thanks for doing that, you’ve helped me out, that’s great. I think that started in about December. I met a couple of people at different pre-Christmas parties where people said to me, “people are telling me you’re doing a great job at Ashland.”

Celeste claimed that as an administrator, she enjoyed working with adults. In addition, Celeste liked looking at the larger administrative world.

I like the adult interaction. I like that. I like being out of the school. I like the EEAA (Evergreen Elementary Administrators Association). I like going to the school board for different things. I like looking at things more on a district perspective rather than you know. I do think in the classroom you really are worried where you’re going to get another package of red crayon pencils from. I like that over, that global look at.

Generally, Celeste followed through on her goal to build good relationships with the staff and to gain influence with the teachers. In addition, Celeste used her authority and facilitative power to assist teachers to achieve their goals on most occasions. She was attentive to the culture of the school and the political nature of her relationships with the teachers.

Celeste discussed how she learned some management and leadership skills during the school year. She believed that performing insignificant tasks diminished the prestige of administrators. In one sense, Celeste equated leadership with exercising authority and being influential. She focused on building influence with the teachers by
using her positional authority and facilitative power to help teachers achieve their
goals and to obtain resources for them.

**Hannah and Woodlawn Teachers**

Woodlawn Elementary School was located in a beautiful wooded area in the
Evergreen School District. The student population was a mixture of Canadian and
international students. Although there was yearly turnover of ESL students, the
percentage of ESL students in the school remained the same.

The Woodlawn staff of 20 full time classroom teachers and six resource
teachers were experienced teachers although there had been a 25% staff turnover
during the previous three years. Woodlawn teachers described themselves as very
independent and individualistic, but not collegial. The teachers expressed diverse
views about many subjects. A teacher commented on the relationships among the
staff:

> Of all of the schools that I’ve worked in, this has been the one school in which
collegial relationships, for me are the least positive. I have some ideas of what
that’s about, but we tend to work on our own. We try to be collegial and we
have goals to be collegial, but I don’t think we have a common understanding
of what that’s like. There’s no real culture here of collegiality. There are
certainly intentions, but it hasn’t quite come together.

An intermediate classroom teacher and a resource teacher were extremely influential
in the school. They had been members of the EETU executive board. These teachers
were articulate, outspoken, and well versed in the EETU collective agreement. The
resource teacher also held the positions of the SAC chairperson and staff union
representative. One teacher talked about the influence of the Woodlawn teachers: “But
here (Woodlawn) we’ve always had a strong staff. And we’ve always had a well
functioning staff committee. So, with both administrators we still have a strong staff committee.”

During the first interview, Hannah felt welcomed by the staff; she reported the teachers were friendly towards and accepting of her. Hannah talked about her expectations:

Well, I can only go on my intuition and my gut feeling. I think that people are, I felt accepted. I felt there is a tentativeness. And I think it’s pretty natural around any new person that’s coming in to a leadership role.

Early in the school year, Hannah worked diligently to build relationships with each person on staff. Because Hannah taught 60% of the time, she arrived at school at 7:30 a.m. and usually stayed until 5:30 p.m. to talk to staff members. Hannah detailed her efforts to communicate with the teachers during the first interview: “I’ve worked pretty hard to develop some kind of relationship with just about everybody. To have a chance to at least have some kind of semi-meaningful conversation. It wasn’t just ‘hi, how is it going?’” During my school visits, I frequently observed Hannah greet everyone she met in the school building and on the school grounds.

One of her goals was to use her authority and facilitative power to support teachers. Hannah talked about this role:

I guess one of the things that I set for myself as an expectation was if I could really support the teachers as much as possible then that would help the school. And I do feel like I supported the teachers. I tried my best to get and give them what they were asking for, for the most part.

Early in the school year, Hannah was frustrated that the time demands of her job restricted how much time she could allocate to supporting teachers. In one situation, Hannah gave information to a teacher about a classroom speaker rather than arranging the visit for the teacher. Hannah shared her disappointment regarding the minimal
assistance she provided to the teacher: “If I had more time, I would have said, ‘I’ll call her. Tell me the dates; I’ll set it up for you.’ You know I can’t; I don’t have the time.”

As the school year evolved, Hannah was able to provide more support for the teachers. She used her positional authority and facilitative power to assist teachers to achieve their goals. In October, Hannah offered to drive students for a fieldtrip in an effort to support a teacher. Additionally, Hannah used her counselling expertise to assess students in classrooms and give feedback to the teachers. During November, a teacher approached me in the hallway and informed me that Hannah was an excellent administrator and very supportive of the teachers.

In October, Hannah did not know the school staff very well, but she knew they were not a cohesive group. When she presented information to the staff, she considered how she delivered the message and how the teachers interpreted her comments. She did not want “to shoot herself in the foot.” Hannah was observant of the teachers on staff and their relationships with each other. She was aware of the political situation at Woodlawn early in the school year. Hannah asserted that she realized that she “needed to go slow as an administrator, that things don’t change that quickly.”

During the first term, Hannah decided that one of her roles was helping teachers work together to build good relations among the staff. All of the teachers interviewed talked about the non-collegial and uncooperative school atmosphere. For example, Hannah took over as chairperson of the behaviour committee because her predecessor held the position. The teachers wanted to continue working on student behaviour because it was a contentious issue. Hannah explained that one teacher caused problems during the previous year. I observed Hannah organize the first committee meeting. She
was deliberate and cautious when she spoke to the teachers. Hannah was attentive to who was on the committee, but did not exclude anyone. She was careful about all aspects of the committee meeting because she was aware of the individualistic and non-collaborative nature of the Woodlawn teachers. Hannah did not pursue goals that were different from the staff.

As vice-principal, Hannah possessed some formal authority. She was surprised at how the teachers treated her because of her position. Hannah recognized that her authority was based on the vice-principal position. She offered this observation: “I am the new kid on the block, but I’m always surprised at how much influence is attributed to me because I’m the vice-principal, not me the person, but you know the title.” Conversely, Hannah explained that teachers would seek out the principal rather than the vice-principal on certain issues. She stated, “I would say they are comfortable coming to me for most things, but the big things, the really big items, like personnel, they go to the principal.” Hannah continued talking about her position and her relationships with the teachers and principal:

Yes, I think it [vice-principal’s position] has some influence. I think you can make it influential. I think what I’m doing in these meetings and stuff. People look to me for leadership and decisions and for information. So, in that sense it’s influential. I think I can influence Jane a fair amount. Whether it’s openly seen as influence, I don’t know.

Hannah talked about getting assertive in her role as vice-principal and the necessity of administrators to use their authority in some situations. Hannah found herself in this type of situation when she asked a resource teacher to cover a classroom. This was a contentious issue between the EETU and the Evergreen School District. There was a shortage of substitute teachers in the Evergreen District so
resource teachers were reassigned to teach enrolling classes on some days. The teacher asked Hannah if she was being ordered to cover the class. Hannah responded that was not her style, but yes, she was ordering her to do it. She commented on the balance of power between the teachers and the administrators. Hannah claimed: “And they [teachers] are powerful personalities. But I think administration is pretty influential.” Hannah recognized when and what type of power she needed to exercise in different situations. In this case, she needed to exercise authority so the class had a teacher.

Curriculum supplies and resources were problematic in the school. During an autumn SAC meeting, two teachers had a tense argument about the science and art supplies. Hannah discussed the situation: “And there is a teacher in charge of art supplies and there’s a teacher in charge of general science. And all the territorial stuff that comes up with that.” Hannah continued to reflect on the situation:

We’re looking at that, which is another big kind of task. So, I see that as part of my role, putting the broader processes in place. How do we know what to order each year and how do people feel on spending money on that kind of stuff?

Hannah helped resolve the problem by working with the science coordinator a few weeks later. They catalogued supplies and decided the best way for teachers to access the resources. Hannah believed it was the responsibility of administration to oversee school procedures. She maintained that this was a way of supporting teachers. Hannah integrated her goals with the teachers’ goals. She assisted the teachers with the supplies, and she pursued her goal of implementing a mechanism to improve the infrastructure of the school.

The SAC meetings reflected the individualistic nature of the Woodlawn staff. Teachers randomly added items to the agenda on the white board in the staff room.
during the week before the monthly meeting. Although the SAC chairperson facilitated the meeting in a professional and efficient manner, several teachers were frustrated that the discussions were superficial and uncritical. During the SAC meetings that I attended, most of the teachers did not speak because several teachers dominated the discussions. One teacher talked about this dilemma:

I’m fairly quiet during SAC. I usually find that there is someone on staff who will express my opinions for me. So, I’m quite content that my thoughts and concerns will probably be raised in most cases. If not, I will say something, but I’m relatively quiet because things go along that way. But I also think there are some people when they speak they make their point. It’s stated so strongly that some people don’t want to oppose it for fear of some kind of clashing. But I think that does happen sometimes. I suppose that’s up to the SAC chair to develop certain tones [for the meetings].

Another teacher commented on the inability of the staff to make decisions during the meeting: “Yes, yes, everyone’s opinion is valued. And every bearer of the news is valued to such a level that it bogs the whole process down. It becomes nothing but a process. Solutions are discussed, but not necessarily acted upon.” Several teachers reported that the staff also had problems after they made decisions during the SAC meetings. The teachers did not follow through on many of the decisions. For example, a teacher talked about the lack of progress with the behaviour committee:

I feel that when we start something, when we start a path that we have to come to some kind of completion. There are so many loose ends. We started a behaviour continuum and it’s been going and going and going for two years and there is no end to it. I find it frustrating because I am really quite linear and quite structured so to never see an end to something. It’s been up on the wall in the staff room for months now. It’s just hanging there.

The Woodlawn School lacked some components of a successful SDM model.

The teachers did not have time to engage in comprehensive discussions. There was an
uncertainty regarding who would ensure that decisions were carried out. To some degree, there was a lack of guidelines for making decisions.

Hannah assessed her performance during the January interview. She aptly described her role as “clearing things out of the way, so the teachers can teach.”

Hannah worked assiduously obtaining supplies, resources and furniture, and responding to requests and finding information for the teachers. Hannah commented on her role:

I think what I’ve worked at is trying to basically put out, I am here to support them [teachers] and I may not always make the right decisions and always get what they need or what they’re asking for, but I’ll try to.

Hannah conveyed that she was gaining influence in the school with the teachers and the principal. Hannah did not use specific strategies to gain influence with the teachers. She became influential because of her counseling expertise, use of power to support teachers, and she did not pursue goals that were contrary to the goals of the teachers. Hannah talked about her influence in the school:

I feel I have influence. I can certainly talk to teachers and they’re listening carefully to what I have to say. I know Jane does, too; she listens and values what I have to say. I feel personally like I’m influential. I think if you ask teachers if they think the vice-principal is influential, I don’t know how influential they’ll say. I think they would say it depends on the person.

As the school year evolved, Hannah focused on building and supporting collegial and collaborative relationships among the staff because she recognized the disunity among the staff prevented them from achieving some individual and school-wide goals. She worked with several committees to facilitate this process. A group of teachers worked on instituting a weekly assembly at Woodlawn. Hannah attended the meetings to help the teachers to make decisions. She used her positional authority to
assist the teachers to work through this issue. Hannah talked about her role on this committee.

And so again, I've said these are some of the ways that I could see that we could work it so it could work. And then they wanted to go back and have a discussion with the staff. And I said, "I think what we need to go back with is a formulated proposal." So they went back and said, "This is where we're at."

Hannah was also a member of the early literacy committee. The primary and resource teachers formed the committee to determine if the primary students would benefit if Woodlawn joined the district-wide program. Hannah supported this committee by obtaining information about the district program. During the final meeting that I attended, Hannah skilfully summarized the various viewpoints of the teachers, facilitated the discussion, and assisted the teachers in making a decision. The teachers rejected joining the program. After the meeting, Hannah reported that she was more interested in the teachers working collaboratively than the actual decision.

I interviewed a third of the staff in late April. The teachers expressed favourable comments about the vice-principal. A teacher commented on how Hannah integrated herself into the culture of the school: "And sometimes a staff will luck out and get someone like Hannah who is fabulous. And exactly the kind of person you want with that kind of background and style and personality." The chairperson of the staff committee described the valuable contributions that Hannah made to the school:

Hannah is knowledgeable about the school district. She knows the structure; she knows who is who. So, she’s a very valuable member of the school-based team for a start. She is also very good with the kids. She has a real pleasant, encouraging, cheerful manner with the children. She’s been here a few months and she knows most of the children. That’s pretty remarkable given that she teaches most of the time. And she gets along with people; she’s respected and she’s liked.
A teacher spoke about her personality: "Hannah, I think truly has the effervescence to not personalize it. Somehow, she has a real talent for that, I think. Also, I think she just sees things as funny."

The teachers viewed the principal and the vice-principal as supporters of the teachers. One teacher explained that the administrators were receptive to the teachers:

Right now, it's open communication. Where I think people are finding that they can go to administration for help and get their needs met and solve problems. The style of administration I'm finding is both the principal and vice-principal is one of facilitating rather than authoritative.

During the June interview, Hannah evaluated her performance as a vice-principal. She contended that the vice-principalship was challenging, but a rewarding position. She talked about the positive features of the job:

I really like the variety and I really like the problem solving. I really like the big picture of it. I don't like the trivia. I don't like the details a whole lot and I know you have to do the details on the job, but it's not where I get drawn. I like the bigger picture and I like looking at the overall complexity.

Hannah explained that as she gained knowledge and information about Woodlawn, she was able to make informed administrative decisions. Hannah continued her evaluation of the school year.

I think as I know the job more I'll know what decisions I can make without collaboration. And that people are going to go "yeah, that was good." It makes sense we don't need to collaborate about that. And which decisions really do require some collaboration and which require a lot. So, its not that I think collaboration is the only way. I'm pretty okay to make decisions.

Hannah talked about how her relationships with the teachers changed during the second term:
I think I became more open with the staff and, around if I didn’t think it was a good idea or not. I was more able to say, I don’t think that is a good plan. Or, I think maybe you would be better off doing it this way. It took me a long time, but I think I did get more understanding that when I spoke there was some kind of authority that people just give when you speak because you’re the vice-principal.

She discussed her influence in the school:

I think I was influential, but I don’t know that people would be able to define how I was influential. I would like to think I influenced Jane and I influenced the tone of the school. I think if I hadn’t been there the tone would have been different.

Hannah’s goals and philosophy of leadership were similar to the Woodlawn teachers. Throughout most of the school year, Hannah focused on supporting the teachers and trying to build a collegial atmosphere in the school. She was interested in the processes and procedures that affected the whole staff. She claimed that administrators support and assist teachers to achieve their goals. Hannah exhibited a facilitative, democratic leadership style. Hannah did not pursue separate goals from the teachers. When Hannah recognized the teachers were divided, she tried to improve the collaboration and collegiality among the teachers. Hannah supported shared decision-making between teachers and administrators, but she was not averse to making unilateral decisions, if necessary.

**Summary**

The vice-principals faced many challenges during the school year, from gathering and assimilating a wide array of skills, knowledge, and experiences to working with different people and personalities. A different novice vice-principal shared her views:
Just the challenges, everyday it’s a different situation. Having to always be on your toes, always thinking, always dealing with situation, trying to resolve conflicts and working with people and making sure that you’re addressing all of the issues. I like the complexity of it. I like the people and the challenges of doing things with together. I really like the team approach.

The teachers were extremely influential in how the vice-principals made sense of school leadership and administration. The teachers in the three schools expected to participate in school-wide decision-making. They felt they had the right to influence what occurred in the schools. They expected administrators to take care of things that occurred outside of their classrooms. The teachers expected the vice-principals to perform these tasks efficiently and effectively even though they were novice administrators. Gina recognized that the teachers wanted competent and efficient administrators to take care of the managerial tasks. She offered this synopsis:

I just like the visionary stuff and they expect that and appreciate it, but teachers really want the management type stuff as well. You have to find a good balance. You can’t be a manager and you can’t be a leader all the time. You have to be a leader who knows how to manage.

The vice-principals became involved with committees, events, and activities. They engaged in decision-making, problem solving, conflict management, and communication. The culture of the schools affected the vice-principals in different ways. Each vice-principal had a slightly different emphasis in her approach. Gina believed administrators should be influential in the school. Celeste worked to gain influence in the school. Hannah worked with teachers and resolved several problems.

The vice-principals exhibited different understandings of the four types of power they utilized as administrators. In terms of formal authority, the vice-principals used this to help and assist teachers. On a few occasions, two vice-principals pressured teachers to act a certain way; but initially they might not have realized the
consequences of their actions. The vice-principals used facilitative power by obtaining resources and finding answers for teachers. In terms of leadership, teachers expected administrators to support teachers when they pursued specific objectives. Teachers wanted administrators to help them obtain resources or materials to achieve their goals. They expected administrators to help teachers in every possible way. Vice-principals gained influence by participating in committee meetings, being visible in the schools, sharing and exhibiting expertise, dialoguing with teachers before meetings, supporting teacher leadership, facilitating decision-making, inserting humour and jokes, supporting the actions of teachers, and supporting teachers by obtaining resources and information.

The shared decision-making model that was in place in the schools affected the vice-principals, teachers, and principals. The vice-principals recognized the collaborative and collegial nature of the schools; however, disagreements occurred among the teachers and between the teachers and administrators. Some of the issues might be considered minor, but they affected the school atmosphere and culture and the relationships among the staff. As a result, the vice-principals began to see that helping people resolve differences was a role of administration.

In June, the vice-principals assessed their performances. Overall, they were very satisfied with the school year and they believed they were successful. They talked about some of the rewarding and challenging features of their positions. The rewarding aspects of the job seemed to centre on the skills and knowledge to perform administrative tasks, while the frustrating aspects of the job were related to working with the teachers and principals.
They enjoyed solving problems, learning new skills, working with adults, and engaging in leadership roles. Vice-principals reported that their learning was done on a continuum. As they gained skills and knowledge, they were able to make better decisions later in the year. Additionally, efficient management was critical to school leadership.

All of the vice-principals recognized the responsibility and gravity of the role and position of the administrators in the school. The vice-principals were concerned with performing their job efficiently and at a high standard even though they were novice administrators. Another first-year vice-principal described the dilemma:

The most difficult is just trying to do a good job in each little aspect of the job because you’re wearing so many hats and doing so many things at once. At times, I feel like I’m doing so many things half. And when you’re used to doing a good job at things, you have to learn to just say okay. This is part of the job and you have to learn to accept that you can’t do everything.

In chapters five and six, I presented data on how the vice-principals understood and perceived the dynamics of school leadership and administration. Five broad themes were identified from the results. The first related to the duties and responsibilities of novice, elementary vice-principals. A second set of themes focused on the training and mentoring of the vice-principals. Transitions were an integral aspect of the experiences of vice-principals. The fourth theme was the intersection of participatory leadership and micropolitics. In the next chapter, the findings, conclusions, and implications for policy, practice, research, and theory will be presented.
In this study, I explored how first-year vice-principals understood the dynamics of administration and school leadership. I was interested in how the roles, tasks, and responsibilities of the vice-principals, and how the relationships between the vice-principals and the teachers and between the vice-principals and the school principals affected how the vice-principals perceived their new roles. More specifically, I wanted to know from a micropolitical perspective what the vice-principals learned about school leadership. Furthermore, I wished to examine the perceptions of the vice-principals about their administrative roles when they encountered different educational philosophies, goals, and values of the teachers and principals. The relationships between administration and the teachers were of particular interest because of the shared decision processes that existed in the schools.

Throughout this study, I was attentive to the triangulation and confirmability of the data. I used four methods of data collection—interviews, participant observations, direct observations, and analysis of documents. The documents provided background information about the schools, school district, and the BC education system. In addition, I interviewed vice-principals, principals, teachers, assistant superintendents, and the coordinator of the leadership program.

Making Sense of School Leadership: Central Findings

In the previous two chapters, certain patterns of responses emerged from the findings of this study that affected the vice-principals' understanding of administration
and school leadership. These patterns form the foundation of the themes that are examined in this chapter. Five themes are analyzed: (a) the role demands of the vice-principalship, (b) learning the job by trial and error and immersion, (c) absences of critical feedback and lack of mentoring of the vice-principals, (d) power of the principals over the vice-principals, (e) transitions into administration, and (f) understanding the vice-principalship from the perspectives of micropolitics and shared decision-making.

**Role Demands**

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah performed the traditional tasks of the vice-principalship. They ordered materials, disciplined and supervised students, organized events, and chaired and attended meetings. Additionally, they performed numerous and diverse tasks, engaged in solving problems, mediated conflict, facilitated processes, worked collaboratively with teachers, supported teachers, worked with and supported principals, and grappled with understanding how to use their power as administrators.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah were assigned to teach 60% of the time. In British Columbia, most elementary principals had teaching assignments; consequently, the vice-principals’ dual responsibilities of teaching and administration were not unique to the Evergreen District. Teaching is not a typical role of secondary vice-principals as discussed in the literature (e.g., Austin, 1972; Black, 1980; Calabrese, 1991; Hartzell, Williams & Nelson, 1995; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Marshall, 1993; Reed & Connor, 1982; Reed & Himmler, 1985; Ricciardi, 2000). The vice-principals in the Evergreen District were assigned to enrolling and non-enrolling teaching positions. Gina, the
enrolling teacher, faced more challenges and demands than either Celeste or Hannah. Based on Gina’s comments throughout the school year, the dual responsibilities of administration and teaching affected the quality of her teaching and the learning of the students in her classroom. Moreover, it was extremely difficult to execute both duties at a proficient level. Hannah, who was a resource teacher, encountered challenges because she did not have experience or a credential for this position. Celeste had the most favourable teaching assignment as project coordinator. Her teaching duties were negligible; consequently, she was able to engage in many activities.

The lack of information about the individual schools and the Evergreen School District was a major impediment for the vice-principals. Because the vice-principals were new to the school, they were unaware of who organized and supervised events, chaired committees, or when activities were scheduled. The vice-principals encountered several problems accessing information regarding the district policies, rules, and regulations. At times, the lack of knowledge about the schools and district hindered the vice-principals from performing their jobs efficiently and effectively. Gina, Celeste, and Hannah spent a substantial amount of time searching for and gathering information about the schools and district during the first term.

The first year of school administration was demanding, challenging, and stressful for Gina, Celeste, and Hannah. New tasks, workload, time demands (e.g., Ricciardi, 2000), fast pace, diverse tasks, and fragmentation of the job as documented in the research (e.g., Hess, 1985; Kaplan & Owings, 1999) challenged the vice-principals during the first year, particularly during the first term. The vice-principals worked long days. They needed to respond to people in an effective and timely
manner. Furthermore, the vice-principals engaged in different and multiple tasks during one school day. They needed to be able to adjust to and perform different tasks. For example, they disciplined students, attended meetings, answered the phone, made inquiries, mediated conflicts, and organized events. The vice-principals wanted to appear competent to the school principal and teachers. These findings were not surprising because they were reported in other studies (Black, 1980; Garawski, 1978; Kaplan & Owings, 1999). The vice-principals had similar experiences as novice elementary and secondary principals and secondary vice-principals.

Initially, the vice-principals were overwhelmed because they performed new tasks and encountered new experiences. As the school year evolved, the vice-principals became more competent and effective performing their administrative tasks. They applied the information and knowledge they gained from their experiences to new situations. Some of the basic tasks they performed became routine; consequently, they spent less time performing these tasks. Assimilating knowledge and applying it to new situations was part of the process of learning about and understanding school leadership.

Relationships with Principals

The vice-principals had collegial and professional relationships with the principals. At the beginning of the year, the vice-principals and principals’ beliefs about leadership appeared to be congruent. Nonetheless, the principals affected the novice vice-principals in several important ways. First, there was little training and mentoring of the vice-principals by the principals. Second, the leadership beliefs of the
principals affected the vice-principals. Third, the vice-principals were cognizant of the power the principals had over their jobs and careers.

**Training the Vice- Principals by Trial and Error and Immersion**

The vice-principals encountered two problems regarding training. The Evergreen School District did not have a training program, guidelines, or procedures for training first-year vice-principals. The vice-principals did not receive systematic training by the their principals. In fact, Gil, Harry, and Jane had “hands off” policies regarding training the vice-principals. The principals maintained that novice administrators learned by trial and error, making mistakes, and encountering various experiences. As a result, the vice-principals had few opportunities to discuss their roles with the principals at an in-depth level.

There were disadvantages and advantages in these circumstances. Learning through experiences or by making mistakes was problematic because there were no guarantees that the vice-principals were exposed to the requisite administrative skills, tasks, and responsibilities, or gained the knowledge and experiences to function as successful school leaders. Conversely, the principals engendered the learning of the vice-principals by not limiting their involvement or participation in school-wide activities. The vice-principals were free to engage in any school activities. The three vice-principals reported that they learned a lot about administration and leadership when the principals were absent from the school, and the vice-principals were acting principals. Because they were on their own in the schools, they began to understand the magnitude of responsibility that administrators carry in the schools.
These problems were not unique to the Evergreen District. Researchers reported that training vice-principals was an infrequent occurrence in schools (Marshall, 1993; Weindling & Earley, 1987). In addition, several researchers reported that elementary vice-principals were not trained for the principalship (Greenfield, 1985a; Wells, Rinehart, & Scollay, 1999).

Absence of Critical Feedback and Mentoring

The vice-principals faced different situations and had numerous experiences that caused them to deliberate and reflect about their new roles as school leaders. At times, their colleagues and the school district personnel supplied answers regarding the technical aspects of the job. The vice-principals reported that their families and friends also provided emotional support for them. However, the vice-principals desired a mentoring relationship with their principals. The vice-principals wanted to engage in critical discussions and reflective conversations about their roles as school leaders. Based on the interviews with the vice-principals, principals, and my observations, the principals demonstrated a limited understanding of mentoring.

Several interconnected factors affected the principals’ mentoring the vice-principals. First, Gil, Harry, and Jane claimed that “stepping away” from the vice-principals was advantageous to the development of the vice-principals. Second, the principals defined mentoring as allowing the vice-principals to engage in any leadership activities, management tasks, or school events, without placing restrictions on the vice-principals. There were few opportunities for the principals and vice-principals to meet and have in-depth discussions during the school day. Third, the
relationship between the principals and vice-principals was hierarchical. The principals evaluated and recommended the vice-principals for principalships. It was problematic for the vice-principals to discuss difficulties or problems with the principals because the principals were critical to their future careers. Mentoring and evaluating vice-principals simultaneously appeared to be difficult for the principals and the vice-principals although the principals did not articulate this point of view.

Hannah, Celeste, and Gina wanted to have in-depth discussions with their principals to help them become successful administrators. They wanted mentors who would guide and coach them on their roles and responsibilities, and give them feedback on their performances to facilitate their learning as administrators. The vice-principals wanted to engage in critical conversations. The vice-principals believed feedback was important to their development as administrators. Dewey’s (1933) description of reflective thinking corresponded with the vice-principals’ perceptions of what they desired in their relationships with the principals. Dewey provides the following definition of critical thinking:

Reflective thinking involves (a) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates; and (b) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity. (p. 12)

The vice-principals and principals discussed school issues, but they rarely analyzed the vice-principals’ involvement in problem solving, decision-making, or school leadership.

I accidentally fulfilled the role of mentor for the vice-principals. I was their critical friend or coach that helped them grapple with their new positions as school leaders. Schon (1983) maintained that practitioners learned about their work through
inquiry and reflection, and they build a repertoire of new insight regarding their work. This occurred when I inquired about different problems and solutions the vice-principals were involved in or asked about their roles and functions in the schools. As the vice-principals and I interacted, they reflected about their roles more critically. The vice-principals were able to discuss their jobs openly with me because I was not evaluating or judging their performances; hence, they felt safe discussing their concerns with me. Critical and reflective discussions helped the vice-principals evaluate their actions and their performances.

**Power of the Principal Over the Vice-Principal**

The three vice-principals occupied the least powerful and lowest status administrative position in the district. Harry, Gil, and Jane, the school principals, possessed the most power and influence over the vice-principals because they were their direct supervisors. The power of the principals affected the vice-principals in the schools and district. At the individual schools, their power was based on dictating the roles and tasks of the vice-principals and sharing power with the vice-principals, which allowed the vice-principals to make decisions in the schools. The formal authority of the vice-principals was dependent on how much the principals permitted them to do. Fortunately, the three vice-principals had a lot of latitude in their schools.

However, they were aware of the principals’ involvement in activities. The vice-principals limited their involvement in some situations because the principals had taken the lead. Instead, the vice-principals engaged in actions that assisted and supported the principals. The behaviour of the principals, whether conscious or
unconscious, affected the behaviour of the vice-principals. Even though the vice-
principals chose to participate in specific activities or meetings, they were aware of the
power the principals possessed to alter or modify their roles in the school, to affect
their behaviour, and to influence their careers.

In an earlier study, Marshall and Mitchell (1991) reported that vice-principals
took on roles and filled niches in schools that complemented the principals. The vice-
principals filled niches in their respective schools. Gina took on additional tasks and
duties because Harry did not perform management tasks. Jane did not always
anticipate problems; consequently, Hannah helped keep things calm on several
occasions. Celeste gradually took over the management tasks because the school
warranted two full time administrators.

Relationships with Teachers

At the end of the school year, the vice-principals reported that they were
successful in achieving their goals in their relationships with the teachers. Overall, the
vice-principals had supported the teachers and worked towards maintaining positive
relationships with them. Nevertheless, Celeste, Hannah, and Gina emphasized that the
teachers affected them throughout the school year. The teachers had specific
expectations of and beliefs about the roles of administrators. According to the
teachers, the primary roles of the administrators were supporting teachers in their
classrooms and protecting teaching time by taking care of matters outside of the
classroom and facilitating processes that assist teachers in their teaching.
The teachers contributed to the workload of the vice-principals by requesting supplies, furniture, resources, information, assistance, and support. The teachers expected the vice-principals to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively. They expected the vice-principals to perform like veteran administrators. The upside of the teachers’ requests was the extensive knowledge and experience the vice-principals acquired about their administrative roles and leadership responsibilities. These requests, demands, and expectations inadvertently contributed to the vice-principals’ learning and understanding about their roles. Researchers described this process as organizational socialization (Hart, 1993; Heck, 1995). Hart and Heck defined it as learning the skills and knowledge of a role via the activities and relationships at the school site. According to Hart and Heck, organizational socialization has the strongest effect on the learning and performances of vice-principals.

The relationship between the vice-principals and the teaching staff changed from when the vice-principals were colleagues of teachers to when they became administrators. Previous research has demonstrated that vice-principals felt separated (Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1995) and isolated from the teachers, and they experienced a loss of identity (Hradecky, 1994). The three vice-principals in this study experienced these changes in mild ways; they appeared to be limited to the individual school settings and were not as difficult as reported in the scholarly literature. In some ways, the vice-principals had close contact with the teachers because they were in charge of many tasks that warranted interactions with the teachers. In a way, the vice-principals’ tasks ensured that they were not separated from teachers. They constantly interacted with teachers because the vice-principals were responsible for duties and
tasks that affected the teachers (e.g., ordering supplies and materials, making requests to the district office). Additionally, the vice-principals did not feel isolated because they remained in contact with teacher colleagues and friends who worked in other schools. The support systems of the vice-principals still existed when they became administrators. The vice-principals were not seen as the ultimate authority in the school; the principals were. Consequently, the teachers held the principals, not the vice-principals, accountable for major decisions or problems in the schools.

Transitions

The vice-principals underwent several different types of transitions. They learned new jobs and skills and moved from being part of the teachers union to being members of the administrators who were non-union. Moreover, some of their administrative duties were less important than tasks they performed in their prior positions.

According to Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995), there were two distinct occurrences when people made the transition to new jobs. Individuals felt a sense of discontinuity, and they developed new responses in order to cope with their new situations. The vice-principals in this study endured both experiences, particularly during the first term. Their tasks and duties were new and different from their past positions. As they became familiar and comfortable in their new positions, they adapted to their administrative roles.

The vice-principals struggled with performing some of the less important tasks. They reported a loss of power and influence when they became administrators. Two of
the vice-principals reported that they had been influential teachers. The vice-principals felt they should be able to contribute more as administrators. Although the vice-principals and many teachers viewed some of these tasks (e.g., ordering supplies and materials) as minor, the importance of performing these duties proficiently and effectively was immeasurable. The jobs were doable. From the vantage points of teachers, successful school leaders were effective and efficient administrators. Performing these traditional tasks enhanced the perceptions of teachers of the leadership abilities of the vice-principals. The vice-principals began to gain influence with the teachers when the teachers viewed them as competent administrators.

Marshall (1990) found there were four stages of enculturation for vice-principals: the decision to leave teaching, appointment to administration, separation from former colleagues, and adoption of and loyalty to administration. My research did not include examination of the first two stages of enculturation. Nevertheless, two of the vice-principals did not report difficulties with separation from the teaching staff. Although one vice-principal claimed she encountered difficulties seeing herself as an administrator, this perception changed in January.

The vice-principals might not have felt separated from the teachers because the principals were seen as the ultimate authority in the school. They were in charge of and responsible for what occurred in the school. In addition, the vice-principals worked more closely with the teachers in some areas of the school, particularly, student discipline. In terms of the last stage, the vice-principals expressed loyalty to and identified with the principals and their new administrative colleagues early in the school year. They knew what was expected of them because they became legal
representatives of the school board. Moreover, the principals were critical to their future careers.

**Micropolitics in the Schools**

In general, the relationships between the teachers and administrators were constructive and productive. This can be attributed to the support by the principals and vice-principals of shared decision-making, and expectations of teachers that the administrators should work with and support the teachers. Micropolitics existed in the three schools. Blase (1991) defined micropolitics as how individuals and groups exercised their formal and informal power to affect the actions of others. In addition to power, the other key elements of micropolitics were beliefs, interests, goals, and strategies (Hoyle, 1986b). Teachers and administrators did have mutual, different, and overlapping interests, goals, and beliefs in the schools.

The expectations of the teachers were critical to the relationship between the vice-principals and the teachers. The teachers expected vice-principals to use their power to support them in the classroom and to protect them from pressures that were external to their classrooms. The teachers viewed themselves as most influential and critical to the education of the children. They believed they were equal partners with the administrators.

In general, the vice-principals exercised the four types of power as administrators. The teachers exercised influence and authority, which is based on the collective agreement, to affect the vice-principals and principals. Muth (1984) defined authority as the ability to affect the behaviour of another person or group because they accepted the legitimacy of the authority of the person in a higher position in a
hierarchical organization. Influence was defined as the ability to affect the behaviour of another person or group without using force or legitimation. Facilitative power was defined as the ability or capacity to help others reach their goals; this was developed through their interactions with others. It was "jointly developed power" (Follett, 1942). Muth (1984) defined coercion as the ability of an individual or group to affect another person or group'sbehaviours, by using physical or mental force, regardless of the others' desires.

Influence was prevalent in the three schools. Both teachers and administrators exerted influence in the schools. They used influence to affect others'behaviours. The teachers' influence was based on expertise, longevity, visibility, personality, number of teachers, and formal authority (collective agreement). The vice-principal built influence with teachers through expertise, knowledge and information, personality, facilitative power, facilitative authority, and authority.

Initially, Gina, Celeste, and Hannah were surprised at the authority that was attributed to them because they became administrators. Based on my observations and interviews with the teachers and vice-principals, the vice-principals used their positional authority and facilitative power to support and assist the teachers to pursue and achieve their goals. The vice-principals gained influence in several ways. They used their power to support teachers. They used their expertise to advise teachers. Overall, the vice-principals developed cordial relationships with the teachers through casual conversations. The teachers opposed the vice-principals when they used coercive power to pressure teachers to take specific actions.
The vice-principals' philosophies of leadership affected the relationships between the vice-principals and teachers. For Gina, her beliefs about leadership caused some conflict to occur with some McCleery teachers. At times, Gina's espoused leadership theory and her practices were contradictory. Gina maintained that she was a collaborative and a "bottom-up" leader; she wanted to work closely with teachers. However, on a few occasions, the teachers opposed Gina's proposals because she pressured the teachers into taking specific actions. These actions did lead to conflict with some teachers. Gina seemed to be unaware that she used coercive power.

Celeste was able to gain influence with the teachers because she supported them by using her authority and facilitative power. She used her interpersonal skills to develop relationships with the teachers. Celeste consciously used specific strategies to build influence with the teachers. However, she did encounter a few problems with some teachers. Her actions caused conflict to erupt between the teachers and her twice during the school year. Celeste used her authority to pressure teachers to do something they did not want to do. The teachers prevented her from carrying out her actions by challenging and confronting her. Celeste recognized that she made a mistake and reversed her decisions. Celeste was politically astute; she understood the politics of the school. Moreover, Celeste began to build influence with the teachers.

Hannah used her positional authority and facilitative power throughout the school year to support the teachers. Hannah was committed to this style of leadership; she rarely, if ever, used her positional power to force teachers to take actions. Hannah gained influence with the teachers by using her counselling expertise to support and advise teachers. She developed professional relationships with the teachers through
casual conversations. Furthermore, Hannah did not have separate goals from the teachers; in fact, Hannah melded her goals with the teachers’ goals. She recognized that the staff were fractured and non-collegial; consequently, she worked towards assisting the teachers to work cooperatively. Hart (1988) argued that paying attention to the values and beliefs of teachers is important in building a relationship with the staff.

When the vice-principals used their positional authority and their facilitative power to help the teachers achieve their goals, conflict did not occur. However, when the teachers believed that the vice-principals were using coercive power to pressure them, they rejected and refused to comply with the proposals. If the teachers were not successful in preventing the vice-principals from taking actions, the relationship between the teachers and vice-principals suffered. As the school year progressed, Celeste and Hannah gradually established themselves with and gained the trust of the teachers and began to use their influence to affect the behaviours of the teachers. To some extent, Gina also influenced the teachers.

The Evergreen teachers were not powerless; in fact, the teachers possessed formal and informal power. The teachers affected the administrators by using the collective agreement, through the numbers of teachers on staff, by refusing to take actions, and through discussing the issues with the administrators.

The teachers rejected the use of power over strategies to influence their behaviours and actions. They welcomed and expected the use of power with strategies to support them in achieving their goals. Positional authority and facilitative power were equated with power with strategies. Coercion, which was the misuse of positional
authority, was a *power over* strategy. Both the teachers and administrators used influence. Understanding leadership was learning when and under what conditions to exercise the four different types of power. The vice-principals needed to become familiar with the goals, interests, and beliefs of the teachers. The teachers and administrators needed to have shared goals to achieve the schools’ goals. The schools’ goals were determined during the accreditation process that the schools were subjected to during the past several years.

**Shared Decision-Making**

The McCleery, Woodlawn, and Ashland teachers expected to be partners with the administrators in school-wide decision-making. Although shared decision-making existed in the three schools, it did not eliminate disagreements. Problems occurred when the vice-principals circumvented the shared decision-making procedures that existed in the schools in situations that affected the teachers. Two vice-principals made this mistake several times. Understanding the procedures and process of SDM was crucial knowledge for the vice-principals. The process of shared decision-making does not occur just because procedures are implemented, teachers join committees, and everyone expects consensus (Weiss, Cambone, & Wyeth, 1992). Successful SDM includes the following elements: belief and support of school principal, support from the district, ongoing professional development of SDM process, guidelines regarding responsibility, execution of decisions that were made, criteria for decision-making, involvement in all school-wide decision-making *(e.g., policies, testing, class assignments)*, recognition of teachers, dissemination and sharing information, and
good relationships between staff and administration. Vice-principals needed to learn under which conditions they could make unilateral decisions or engaged in shared decision-making. The vice-principals learned that they could make unilateral decisions during emergencies. They needed to engage in shared decision-making on issues that affected the teachers in their classrooms. Sharing information was an important component of shared decision-making.

Recommendations for Policy, Practice, and Research

This research has implications for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. Knowledge of the experiences of novice elementary vice-principals is critical to understanding and improving school leadership and the performances of new administrators. Learning how vice-principals understand their initial experiences and how they make the transition from teaching to administration has implications for the leadership approaches administrators might utilize as they work with teachers to affect the education of children. In this section of the paper, the following recommendations will be discussed: (a) providing guidance regarding the duties and responsibilities of first-year vice-principals; (b) codifying procedures for routine tasks and information; (c) making changes in vice-principal’s teaching positions; (d) developing a clear leadership statement for the district that addresses the use of power in schools; (e) developing a principalship preparation program; (f) providing mentoring for vice-principals; and (g) cultivating the vice-principals’ understandings and awareness of working in schools in which micropolitics and SDM co-exist. Suggestions for further
Research are presented in the next section. Last, contributions to micropolitical and participatory leadership theories are discussed.

**Recommendations for Practice**

The vice-principals endured stress and tension during the initial months of administration due to their workloads, the fragmentation of their work, long workdays, and time needed to learn about their new roles. Ready access to school and district information was another challenge the vice-principals faced. The tasks of the vice-principals and the lack of information affected the daily work lives of the vice-principals. The following recommendations address these issues.

**Assigning duties and responsibilities.**

At the beginning of the school year, the vice-principals were overwhelmed and stressed by their workloads and their involvement in numerous activities and tasks. With the exception of brief conversations in September, the principals did not provide enough feedback or guidance about the vice-principals new duties, roles, and responsibilities. Vice-principals need to learn administrative skills and fundamental management tasks during their first year. This low-level basic requirement includes traditional jobs (e.g., obtaining materials, disciplining and supervising students), management tasks, and information related to the skills vice-principals need to function in schools that have established shared decision-making among administrators and teachers. The district, principals, and vice-principals could develop a concrete, abbreviated list of the tasks, skills, and information that first-year vice-
principals should be aware of, which in turn would sensitize the vice-principals to some of the basic tasks they need to learn. Vice-principals could monitor their own progress and maintain control over this aspect of their learning. This information could be used to assess the performance and monitor the progress of the vice-principals. These changes might reduce some of the stress the vice-principals grapple with during their transitions into administration.

Vice-principals respond to the requests of teachers, parents, students, administrators, and non-school personnel almost everyday. Hence, the vice-principals regularly encounter numerous and diverse duties, tasks, responsibilities, and demands. Because the vice-principals react to unexpected situations and unanticipated emergencies, their work seems to be disjointed and piecemeal. This aspect of administration has remained constant for 30 years. Many researchers have reported that administrative jobs are fragmented (e.g., Austin, 1972; Kaplan & Owings, 1999; Koru, 1993; Marshall, 1985b). This element of administrative work cannot be changed. Consequently, novice vice-principals should expect that their workdays would be fragmented; it is inherent in the administrators’ roles.

Codify procedures for routine tasks and information.

The paucity of information about the individual schools and the district affected the performances and contributed to the workload of the vice-principals. It was problematic during the first term because the vice-principals spent a substantial amount of time searching for information. The vice-principals did not always respond or act immediately to the requests of the teachers because they did not always have
ready access to the information. Gathering information required considerable amounts of time — time vice-principals did not have.

A basic and fundamental solution to the problem would be to develop school and district information that the vice-principals need to perform their administrative tasks. For example, procedures for selecting, ordering, acquiring, storing, and distributing supplies, equipment, and learning resources could be compiled for the individual schools. A calendar of activities and events that occur during the school year (e.g., Pro D days, sports day, parent-teacher conferences) might be developed and organized. Another example of general information would include details about the various events, activities, and committees in the school. Administrators and teachers, who are new to schools, would benefit from this type of resource.

A similar manual could be assembled for district information. This might include whom to call for which issues and information. Having ready access to this information would reduce the time new vice-principals spent searching for information. It would ease vice-principals' transition into administration by reducing their workload early in the school year, thus allowing the vice-principals more time to engage in other leadership activities.

**Recommendations for Policy**

Several of the challenges that the vice-principals faced were related to district policies. Consequently, the superintendent and assistant superintendents would need to address these issues. These include teaching assignments of the vice-principals,
Changes in vice-principals’ teaching assignments.

In this study, the elementary vice-principal who was an enrolling classroom teacher experienced more challenges, had a more demanding workload, worked longer hours, and struggled with more stress than her colleagues. If vice-principals are enrolling teachers, their teaching loads should be reduced. Based on the EETU collective agreement, teachers were appointed to a specific percentage of resource teaching positions throughout the district. This stipulation forced the Evergreen district to assign vice-principals to classroom teaching positions rather than resource positions. However, the contract did not dictate the amount of time the vice-principals allocated to teaching. The Evergreen School District should reduce the teaching time of the enrolling vice-principals. As a result, the enrolling vice-principals would have less demanding workloads, which may reduce their stress and ease their transition into administration.

The assignment of new vice-principals who are overwhelmed and overworked to teaching positions (e.g., resource and ESL teachers) in which they do not have credentials or qualifications is problematic. The learning of the students in their classes is disadvantaged when the teaching vice-principals are not qualified for their assignments and when they lack the expertise and experience to plan a quality program. Vice-principals should possess the requisite qualifications to teach in the positions to which they are assigned.
Develop leadership philosophy.

Although the administrators and teachers supported shared decision-making and collaborative relationships with each together in the three schools in this study, they encountered problems when working together. Some of these problems could be attributed to the diverse views among the teachers and administrators regarding the school leadership.

The Evergreen School District should articulate an understandable and lucid statement about its philosophy of leadership. The following topics need to be addressed: the goals of school leaders and teachers, leadership styles, shared decision-making, collaborative relationships with teachers, and teacher leadership. A leadership statement could include how administrators use their power (coercion, positional authority, facilitative power, and influence) effectively in schools. Teachers and administrators should work together to develop the philosophy of leadership statement.

Preparation for the principalship.

The findings indicated that the primary goal of the vice-principalship in the Evergreen District is preparation for the principalship. The vice-principals were concerned that they were not exposed to all of the skills and experiences necessary to be successful school leaders. Neither the district nor the principals provided comprehensive and systematic school-based training for the vice-principals.

Two components seem necessary for a leadership/administrative preparation program: (a) guidelines on how principals should work with and monitor the vice-
principals; and (b) a staged preparation program for the vice-principals that includes the essential management and leadership skills and responsibilities, critical information, and leadership activities for novice administrators.

If principals are leaders of schools, then they must be leaders and contribute to the development of the vice-principals. Principals must take the lead in guiding and training the vice-principals because they are their immediate supervisors. They are expected to supervise, evaluate, and recommend the vice-principals. A basic list of skills and tasks could guide the principals in determining how much assistance and training the vice-principals require. The roles and responsibilities of the vice-principals would be based on the basic skills and information vice-principals should be aware of, their knowledge and expertise, and the needs and goals of the individual schools. The Evergreen District needs to develop workshops and/or in-services on how principals can support the development and learning of vice-principals.

A principalship preparation program for vice-principals should be developed to ensure that the vice-principals are successful school leaders. The program would include several stages. The stages would be based on the premise that vice-principals would become principals within a four to six year period. The training program could include aspiring administrators as well as novice vice-principals.

The focus of the first stage would be to learn the procedures and routines that support the management of schools. This could include how to order, obtain, and distribute supplies, resources, and furniture, and how to organize events and activities. The second stage would focus on working with teachers and the principal to develop and achieve school goals. This phase might encompass overseeing and coordinating
curricula programs, chairing different meetings, and working with teachers on school-wide projects. The principals would closely guide and monitor the vice-principals during the first two stages; these stages could last three to four years. The goal of the third stage would be to increase the autonomy and level of responsibility of the vice-principals. For example, third and fourth year vice-principals could be assigned to school annexes to prepare for the principalship. Vice-principals are the only administrators in the annexes so their experiences and roles are more similar to the principals. In addition, the vice-principals could be assigned to be the acting principals on a regular basis. The next and last step of the principal preparation program would be to appoint the vice-principals to principalships.

*Mentoring and critical conversations and feedback.*

The vice-principals wanted to engage in reflective and critical discussions with the principals about their roles as school leaders. However, the mentor relationships between the vice-principals and principals were marred with difficulties because (a) the principals expressed limited knowledge of mentoring; (b) the principals and vice-principals rarely met or interacted one-on-one for extended periods of time; and (c) the principals evaluated the vice-principals; consequently, it was difficult for the vice-principals to discuss their mistakes or problems with the principals.

Several recommendations can be made based on the results of this study. Because there were difficulties with the mentoring, alternatives should be considered. The principals, vice-principals, and assistant superintendents need training on mentorship relationships. The district needs to make mentoring a key component of
the experiences of first-year administrators. The principals and vice-principals could
discuss mentoring during the monthly area meeting with the assistant superintendents.
Another option would be to set up cooperative mentoring programs with
administrators in other school districts and with the British Columbia Principals’ and
Vice-Principals’ Association. Principals could mentor vice-principals from another
district. This relationship should engender frank and straightforward conversations.
Another consideration would be to enlist veteran, tenured teachers to provide feedback
to first year administrators. Teachers closely scrutinized the performances of the vice-
principals in this study. For example, the teachers commented on vice-principals’
interactions with others, aptitude in performing their duties, ability to work
collaboratively with teachers, and propensity to bring an idea to fruition. Teachers
could give feedback to the vice-principals.

_School micropolitics._

Power is the central feature of micropolitics. The utilization of _power with_
rather than _power over_ strategies appear to be more effective in the three schools in
this study. The vice-principals need to understand the different types of power they
use in the school and the effects of their use of power. A key to this situation is being
aware of and understanding the expectations, beliefs, and goals of the teachers.
Understanding how to use facilitation, authority, and influence to solve problems and
work with teachers are critical to understanding school leadership. Vice-principals
need to learn how to use their formal authority to facilitate discussions and move the
staff toward resolutions. Furthermore, administrators need to be aware of how the
different goals, interests, and beliefs of the teachers and administrators and the
micropolitics of the schools, affect and influence the decision-making processes and
the relationships among educators in the schools. Consequently, vice-principals need
to learn the necessary skills to function in schools that support cooperative workplaces
and where teachers possess and articulate diverse opinions and beliefs about
education. Facilitation, conflict management, conflict resolution, approaches and
methods of communication, and decision-making criteria are some of the processes
and information that new administrators need to understand and be able to put into
practice in schools. The facilitation process entails listening to teachers, discussing
issues, synthesizing and summarizing what people say, suggesting alternative ideas
without forcing ideas on others, ensuring the group moves to the next step in the
process, and eventually making decisions. Conflict management skills include an
awareness of the political landscape of the schools, the use of techniques that respect
the integrity of each individual, and mediation between individuals and/or among
groups. Understanding these processes and using them effectively with teachers is
critical to successful school leadership.

*Shared decision-making.*

A condition of collective agreement states that teachers have the right to advise
administrators on various school issues. Additionally, the shared decision-making
(SDM) practices that existed in the three schools were based on the administrators’
and the teachers’ beliefs to work collaboratively together. The SAC meetings were the
main forums for shared decision-making to occur. Although SDM did occur in the
three schools, problems arose regarding who made decisions and how and why
decisions were made. SDM procedures for some school issues need to be clearly
delineated. Decision-making and problem-solving criteria need to be developed,
shared, and clarified for teachers and administrators to support successful SDM.
Guidelines could be developed to facilitate the process of SDM on general school
issues. Criteria could be developed to determine when administrators, committees, or
teachers make decisions, particularly when the principals can overturn decisions made
by the teachers. The vice-principals should have training on how to engage in
successful shared decision-making with teachers. Problem identification and problem
solving should be integral to leadership because the administrators were constantly
called upon to take on these roles and responsibilities.

Recommendations for Research

In this study, I observed vice-principals for one school year to determine how
they understood the dynamics of administration and school leadership. There were
several deficiencies in the job description, training, and mentoring of vice-principals.
These deficiencies seemed to affect the transitions and performances of the vice-
principals. Hiring procedures and research on the experiences of female and male
vice-principals will be discussed.

Research could be conducted to develop a comprehensive job description of
the vice-principals. Novice vice-principals would be able to use the job description as
guidelines during their first year. The focus of the project would be to gather data on
the roles and functions of the vice-principals. Surveys would be sent to all vice-
principals to collect information on the duties, tasks, roles and responsibilities they engaged in during the first and second terms of a school year. The data would be analyzed based on the tenure of the vice-principals. That is, the information would be analyzed based on the differences and similarities of the tasks and responsibilities of first, second, third, and fourth year vice-principals. The survey results would be used to create a job description for elementary vice-principals. Moreover, the results would contribute to the vice-principals’ training and the development of a preparation program for principals.

The lack of mentoring of the vice-principals was noticeable in the relationships between the three pairs of principals and the vice-principals. A study could be conducted to develop a mentoring program for novice vice-principals. The first step in the process would be to determine the principals and vice-principals’ understandings of mentoring. This could be accomplished through a limited number of interviews. Representative sampling could be used to determine the administrators who would participate in the interviews. The second step would be developing a mentoring program that was based on the findings from the principals and vice-principals’ interviews and the components of other successful mentoring programs. The third phase would be to implement a pilot project that included the participation of a limited number of administrators. Principals and vice-principals who participate in the pilot program could assess the program; this could be done through surveys or interviews. The goal would be the implementation of a formal mentoring program for new administrators.
Research examining how school leaders understand school leadership and administration over a long time period would be beneficial to educators. A longitudinal study could be conducted to examine this process over a five to six year period. The study would begin during the vice-principals’ first year. Researchers would follow the vice-principals until they become principals. The focus of the study would be to analyze the transitions from teaching to the vice-principalship, novice vice-principals to experienced vice-principals, vice-principalship to the principalship, and the experiences of veteran principals. Analyses would include the administrators’ relationships with other administrators, teachers, students, and parents during each phase of the process. In addition, the SDM and school micropolitics would be examined in the study. An examination of how these administrators understand their roles in the schools from their initial experiences as vice-principals to when they become principals would contribute to our understanding school leadership.

Shared decision-making was an integral element in the three schools in this study. Although the principals, vice-principals, and teachers supported collaboration in the schools, they encountered various challenges throughout the school year when they engaged in shared decision-making. Shared decision-making procedures and criteria for some school issues were vague. An examination of the shared decision-making processes and procedures at the school is needed. Criteria need to be developed, shared, and clarified for successful shared decision-making. The focus of the study would be to improve how principals, vice-principals, and teachers work together to make decisions in the schools. Principals, vice-principals, and teachers would be interviewed to find out their views and perceptions of the shared decision-
making processes and procedures. Additionally, they would be asked to provide
detailed information of each stage of the decision-making process. The interviews
would include questions about leadership beliefs, power of principals in schools,
collaboration, and shared decision-making with the teachers. The research would
include observations of meetings in which administrators and teachers will engage in
shared decision-making. The goal of the study would be to create guidelines for shared
decision-making at the school level.

The absence of a discussion about gender was a limitation of this study. A
similar study could be conducted that compared and contrasted the experiences of
first-year female and male vice-principals. In addition, the relationships between the
vice-principals and principals would be investigated. Different gender pairs of vice-
principals and principals could be included in the study (i.e., female-female, female-
male, male-female, and male-male). The research would focus on male and female
vice-principals’ understandings of school leadership and administration.

*Implications for Theory*

The findings of this study contribute to micropolitical theory and to our
understanding of how individuals and groups exercise power in schools.
Understanding how people utilize power is critical to understanding school leadership
and administration. Most of the micropolitical research (e.g., Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991;
Hoyle, 1986) presented in this paper used a *power over*, hierarchical, top-down
definition of power in their studies. From this traditional perspective of power, the
results of Ball, Blase, and Hoyle’s studies focused on how administrators possessed
and exercised power in schools. In most of these studies, the findings focused on the
effects of the administrators' use of power over the teachers. The teachers' use of power has been overlooked.

In this study, a broader definition of power was used to examine the micropolitics of the schools. Power was defined as the ability of an individual or group to affect the behaviours of others. The concept of power was not only viewed as dominance over others, but also it was perceived as “enabling” others to achieve their goals.

The findings of this study demonstrate how the vice-principals, principals, and teachers exercise the following four types of power (i.e., facilitation, influence, authority, and coercion) independently as well as exercising power by combining the different types of power. Authority and influence are combined with facilitation and coercion in the following ways: influence/facilitation, influence/coercion, authority/facilitation, and authority/coercion. When individuals combine either authority or influence with facilitation, power with others occurs. When individuals combine authority or influence with coercion, power over others transpires.

Throughout this study, the vice-principals, teachers, and principals' use of power affected the behaviours of others. At different times, they exercised variations of influence, authority, facilitation, and coercion. When the vice-principals used coercion, positional authority, or power over strategies to try to force teachers to take certain actions, teachers opposed the actions of the vice-principals. Teachers responded favourably when the vice-principals and principals used their facilitative power and positional authority to support teachers. When administrators used their influence to try and persuade teachers to act in specific ways, the teachers did not
oppose the administrators because they were not forced to make changes. Teachers also used different types of power that affected the behaviour of the vice-principals. The union representatives used their positional authority to affect the behaviour of the vice-principals. In addition, teachers used their influence (e.g., personal, expertise) when they discussed issues with the vice-principals. On several occasions, teachers used coercion to affect the behaviour of the vice-principals. This occurred when a group of teachers made specific demands of two vice-principals. From time to time, the teacher union representatives used their positional power and facilitative power to support the administrators to achieve goals.

Based on the findings of this study, the following definitions of power are suggested. Influence is the capacity of a person or group to cause others to be receptive to and willing to listen to points of view. Authority is legitimate power based on formal positions (e.g., vice-principal, principal, union representative) in schools. Authority is equated with positional power. Facilitative power is the ability or capacity of an individual or group to help others reach their objectives and goals. Coercion is the ability of an individual or group to affect another person or group’s behaviours, by using mental force regardless of the others’ wishes. Authority/facilitation is the capacity to use positional power to support others to achieve their goals. Authority/coercion is the ability to use positional power to force others to take specific actions. The combination of influence/facilitation is the capacity to affect the behaviours of others by helping or assisting them to achieve their goals. Influence/coercion is the ability to pressure others to accept a point of view and change their behaviours.
Understanding the use of power contributes to the complex, dynamic, and multifaceted relationship that exists between administrators and teachers. An awareness of how the administrators and teachers exercise different types of power provides insight into school leadership for novice and experienced administrators.

Shared decision-making, another aspect of this study, was an integral element in the schools in this study. Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994) identify the following characteristics to evaluate the success or failure of shared decision-making in schools. These include power (participative, structures, roles of the principals, devolved authority), knowledge, information, rewards, and instructional improvement. The findings of this study augment our understanding of the importance of power in both shared decision-making and micropolitics. The teachers and administrators in the three schools possessed and exercised power and engaged in shared decision-making. Results illustrate the interconnectedness of power, shared decision-making, micropolitics, and relationships between administrators and teachers. Facilitation, authority/facilitation, and authority — *power with*—are essential elements and integral to successful shared decision-making. Successful shared decision-making contributes to collaborative and collegial relationships between administrators and teachers. The use of *power over*, coercion and authority/coercion, undermines successful shared decision-making. *Power over* hinders the development of collaborative and collegial relationships between administrators and teachers. Influence can be used for *power over* and *power with* purposes.

The findings in this study contribute to the literature on elementary vice-principals and their relationships with principals. The power the principals held over
the vice-principals dominated these relationships. At the beginning of the school year, the principals indicated that the vice-principals were their partners and “equals” in the school. However, as the school year evolved, the vice-principals had less power in the schools than initially indicated by principals. The vice-principals recognized that their power was dependent on the principals. Towards the end of the year, vice-principals reported that they were only as powerful as their principals allowed them to be in the schools. The vice-principals viewed their positions in the schools in relation to principals’ power over them. The hierarchical relationship between the principals and vice-principals affected the actions and performances of the vice-principals.

Conclusion

My interest in school leadership and administration evolved from my own experiences as a principal. Because of the difficulties I encountered during my first year, I wanted to explore the experiences of other novice administrators. I was particularly interested in examining, from a micropolitical perspective, how first-year elementary vice-principals made the transition to and understood administration and school leadership. Understanding the use of power between the vice-principals and the principals and between the vice-principals and the teachers was a focus of this study. In addition, the vice-principals’ tasks and responsibilities and the SDM processes in the schools were examined.

The following key findings are central in my research. A clear and coherent, and leadership statement is critical to the development of school leaders. Novice administrators need to engage in analytical conversations and receive critical feedback
regarding their roles and their development as school leaders. Mentoring relationships
could fill this void. The vice-principals’ teaching assignments should not disadvantage
the students in their classrooms and it should not burden first year vice-principals.
First-year vice-principals need to be knowledgeable of the procedures and process of
routine school tasks. Developing and instituting guidelines for shared decision-making
can contribute to collaborative and collegial relationships between teachers and
administrators. Schools are dynamic, multifaceted, and complex environments;
consequently, vice-principals need to understand and appreciate how they and others
exercise power. The vice-principals need to develop an awareness and sensitivity to
the effects and consequences of the use of power in the schools.
Epilogue

At the end of the first school year, the vice-principals began to think about their second year. They talked about some of the things that they would do differently. Gina believed that some of the problems that arose during her first year were because she and Harry were both new to McCleery. Consequently, Gina wanted to meet with Harry in August so they could develop a plan for the school year. Celeste had requested a meeting with Gil in June to discuss the school year. She wanted to examine and analyze events and activities that occurred during her first year so that she and Gil could prepare for the second year. Because Jane left Woodlawn Elementary, Hannah would be working with a different principal. When Hannah was informed who the new principal was, she said: “I’m relieved. I don’t need someone hard either.” Josh, the new principal, who had taught at Woodlawn earlier in his career, had an excellent reputation among Woodlawn teachers.

I interviewed Gina, Celeste, and Hannah at the end of their second year in administration. Two questions were posed: How was your second year as a vice-principal? How did your experiences during your second year different from your first year?

The second administrative year for Gina, Hannah, and Celeste was marred with labour problems among the BCTF and the British Columbia Public Schools Employee Association (BCPSEA) and the provincial government. The collective agreement between the teachers and the school districts had expired the previous June; however, a new contract had not been signed when the school year commenced. Although representatives of the BCTF and BCPSEA met several times during the negotiation
period, many issues were not resolved. Because of the stalled negotiations, teachers throughout the province engaged in various job actions. During the first term, teachers did not supervise extra-curricular activities, write report cards, or attend administrative staff meetings among other job actions. At the beginning of February, the provincial government circumvented the negotiation process and legislated a new contract between the teachers and the school districts. However, according to the BCTF, many teachers were upset and angry at the response of the government. This issue affected all three schools in this study during the vice-principals' second year in administration. The following summaries offer views of the vice-principals' second year in administration.

**Gina**

Gina reported that she had a much clearer understanding of her role and how to perform it more effectively during her second year. She had learned the necessary management skills; she knew how to order the supplies and furniture. Furthermore, she felt she possessed more influence with the teachers because she had established herself as an effective leader during the first year. She had looked forward to working with Harry because they agreed to meet and develop a plan for the school year. When Gina and Harry met to discuss the agenda for the first staff meeting, Harry claimed he did not have any topics to place on the agenda because he had nothing to say to the staff. Harry continued to be a laissez-faire leader. Instead, Gina set the agenda because she needed to discuss several activities with the staff. The beginning of the school year
began the same way the previous school year had ended. Gina was organizing and managing events and activities in the school.

Gina claimed that her school year was progressing as expected until Harry went on leave in January and was absent for the remainder of the school year. Based on Harry’s recommendation, the assistant superintendent for McCleery appointed Gina as acting principal. In addition to assuming the responsibilities of the principalship, Gina had to manage the school during and after the labour dispute. Moreover, she reported that she had to correct budgetary mistakes Harry had made during the previous 15 months. Because the teachers were not engaging in extracurricular activities during the labour action, Gina supervised all of the programs for the kids (e.g., student council, rainy day recess).

The second half of the school year was difficult for Gina. She claimed the contract dispute was the main factor for the problems that she encountered. Initially, Gina called Harry for advice and guidance; however, she ceased calling him because he was unhelpful. She stressed that other administrators could not assist her because they were unsure how to respond to the job actions. Instead, Gina frequently called the district office for advice. She claimed that the contract problems caused her workload to increase.

Furthermore, Gina maintained that she felt more isolated from the teachers during her second year and after she became the acting principal. Her relationships with the teachers were difficult. When Gina called administration meetings and presented information or made proposals to the teachers, they reacted by meeting without her to discuss the situation, then responded to her proposals. Gina stressed that
the teachers did not appreciate how trying her situation was and how much work she
did for the school. She alleged that the teachers did not realize how much she planned
and organized school activities and events. Gina was disconcerted that she spent 80%
of her time on human resource issues and solving problems for the staff. She informed
the teachers that she had become an administrator to help kids. Gina claimed that the
students were her priority and supporting teachers was secondary. This caused conflict
because the teachers believed the administrators’ primary role was supporting
teachers. Gina and the teachers emphasized the importance of administrative support
of teachers during the interviews during the previous school year. Gina felt she was
spending too much time on teacher issues directly related to the job action and not
enough time on student issues and concerns (e.g. reading program, computers).

Gina claimed that her age and gender influenced how the teachers treated her.
During her first year, Gina had discussed her age, but not her gender. Gina reported
that her age was problematic because she was not sure how to speak to some of the
older teachers on staff; she needed to learn to deal with different situations. Gina
reported that she had done some leadership activities in the school, such as supporting
the literacy program, and obtaining computers for the school, but she stopped
performing these tasks when she knew she was transferring to another school for her
third year as vice-principal. Vice-principals usually transfer to another school after
their second or third year in one location.

Gina reflected on how Harry had influenced her first year in administration. In
retrospect, she reported that Harry had given her too much freedom to do what she
wanted. He rarely offered Gina any guidance or feedback. As a result, Gina
maintained that she learned little about administration in her relationship with Harry. Harry's laissez-faire approach to leadership did not help Gina develop leadership skills. Gina reported that she wanted to transfer to a new school where the principal would mentor her; she wanted the opportunity to discuss situations with someone. Gina is looking forward to her new assignment because she met with the current vice-principal of the school she was being assigned to for her third year as vice-principal. He shared a list of tasks and responsibilities that the vice-principal performed in the school. Gina was relieved that her new job had some parameters for her to work within. Gina felt she needed guidance and mentoring in her vice-principal role; Harry had not provided this for her.

Celeste

Celeste reported feeling more confident about her job during her second year. Celeste had developed credibility and influence with the staff during her first year. She had accomplished this by supporting teachers in various ways (e.g., obtaining materials, allocated finances, organizing events). Additionally, she used her interpersonal skills to interact with the teachers. During the second year, she continued to emphasize that her style was different than the style of her predecessor. She knew how to order supplies and furniture; these tasks did not require as much time as the previous year. Celeste made all of the decisions in the school that pertained to its overall management.

The Ashland teachers participated in the union job actions. Meetings between administration and teachers were cancelled; however, the school climate was upbeat
throughout the school year. No animosity between administration and the teaching staff at Ashland existed because of the attitudes and actions of the vice-principal and principal toward the staff. Gil and Celeste sought the input of the teachers throughout the job action period. They met with the union representative on a regular basis to discuss the situation and its effect on the school. Celeste wrote morning memos that the teachers read when they signed in for work. These memos included information about events in the school. Teachers were invited to participate in the events, but they were not pressured to do so. They did not use their power to force the teachers to take any actions. This worked to the advantage of Celeste because she organized all of the events and activities during the school year. Celeste presented the plans to the teachers; letting them decide on their level of involvement. This way the teachers were not pressured to organize activities, but they could participate in them. Celeste continued this practice throughout the school year. For example, she developed the supervision schedule and organized sports day. As a result, teachers became of aware of her organizational skills. Although Celeste described her leadership style as a “benevolent dictator,” she spent her time planning, organizing, and facilitating school events.

Celeste did many things for the teachers to build credibility and trust. She honoured the history and culture of the school by listening to and responding to the teachers who had taught in the school for many years. Celeste reported that she used several strategies to influence teachers. Celeste gathered information by talking with teachers, solved problems for teachers, and acknowledged their contributions with gifts and notes. Celeste talked about reaching people through thinking about how
things might affect them, and then planning accordingly. She maintained that the teachers appreciated some of the small things she did, like providing snacks for meetings.

Celeste continued to use her facilitative power to financially support and obtain resources for a new group of teachers who were willing to take risks. She publicly thanked the union representative for a successful school year. She was attentive to the needs of teachers; she was diligent about securing substitute teachers throughout the school year. Celeste wanted to instill an attitude of fun in the school, and she was instrumental in maintaining and promoting a positive school atmosphere. During reading week, she dressed up as several book characters. Several teachers followed her lead. Celeste claimed that the teachers felt like she was in the trenches with them, working with them. They did not think she was using her position to become a principal.

Even though the school enrollment decreased by 150 students, discipline of children continued to be a problem during this school year. Celeste claimed that the teachers wanted a tougher stance from administration. However, Gil continued to oppose this approach.

The leadership of the principal was a common theme of this interview. Celeste reported that the principal was on the sidelines throughout most of the school year. She maintained that Gil trusted her to oversee the daily operations of Ashland. She claimed he lacked the interpersonal skills to relate to the staff. Furthermore, he had separated himself from the staff and was less accessible to the teachers. Celeste reported that the teachers would approach her to make decisions and solve problems
rather than Gil. However, she kept him abreast of everything that occurred in the school. Celeste reported that Gil had an excellent reputation in the district and in the local administrators’ association; she claimed that her relationship with the Gil would help her to become a principal. According to Celeste, the assistant superintendent regularly sought out Gil’s opinions on important district issues during the monthly area meetings.

Celeste was looking forward to her third year as vice-principal. She expected to raise the academic expectations of the students, increase the involvement of parents in literacy, ensure teaching consistency across a grade level, and influence the teachers to commit to higher academic standards. She offered to mentor other vice-principals during her third year. During the second school year, Celeste continued to focus on supporting the teachers; however, she was able to focus more on the students because Celeste planned most of the activities in the school. Celeste had begun to focus more on the students; nevertheless, she continued to support the teachers.

Hannah

Hannah reported that she and Josh, the new principal at Woodlawn, shared similar philosophies about education and were a closer match than Hannah and Jane. Josh worked more collaboratively with the teachers than Jane did. He was transparent about his feelings, processes, thinking, and decision-making in the school. He gave out more information to the teachers, and paid attention to process and procedure. Josh was adept at letting people know that he valued them and their opinions. Teachers felt more comfortable about expressing their opinions. Josh involved Hannah in more
administrative responsibilities than Jane had; he valued her opinion because she was at Woodlawn the previous school year. Hannah maintained that she had learned valuable information from Josh regarding school leadership.

Hannah reported that she was more open with the staff during her second year. She had stayed in the background more during her first year. She freely shared her opinions with the staff during her second year. The teachers asked Hannah more leadership type questions and they asked her permission to do things because of her position in the school hierarchy. Hannah claimed there were still “Woodlawn moments” in which people exhibited uncooperative behaviours. However, Hannah took the lead to discuss those behaviours. In the past, some of the teachers talked about each other; this had caused negative feelings and undermined the collegiality among the staff. Hannah discussed this behaviour openly with the teachers by calling it triangulating. She reported that because the staff started to discuss the problems, teachers were less likely to engage in this behaviour. The staff acknowledged their inability to follow through on plans that they had approved. This openness and critical reflection influenced the climate in the school.

Hannah stated that September 11 had an impact on the school because of the many nationalities represented in the school population. The teachers and administrators discussed a school community in terms of a peaceful community. Hannah had invited a school speaker for professional development day to talk about how to maintain healthy relationships in the school. This sparked discussions among the teachers throughout the school year. The speech helped the teachers talk openly about their relationships with each other. This was a crucial turning point for the
teachers at Woodlawn because they had identified improving collegiality and collaboration among the staff as viable goals. Hannah had tried to help the staff become more collegial during her first year.

Hannah maintained that she and Josh were viewed as union-friendly by the teachers in the school and by the EETU. The teachers and administrators felt like they were in the situation together. They did not ask the teachers to do anything that might cause them to violate the job action. They checked with the union representatives before they moved forward on school issues or on making decisions. They maintained good communication with the teachers throughout the job action. Although some discord occurred among the teachers about the job action, Hanna and Josh did not become involved in it. Committee meetings were held throughout the school year; however, extracurricular activities were cancelled. When Hannah and Josh delivered a message from the district office, they neutralized the language if it was inflammatory. Teachers felt emotionally safe and supported in an unsafe environment due to the job action and negotiations.

Hannah discussed her third year in administration. She was looking forward to working with Josh for another school year. Hannah was going to remain very involved in the school community. She was working closely with parents and other community members.

Gina, Celeste, and Hannah were confident about their roles at the beginning of their second year as vice-principals. The vice-principals possessed the knowledge and experience to perform their administrative tasks, roles, and responsibilities. They were not overwhelmed or stressed during the first few months of the second year, as they
had been during the first year. None of the vice-principals were enrolling classes; they were resource teachers.

Interestingly, Celeste and Hannah discussed their second year as administrators from similar philosophical positions that they expressed during their first administrative year even though the labour actions by the teachers had considerable impact on the vice-principals’ experiences. However, because Gina was the acting principal during the second term of the school year, her experience was different from those of Celeste and Hannah.

Administrative and positional authority was a prevalent topic during my interview with Gina. In general, the teachers were not responding to Gina’s efforts in the school. Based on Gina’s comments about her struggles with the teachers and the teachers’ labour actions, her inexperience as an administrator contributed to some of the problems she encountered. Appointing Gina, second year vice-principal, to the acting principal position seemed to be an imprudent decision.

Despite the contract dispute, Celeste and Hannah had good relationships with the teachers during their second year. Celeste reported that she had become influential in the school because she organized all of the school events during the labour actions. Gaining, maintaining, and using influence to work with teachers was a key element of her success during the second year. She expressed confidence regarding initiating changes in the school during her third year as vice-principal.

Using facilitative power to work with and support teachers, and to improve the school atmosphere continued to be a primary goal during Hannah’s second year in administration. She focused on working with the staff and using her authority and
facilitative/authority to support the teachers. Hannah achieved success in helping them to become a more collaborative and collegial staff.

Because of the length of these interviews, I did not explore all of the issues that I was able to address during my initial study. However, a final comment is warranted regarding power and leadership. Because the vice-principals appeared to use the same style of leadership they adopted during their first year as administrators, two of my initial recommendations are worth highlighting. Vice-principals need to be aware of and understand what types of power they use in their relationships with the teachers. Furthermore, the vice-principals need to understand consequences of exercising different types of power because they elicit different responses from teachers. Additionally, school districts with characteristics like Evergreen need to develop a succinct and comprehensive leadership statement. The teachers need to participate in the development of the statement.
References


Vann, B. J. (1999). Micropolitics in the United Kingdom: Can a principal ever be expected to be “one of us?” School Leadership and Management, 19(2), 201-204.


West, M. (1999). Micropolitics, leadership and all that... the need to increase the micropolitical awareness and skills of school leaders. *School Leadership and Management, 19*(2), 189-95.


### Appendix A: Research Activities and Time Allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Observations (hours observing and transcribing notes)</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Field notes</th>
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<td><strong>October</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 schools 4 hours per week</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 school 6 hours per month</td>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November, December, January, February, March (17 weeks)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 schools 5 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 school 7 hours every 2 weeks</td>
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<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April, May, June (six weeks)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 schools 7 hours every 2 weeks</td>
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<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of days in schools</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashland - 23 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>McCleery - 24 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodlawn - 15 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>Transcribe</td>
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<tr>
<td>October, January, June</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Vice-principals 3 times for 2.0 hours</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April &amp; May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Principals 1 time for 1.5 hours</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>January to April</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Teachers 1 time/ for 1.0 hour</td>
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<td>67.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Senior administrators 1 time for 1.0 hour</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>May &amp; June</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 other first-year vice-principals 1 time/1.5 hours</td>
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<td><strong>Document Review</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher contract/Code of ethics</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators contract &amp; history of administration association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government information: School Act, Bill 19, &amp; Bill 20, College of Teachers &amp; Teachers Professional Act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Information: staff minutes, newsletters, school profile, daily bulletin, Accreditation report, administrators’ goals.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>District information: general information, leadership philosophy &amp; programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total hours</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain Records (5 hours/week for 38 weeks)</td>
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- 2.5 hrs. of transcription/1 hour tape
### Appendix B: Chronology of research activities

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Who, When, Where</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>17/1</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ Woodlawn 7:00 - 9:20 observed parent meeting; principal, vice-principal, several teachers, 8 parents</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/1</td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td>committee member asked for advice about observation comments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/1</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ McCleery 8:30-3:00 pro d planning committee meeting</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/1</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>teacher @ McCleery 3:15-4:20 grade 6/7 teacher</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/1</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ Ashland 11:50-3:30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/1</td>
<td>presentation</td>
<td>teachers @ Ashland 9:10-9:50 EUOT presentation to staff. Time at school 8:15-11:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>24/1</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>teacher @ McCleery 2:00-2:45 Chair of staff meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>25/1</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ McCleery 8:30-4:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/1</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>teacher @ Ashland 12:15-1:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/1</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>teacher @ McCleery 2:15-3:30 in her classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>29/1</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ Ashland observed VP 8:15-3:30 spent more time in the office alone than has been typical</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/1</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>teacher @ Ashland 1240-2:00 in tch’s room; she did not go to a class</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/1</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>teacher @ Ashland 3:30-4:20 in her classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/1</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ McCleery 8:15-4:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/1</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ Woodlawn 8:00-2:00 mtg w/ teacher for evaluation at 2:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>visit for inte</td>
<td>Carleton interview cancelled, scheduled interview w/unio rep; gave out interview summaries; talked to VP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>phone call</td>
<td>VP @ home Evening-wanted to schedule visit for next day, R going snow shoeing; discussed vp meeting at explained why I should not go.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6/2</td>
<td>phone call</td>
<td>VP @ home VP not feeling well; won’t return to McCleery for mtg.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/2</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ Ashland shadowed vp from 8:05 to 3:30; did interview w/tchr from11:30-12:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/2</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>counsellor @ Ashlan 11:30-12:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>teacher @ Ashland 12:10-1:25 Turned tape recorder many times</td>
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<td>9/2</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>teacher @ Ashland 1:30-2:35</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ McCleery observation 8:15-3:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>13/2</td>
<td>observation</td>
<td>VP @ Woodlawn observation 8:00-3:40 – SAC mgt 8:00-8:40</td>
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## Appendix C: School Observations Days and Times

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<th></th>
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<td>Mon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 4</td>
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<td>Dec 11 8:30-3:00 6.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>8:00-3:00 7</td>
<td>Jan 22 11:50-3:45 3.75</td>
<td>Oct 24 9:00-12:00 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 12</td>
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<td>Jan 29 8:15-3:30 7.25</td>
<td>Feb 13 8:00-3:40 7.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
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<td>Feb 26 12:40-4:30 4.00</td>
<td>Feb 28 8:40-2:45 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.25</td>
<td>May 7 8:20-4:10 7.75</td>
<td>Apr 3 8:20-3:00 6.5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>June 18 8:30-4:00 7.50</td>
<td>June 19 8:00-4:00 8</td>
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<td>Tues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 26</td>
<td>8:15-3:15 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 10</td>
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<td>Oct 17 10:00-3:00 5</td>
<td>Oct 24 9:00-12:00 3</td>
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<td>Jan 30</td>
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<td>Apr 3 8:20-3:00 6.5</td>
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<td>Mar 6</td>
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<td>Mar 13 8:15-12:05 3.75</td>
<td>June 19 8:00-4:00 8</td>
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<td>Mar 27 8:15-1:30 5.25</td>
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<td></td>
<td>May 22 8:15-4:00 7.75</td>
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<td>Wed.</td>
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<td>Nov 1</td>
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<td>Oct 11 12:30-2:40 2</td>
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<td>Jan 17 7:00-9:20 2.5</td>
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<td>Feb 8 8:05-3:30 7.5</td>
<td>May 23 11:00-5:00 6</td>
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<td>June 7 8:15-4:00 7.75</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
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<td>Dec 21 12:45-2:00 1.25</td>
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<td>Nov 9</td>
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<td>Nov 16 8:20-1:30 5</td>
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<td>Dec 14</td>
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<td>June 7 8:15-4:00 7.75</td>
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<td>Apr 19</td>
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<td>8:15-2:00 5.75</td>
<td>Dec 1 8:30-3:30 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 19</td>
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## Appendix D: Vice-Principal's Schedule

### McCleery

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrives</td>
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<td>7:40/7:45</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
<td>8:30-10:40</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Area mtg 1/month</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>District mtg 4/year</td>
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<td>Teaching</td>
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<td>9:00-10:20</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:40-12:00</td>
<td>dismissal 12:00</td>
<td>10:40-12:00</td>
<td>12:55-3:05</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>staff mtg (1 per month)</td>
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<td>Teaching</td>
<td>12:55-3:05</td>
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<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>cmt mtgs held @ lunch</td>
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<td>12:55-3:05</td>
<td>12:55-3:05</td>
<td>12:55-3:05</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Ashland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Team</th>
<th>Supervision</th>
<th>Supervision</th>
<th>Supervision</th>
<th>Supervision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:47</td>
<td>8:00-8:47</td>
<td>8:00-8:47</td>
<td>8:00-8:47</td>
<td>8:00-8:47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-1:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super 3:00-3:20</td>
<td>Super 3:00-3:20</td>
<td>Super 3:00-3:20</td>
<td>Super 3:00-3:20</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Woodlawn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrives</td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Arrives</td>
<td>Arrives</td>
<td>Arrives</td>
<td>Arrives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>7:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>8:30-9:05</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Area mtg 1/month</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:30-9:05</td>
<td>8:30-3:00</td>
<td>District mtg 4/year</td>
<td>8:30-9:05</td>
<td>8:30-9:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>9:05:10:25</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Area mtg 1/month</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess duty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recess duty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recess duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>10:45-12:00</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:45-12:00</td>
<td>10:45-12:00</td>
<td>10:45-12:00</td>
<td>10:45-12:00</td>
<td>10:45-12:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-12:45</td>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-12:45</td>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-12:45</td>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-12:45</td>
<td>Cafeteria and recess duty 12:00-12:45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>1:25-2:45</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Early dismissal</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:25-2:45</td>
<td>1:25-2:45</td>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>1:25-2:45</td>
<td>1:25-2:45</td>
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<td></td>
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325
### Appendix E: Interaction Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>845</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>po</td>
<td>tchr prob</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>vp gave tchr info on IEPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>845</td>
<td>cut</td>
<td>po</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>846</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>basketball team 10 not 13 players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>850-904</td>
<td>pat</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>stu prob</td>
<td>tel</td>
<td>parent talked student’s work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>905</td>
<td>stu</td>
<td>csr</td>
<td>prepare material</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>gave book to student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>906-911</td>
<td>rt</td>
<td>csr/hwy</td>
<td>stu prob</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>discussing helping stu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911-915</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>several topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>919</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>talked briefly about interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>921</td>
<td>pr</td>
<td>hwy</td>
<td>give advice</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>VP told P not to lift anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>924</td>
<td>sec</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>seek info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>address of food bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>926</td>
<td>stu</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>give info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>about basketball jerseys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>930</td>
<td>pr/sec-</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>seek info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>requests for furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>931</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>about filing system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>932</td>
<td>sec-</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>seek info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>requisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>933</td>
<td>sec</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>seek info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>looking for requisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>935</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>realized order wasn’t placed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>939</td>
<td>other admin</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>seek info</td>
<td>tel</td>
<td>need info on tote trays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>942-944</td>
<td>sec</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>seek info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>discussion about rekeying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>945-951</td>
<td>ct</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>seek info</td>
<td>tel</td>
<td>info on project love from teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>952-954</td>
<td>sec-</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>discuss issue</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>discuss time for fundraising cmt mtg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>955-1000</td>
<td>pr</td>
<td>po</td>
<td>sch issue</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>discussing prostitute problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>pr</td>
<td>po</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1006-1010</td>
<td>com direct</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>announcement on intercom for bball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1010</td>
<td>stu</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>icm</td>
<td>wants to know about bball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1011</td>
<td>ct</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>seek info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>talked for 5-10 minutes, NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1015</td>
<td>ct</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1044</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>told Gina there was a snack in the lounge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1045</td>
<td>sec</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>casual</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>sweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1046</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>green behaviour chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1047-1054</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>bkrm</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>shared about IEP and LAC teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1055</td>
<td>ct</td>
<td>hwy</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>check for bball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100-1111</td>
<td>other vp</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>make request</td>
<td>tel</td>
<td>ordering books, how vp jobs are similar and different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1112</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>vpo</td>
<td>share info</td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>cost of books, what vps know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix F: Observation Form Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pr- principal</td>
<td>pat parent</td>
<td>gym gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sec- secretary</td>
<td>stu- student</td>
<td>mo main office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rt- resource teacher</td>
<td>cut custodian</td>
<td>po principal office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ct-classroom teach</td>
<td>ED work in district</td>
<td>csr- classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>st tchr student teac</td>
<td>vis- visitor</td>
<td>plg playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e- researcher</td>
<td>ck – cook</td>
<td>wkr- workroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share/seek/receive info</th>
<th>General information given, shared, or received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stu problem</td>
<td>Any student problem (i.e., hurt, parent, phone call) not student discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discipline</td>
<td>Vp is disciplining a student for behaviour reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher/parent problem</td>
<td>Anything that the teachers wants to vp to help solve a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss issue</td>
<td>Vp and other person exchange ideas about something, not student discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supervise</td>
<td>Vp supervise students outside of classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teach/coach</td>
<td>Vp teaching classes; Vp coaching sports team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seek/give advice</td>
<td>Ask other persons for advice about issue; Vp gives others advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seek/give assistance</td>
<td>Help to do something or receive help doing something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make/receive request</td>
<td>Ask someone to do something and it is done; Vp receives request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make decision</td>
<td>Make decision about anything in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepare material</td>
<td>Get material ready for class or meetings (i.e., make copies, type report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give/receive praise</td>
<td>The vp compliments someone or vice-versa; i.e., job well done, thanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give/receive direction</td>
<td>Give directions/orders to other persons; or vp is directed (i.e., by principal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix G: Meetings vice-principals attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>McCleery</th>
<th>Ashland</th>
<th>Woodlawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff meeting</td>
<td>1/month</td>
<td>Every 3 weeks,</td>
<td>1/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>1/month in spring</td>
<td>1st Fri. of month</td>
<td>1/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School based team</td>
<td>bimonthly</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>1/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner-city</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>weekly</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-PV</td>
<td>Infrequently</td>
<td>brief interactions</td>
<td>Infrequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro D</td>
<td>6-7 x/year</td>
<td>6-7 x/year</td>
<td>6-7 x/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>as needed</td>
<td>as needed</td>
<td>as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget/Resource</td>
<td>as needed</td>
<td>as needed</td>
<td>as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1/month</td>
<td>2 meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area mtg</td>
<td>1/month</td>
<td>1/month</td>
<td>1/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District mtg</td>
<td>bimonthly</td>
<td>bimonthly</td>
<td>bimonthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators’ mtg</td>
<td>1/month-dinner</td>
<td>1/month-dinner</td>
<td>1/month-dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assembly, behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix H: Meetings researcher attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>McCleery</th>
<th>Ashland</th>
<th>Woodlawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School-based team</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner-city</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Oct. Nov.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. &amp; Mar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline-students</td>
<td>regularly</td>
<td>every visit</td>
<td>occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies</td>
<td>Nov. &amp; Mar.</td>
<td>Oct. &amp; April</td>
<td>Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget/Resource</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Synopsis of district document

School administrative leaders are expected to do the following: be able to articulate a school vision, facilitate collaborative goal setting, be an impetus for change, be an instructional leader, plan for purposeful staff development, operate and manage a school efficiently and effectively, establish a positive, professional and collegial school culture, cooperate and foster mutual respect with the school community, be able to communicate effectively, motivate staff and students, anticipate and solve problems, implement policies and procedures for students, parents and the school; and demonstrate professionalism and self and social awareness. Moreover, school leaders should possess the following characteristics: dedication, flexibility, innovativeness, integrity, intelligence, judgement, knowledge, openness to change, patience, political astuteness, persistence/stamina, self-confidence, sensitivity, stress tolerance, tolerance of ambiguity, and vision.
Appendix J: Interview Questions for Vice Principals

October

- Background information of the vice-principal: age, gender, teaching experiences (e.g., grade levels, subject areas, involvement in curriculum development or district initiatives).
- How have you prepared yourself for administration? (e.g., university degree, district leadership program,
- Why did you want to become an administrator? Who or what influenced you to become an administrator?
- Describe your role as the vice-principal. What are your teaching and administrative responsibilities? What percentage of the time do you teach?
- What are your perceptions, expectations, attitudes, and beliefs about the role of the vice-principal, about the role of school leaders?
- What are your goals as a vice principal?
- Will you describe your philosophy of education? What do you see as the primary goals and purposes of education?
- How would you describe a successful school leader?
- What do you know about the culture and history of the school? Will either affect your experiences as a first-year administrator? How?
- Are there any issues that the teachers and administrators have different opinions?
- What committees are you a member of? What is the purpose of the committee? How often do committees meet? What types of decisions are made in each committee? What is your role on the committees that you serve?
- How are participatory leadership and/or shared decision-making practiced in your school? What decisions in the school are made by teachers? What decisions are made by administration? What decisions are made by both teachers and administrations?
- What are some of the key issues in the school that are being discussed by teachers and administrators? (i.e. Foundations Skills Assessment, PAC, Accreditation)

January

- How has the history and culture of the school affected how you have adapted and adjusted to administration during the first five months of this school year?
- What are some things that you have done this year that has been successful you been as the vice-principal?
- Who or what has affected your transition into administration? (e.g., individuals or groups, and critical incidents)
- As a vice-principal, you have teaching responsibilities and administrative duties. What effect, if any, has this had on becoming a vice-principal?
How would you describe your relationship with the teachers? How does your relationship with the teachers affect your transition into administration? Does the collective bargaining agreement affect you as vice-principal?

How would you describe your relationship with the principal? How does this relationship affect your transition from teaching to administration? The principal is your supervisor and evaluator. Does this affect your relationship with him/her?

How are participatory leadership and/or shared decision-making practiced in your school? What decisions in the school are made by teachers? What decisions are made by administration? What decisions are made by both teachers and administrations?

If there are different views regarding specific issues, how are the issues resolved? What is the role of administration in resolving issues?

How has decision making evolved in the committees? What was your role?

What type of support system do you have (e.g., other vice-principals, principal, teacher, district office administrator, spouse, partner, BCPVPA)? Will you describe how individual(s) or groups have supported you?

June

How has the history and culture of the school affected how you have adapted and adjusted to administration during this school year?

How have the teachers affected your transition into administration?

How has the principal affected your transition into administration?

Were there any critical incidents that affected you?

Has the decision making process changed throughout the year? What is your view of how decisions are made in the school?

How has decision making evolved in the committees? What was your role?

What issues or topics were resolved this year? How were issues resolved? What were the outcomes?

How effective and successful do you feel you have been this year as vice-principal? Evaluate your performance. What, if anything, would you have done differently?

What are your plans for next school year? How have your expectations matched your experience? What was unexpected?
Appendix K: Interview Questions for School Principal

- Background Information: age, gender, teaching and administrative experience, education, number of vice-principals principal has worked with, and mentoring.
- Background information of the history, culture and micropolitics of the school.
- What is the role of administration in the school? What are the responsibilities of administrators that are different from the teachers’ responsibilities? What is the district’s philosophy of leadership?
- Can you describe your leadership style? How does your leadership style affect the teachers and the operations of the school?
- How are participatory leadership and/or shared decision-making practiced in your school? What decisions in the school do teachers make? What decisions are made by administration? What decisions do both teachers and administrations make?
- What are your expectations of a first-year vice-principal? What type of support does the vice-principal receive?
- How do you determine the vice-principal’s duties and responsibilities?
- As a principal, how do you influence a vice-principal’s transition into administration? How do the teachers affect the vice-principal’s transition into administration?
- Has the collective bargaining agreement affected the vice-principal’s adjustment to administration?

Appendix L: Interview Questions for Senior Administrator

- Background information: teaching and administrative experience.
- What are the criteria for choosing administrators?
- What is the district’s philosophy of leadership and management? How are new vice-principals trained?
- Background information on the leadership program: philosophy, history, goals, and purpose.
- How does the leadership program inform first-year administrators about their role?
- What are the expectations of new administrators, particularly new elementary vice-principals?
- How do teachers and the union contract affect vice-principal’s transition into administration?
- What are some of the typical problems that first year vice-principals encounter?
- What advice would you give first-year vice-principals regarding their relationship with teachers?
Appendix M: Interview Questions for Teachers

- Background information: age, gender, number of years in school, involvement in school/member of committees, and teaching experiences, (e.g., grade levels and subject areas).
- Background information on the history, culture and micropolitics of the school, relationship between teachers and administrators.
- How would you describe an effective and successful administrator? What are some characteristics he or she would possess? Would these characteristics be similar for the vice-principal and the principal?
- What is your opinion of the vice-principal's predecessor?
- What are your expectations of the new vice-principal?
- Does the collective bargaining agreement affect the relationship between administration and the teachers? How?
- Does the teaching staff affected the vice-principal’s adjustment into administration? How?
- How are administrators use their power and influence in the school?
- How do teachers use their power and influence in the school?
- How has the collective bargaining agreement affected the vice-principal’s transition into administration? Are there any issues that the teachers and administrators have different opinions?
- How effective is the function of committees in the school?
- Can you talk about the decision-making practiced in your school? What decisions in the school are made by teachers?
- Has the vice-principal been successful this year? Why or why not?
- What advice would you give first-year vice-principals regarding their relationship with teachers?
### Appendix N: Teacher demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
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