DOES LEADERSHIP MATTER?:

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TO A SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE, BULLYING, AND FIGHTING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

by

Jonathan M. Leff

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of

the College of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Florida Atlantic University

Boca Raton, Florida

May 2014

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This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Department of Educational Leadership & Research Methodology, and has been approved by the members of his supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Ed.D.
Dissertation Chair

Ira Bogotch, Ed.D.

John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Robert Shockley, Ph.D.

Robert Shockley, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Educational Leadership & Research Methodology

Valerie J. Bristor, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education

Deborah L. Floyd, Ed.D.
Interim Dean, Graduate College

April 2, 2014
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Oh boy…where do I begin? This has been one of the most profound experiences of my life, and there is an amazing collection of people I would like to thank from the center of my heart. First, my wife Sharin, my son Ryan and my daughter Jessica: you are the reason I wake up every morning and strive to be the best person I can be—both personally and professionally. I love you unconditionally.

Second, I would like to thank Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski. Your inspiration, professionalism, ethical standards, guidance, knowledge, and patience have illuminated the path I travelled the last seven years. I would also like to thank Dr. Bogotch, Dr. Morris, and Dr. Shockley for volunteering their time to serve as my dissertation committee. I have had the honor to sit in each of your classes during my doctoral studies, and in every way each of you demonstrate true passion for school leadership, and you have impacted my life and I am forever grateful.

Third, I would like to thank my **entire** family for supporting me these last seven years. I missed baseball games, school performances, birthdays, and family vacations and you all understood and supported my continuing education. I love you all.

Fourth, I would like to thank my doctoral cohort with whom I share this dissertation. You were all there at the beginning, and for those of you that finished, Congratulations! I join you now. For those of you still working – DO NOT GIVE UP!!!!!

All of you are forever in my heart. I want to especially acknowledge Dr. Angela Iudica for keeping my ducks in a row when they began to scatter all over the pond.

Last, but certainly not least (well, maybe least), I would like to thank the *inspirational motivation* (if you will permit me a small Avolio and Bass pun) behind this dissertation—my middle school bully, M.V. It's a long time since 1981, when I was that little seventh grade boy that you towered over and used to frighten the hell out of just to see cry. I can still recall in my mind's eye our hallway encounters and the state I was left in after you were through tormenting me. I still look over my shoulders from time to time—just to make sure. Why did you hate me so much? What did I ever do to you for you to treat me so horribly? The hardest part about all of this is I never stood up to you and defended myself, which has left an everlasting imprint that I have lived with since middle school. This dissertation is dedicated to you because I have found a way to "fight back" and ensure that no one gets hurt in the process.

ABSTRACT

Author:	Jonathan M. Leff
Title:	Does Leadership Matter?: The Relationship of School Leadership to a Safe School Climate, Bullying, and Fighting in Middle School
Institution:	Florida Atlantic University
Dissertation Chair:	Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski
Degree:	Doctor of Philosophy
Year:	2014

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a relationship between transformational principal leadership style, a safe school climate, and school safety (specifically, the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents) in Broward County, Florida's middle schools. This study also investigated if a relationship exists between transformational leadership and a safe school climate, transformational leadership, and the number of bullying incidents and student fights, and a safe school climate and the number of bullying incidents and student fights.

The study surveyed 12 middle schools located in a large, urban district in south Florida. Principal leadership style was determined from the MLQ-5X, school safety climate was determined from the school district's Annual Customer Survey, and the reported number of fights and bullying incidents recorded in the school district's

Discipline Management System were collected via records request for each participating middle school and tallied.

Pearson correlations were conducted to examine the bivariate association between the leadership dimensions, a safe school climate, and school violence. Separate multiple linear regression models were used to examine the following relationships: leadership style and the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents; leadership style and a safe school climate; and a safe school climate and the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents.

The findings suggested that there were no statistically significant correlations between leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), and bullying or fighting, and no statistically significant correlation between principal leadership style and middle school climate. There was a statistically significant correlation found between school climate and the number of student fights. The significance of this finding is important because it illustrates the adverse impact fighting has on student safety, which, in turn, adversely affects the school climate. Therefore, it is up to the school leader to create a climate where everyone feels safe can focus on student achievement.

DOES LEADERSHIP MATTER?:
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LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1: Introduction

Our nation's schools should be safe and orderly environments that are conducive to learning and free of violent behavior and criminal activity (Robers, Zhang, & Truman, 2010). "Over 13 million kids will be bullied this year, making it the most common form of violence experienced by young people in the nation" (Hirsch & Lowen, [Producers of *BULLY*], 2011). *BULLY*, the first full-length documentary-style film to capture bullying in school, has become the next medium in exposing the lives of children who are bullied in school. Filmed over the course of the 2009–2010 school year, *BULLY* followed the stories of five families and their traumatic experiences with bullying in the schoolhouse.

Over the last decade, lack of discipline and school violence have been cited as the worst problems confronting public schools (Gallup, 2009). Although the instances of violence vary in schools and communities, creating a safe, disciplined learning environment is a challenge for all school principals (Chavis, 2011; Lunenburg, 2010; Lunenburg & Irby, 2006; Melvin, 2012). This dissertation examined the relationship between middle school principal leadership style, school climate, and school safety.

The problem of school violence has been one of the most pressing educational issues in the United States (Rogers, 2004). Various forms of violent behavior are prevalent in all levels of schools and span the spectrum from school shootings, stabbings, and rape to bullying, harassment, fighting, and drug abuse to disobedience and defiance. Increasing violence, bullying, cyberbullying, and chaos in the classroom have become a

regular part of the school day for a growing number of students (Ayers, 2009; Barter, 2012; Carlson, 2011; Davis, 2010; Ellis, 2011; Espelage, 2011; Lane, 2011, Ludwig, 2011; Lunenburg, 2010; Scott-Coe, 2011; Shapiro, 2011).

Middle and high school administrators have been charged with reducing school violence while creating a safe atmosphere for students to engage in learning (Leinhardt & Willert, 2002). Research suggests that middle school students are more apt to feel unsafe where bullying may occur (Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver, 1992; Safer, 1986; Vargas, Henrich, & Meyers, 2009).

Transitioning from elementary school to middle school may be considered a critical life-changing event (Chung, Elias, & Schneider, 1998; Eccles et al., 1993) which most children confront during their school career (Lohaus, Ev Elben, Ball, & Klein-Hessling, 2004). Students are faced with a myriad of physical, psychological, physiological, and emotional changes. In addition, the influx of two or more elementary schools into one middle school create new social dynamics and challenges for students as they enter a world of multiple classes and passing periods, older classmates, and more freedom accompanied with more responsibility.

The middle school setting in the United States is typically designed for 10- to 14-year-olds and functions as its own organizational entity. Existing between two completely different institutions (elementary and high school), the middle school has its own social norms and structure. The dramatic changes (physical, psychological, and physiological) young adolescent students will undergo add to the leadership challenges of creating a safe school environment. Thus, there is a need to examine and further understand the unique

context of middle school and determine the relationship between transformational principal leadership style, school climate and school safety.

A significant portion of this study highlights the connection between middle school climate, a primal characteristic of an effective school, and educational leadership. It has been noted that an essential dimension of an effective school is a safe and orderly climate, especially an atmosphere of social and emotional health that respects and dignifies all school stakeholders. When explicitly defining a safe and orderly school climate, the principal is identified as a key factor (Allen, 1981, as cited in Moore, 1998; Barth, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1991, 1992a, 1992b; Sybouts & Wendel, 1994).

Leading a middle school is a multifaceted responsibility. Understanding that no school is impervious to violence, one of the principal's roles is to create a safe learning climate. According to the The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders, Standard 3 states that:

> A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring the management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, sufficient, and effective learning environment…. The administrator has knowledge and understanding of principles and issues related to safety and security. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. 12)

Based on the ISLLC standards in Florida, site of this study, the revised Florida Principal Leadership Standards (Domain 2, Standard 5a), state that:

> Effective school leaders structure and monitor a school learning environment that improves learning for all of Florida's diverse student population. The leader maintains a safe, respectful and inclusive student-centered learning environment that is focused on equitable opportunities for learning and building a foundation for a fulfilling life in a democratic society and global economy. (Florida School Leaders, 2010, p. 2)

In addition to the FPLS and ISLLC standards, the Educational Leadership Constituents Council (ELCC, 2002) created seven standards for advanced programs in educational leadership. Standard 2 states that:

> Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff. (ELCC, 2002, p. 4)

Moreover, Standard 3 addresses a safe learning environment:

> Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. (ELCC, 2002, p. 7)

A plethora of studies have examined the characteristics of effective schools and the effective school movement (Andrews & Morefield, 1991; Bell, 2001; Bliss, Firestone & Richards, 1991; Cohen, 1983; Edmonds, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983; Good & Brophy, 1986; Marzano, 2003; Peterson & Lezotte, 1991; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Their findings have concluded that two of the essential ingredients for student achievement are strong principal leadership and a structured and safe school environment.

School leadership makes a difference, and school-based administrators—principals and assistant principals—are central to developing and maintaining effective schools (Brewer, 1993).

The principal, according to Byrk and Schneider (2002) is "the single most influential actor in a given school community" (p. 26). The principal should be able to exercise leadership skills by inspiring, encouraging, and empowering others to perform at high levels of effectiveness and efficiency. One of the principal's essential tasks is to

model and promote behaviors that foster a healthy organizational climate. Effective principals that lead successful schools promote student achievement, professional development, enhance positive staff morale, and behave in an ethical manner that demonstrates genuine caring, respect, and trust.

A leader without ethics can create a toxic environment. Kanungo (2001) argued that ethical leaders act and behave in a manner that benefits others while simultaneously refraining from behaving in a manner that may cause harm to others. Ethical leadership, authentic leadership, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, and transformational leadership are all forms of leadership that research shows to have positive outcomes for leaders, followers, and organizations (Toor & Ofori, 2009).

Over the last two decades, educational leadership scholars also noted a variety of attributes and behaviors associated with positive leadership: character, honesty, integrity, altruism, trustworthiness, collective motivation, encouragement, morality, and justice (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman., 1999; Palanski & Yammarino, 2007; Resick, Hanges, Dickson, & Mitchelson, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2009; Toor & Ogunlana, 2008). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) further argued that transformational leaders have a moral character, strong concern for self and others, and ethical values, which are deeply embedded in their vision (as cited in Toor & Ofori, 2009). This study focused on Avolio and Bass's (1991) Full-Range Leadership Styles: Transactional, Transformational, and Laissez-Faire.

Transformational leadership identifies potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and authentically engages the full person of the follower. Transformational leadership entails the leader providing the vision, mission, and goals for

the organization, and then seeking buy-in from the organization's stakeholders (Seyfarth, 1999). A transformational leader strives to unite all stakeholders for the greater good of the organization.

Transformational leadership was originally conceptualized by James Macgregor Burns (1978). On one hand, Burns discovered that a leader could demonstrate transactional behaviors by exchanging things of value with subordinates in exchange for increased results (1979). On the other hand, Burns found that at the other end of the leadership spectrum, a leader could employ transformational leadership behaviors by engaging in behaviors with subordinates that would raise each other to "higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 382). Bernard Bass (1985a) elaborated on Burns' work and developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), a model where a leader can employ varying combinations of transactional and transformational behaviors as he or she felt they lie along a continuum (Bass & Avolio, 1990, p. 23). For this study, the MLQ-5X, which measures three areas of leadership behavior: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire, was used.

The style of leadership a principal employs is important because of the effect it may have on school climate (Clabough, 2006; Goens & Clover, 1991; Goldman, 1998). Moreover, school climate is important because of its effect on staff, students, and school effectiveness. In order for a school to be effective, the climate must be healthy and positive (Bulach & Malone, 1994; Clabough, 2006; Fullan, 1992; Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003; Goens & Clover, 1991; Halpin & Croft, 1963; Lambert, 2003; Leithwood, 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Conversely, Elliott, Hamburg, and Williams (1998) argued that violence in

schools can negatively impact on school climate. Although research suggests that there may be a relationship between school climate and violence in schools (Blum & Rinehart, 1997; Bonny, Britto, Klosterman, Hornung, & Slap, 2000; Clabough, 2006; Moore, 1998; Schapps & Solomon, 1990; Wilson, 2004), the relationship between principal leadership style and violence in schools is still unclear (Clabough, 2006; Moore, 1998; Wilson, 2004).

Educators have recognized the importance of school climate for a hundred years (National School Climate Center, 2007; Perry, 2009). School leaders that are effective, visible, and treat teachers, staff, students, and all school stakeholders with dignity and respect create a school climate that is conducive to learning, school attachment, and nonviolent behavior (Hamilton Fish Institute, 2001). Furthermore, school leaders that are innovative, provide adequate resources, and are actively involved in all aspects of violence prevention increase the likelihood of creating a safe and successful school environment (Hamilton Fish Institute). According to Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, and Hymel (2010), "School climate is an important consideration in understanding school bullying because adult supervision decreases as students move from elementary to middle and secondary school" (p. 39). Hence, the examination of middle school climate played a paramount role in this study.

Statement of the Problem

School violence is a recurring nationwide problem (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Fong, Vogel, & Vogel, 2008). The challenge for educational leaders is to create a positive school climate that responds to all children's academic needs, provide a safe and secure

campus where students can focus on their education, and reduce the amount of safety issues schools face on a daily basis.

Two of the most common types of violence encountered in middle schools are fighting and bullying. School bullying is perhaps the most severely underrated problem within an educational system (Quiroz, Arnette, & Stephans, 2006). Three decades of research have concluded that bullying causes an array of devastating consequences (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kogan, 2011; Mynard, Lawrence, & Joseph, 2000; Nishina, Juvonen, & Witkow, 2005; Olweus, 1980; Rigby & Slee, 2001; Roland, 2002; Sharp, Thompson, Arora, & Cho, 2000; Shellard & Turner, 2004) for both bullies and victims.

Bullying, according to Batsche and Knoff (1994), appears to peak in the middle school years. According to the American Psychological Association and the National Education Association, 7% of eighth graders stay home from school at least once a month to avoid a bullying situation (as cited in Vail, 1999). Other middle school students alter their paths to avoid encountering bullies (Wessler, 2003).

During the 2007–2008 school year, 25% of public schools reported that bullying occurred on a continuous basis. In addition, middle school students reported more bullying than primary or high schools (Robers et al., 2010). In addition to bullying, a middle school study reveals that 41% of students admitted to hitting or threatening to strike other students (Wilson & Lipsey, 2005). This is a concern to researchers because they are discovering that bullying and fighting are fairly common, especially among youth in their early teen years. This study focuses on fighting and bullying at the middle school level.

Researchers in the field of school violence concur that the body of conceptual and empirical work related to the contexts of school violence is growing and that more research is needed (Astor, Guerra, & Van Acker, 2010; Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999; Cornell, 2006a; Debarbieux & Cooke, 2007). Safety issues in schools should be studied in context because primary, middle, and high schools are contextually different regarding their philosophies, policies and procedures, teacher-child relationships, and beliefs about appropriate and expected behaviors (Astor, Benbenishty, & Estrada, 2009). The literature demonstrates that school types have a major impact on school safety issues (Astor, Benbenishty, Vinokur, & Zeira, 2006; Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001; Behre, Astor, & Meyer, 2001; Khoury-Kassabri, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2007a, 2007b; Marachi, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2007a, 2007b; Pepler, Smith, & Rigby, 2004; Scheithauer, Hayer, Peterman, & Jugert, 2006). Furlong and Morrison (2000) concluded that researchers are seeking a more in-depth, comprehensive understanding of the "school" in school violence to further understand the contributions of school context to school safety outcomes. For this study, the researcher focused on the middle school setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a relationship between transformational principal leadership style, a safe school climate (as measured by perceived school safety), and school safety (specifically, the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents) for middle schools in Broward County, Florida. Broward County Public Schools is the sixth largest school district in the country.

Research Questions

The overarching research question was: Is there a relationship between specific principal leadership behaviors (as measured by the dimensions of transformational/transactional/laissez-faire), a safe learning climate, and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? More specifically, this study addressed the following three research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transformational leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?
2. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transactional leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?
3. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of laissez-faire leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions will provide the reader with a basic understanding of terms used throughout this dissertation.

*Violence in schools***.** "The threat or use of physical force with the intention of causing physical injury, damage, or intimidation of another person" (Elliott et al., 1998, p. 31).

Bullying.

> The systematic and chronic infliction of physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students/employees manifesting itself in unwanted purposeful written, verbal, nonverbal or physical behavior, including, but not limited to, any threatening, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long term damage; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation, is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power. (School Board of Broward County, Florida, Administrative Definitions of Disciplinary Infractions, 2011–2012, p. 2)

Fighting (Major). "Mutual participation of two or more individuals in a hostile or physical encounter/altercation involving violence, such as pushing, pulling, punching, striking, etc., which requires physical restraint to end and/or results in injury" (School Board of Broward County, Florida, Administrative Definitions of Disciplinary Infractions, 2011–2012, p. 5).

Fighting (minor) Altercation / Confrontation. "Mutual participation of two or more individuals in a hostile or physical encounter/altercation involving violence, such as pushing, pulling, punching, striking, etc., that does not require physical restraint to end and/or does not result in injury" (School Board of Broward County, Florida, Administrative Definitions of Disciplinary Infractions, 2011–2012, p. 5).

Leadership. "Inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers" (Burns, 1978, p. 19).

School leadership. "The activity of mobilizing and empowering others to serve the academic and related needs of students with the utmost skill and integrity" (Smith & Piele, 2006, p. 5).

Transactional leadership.

> An authoritative, manager-oriented style where the leader invokes recognition, reward, and other tangible incentives to incite desirable behavior (e.g., "Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts"), monitors followers closely and actively to unearth deficiencies or shortfalls (e.g., "Keeps track of all mistakes"), and interferers only when problems or errors emerge (e.g., "Fails to interfere until problems become serious"). (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 4)

Transformational leadership.

> A human relations leadership style in which leaders invite followers to challenge conventional practices and reflect upon issues from a novel perspective, called intellectual stimulation. Second, rather than follow these traditional customs and conventions, transformational leaders promulgate an inspiring, challenging, and shared vision of the future, called inspirational motivation. Third, to enable followers to adopt and embrace this vision, these leaders strive to understand and accommodate the unique preferences, concerns, perspective, motives, and qualities of each individual, offering coaching and support, called individualized consideration. Finally, these leaders demonstrate the vision and values they convey; they show respect towards followers, called idealized influence (attributes), and maintain exemplary conduct, called idealized influence (behavior). (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 4)

Laissez-Faire leadership. "The avoidance or absence of leadership and is by its definition, the most inactive as well as the most ineffective according to almost all research on style…. It represents nontransaction" (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 4).

School climate will generally be defined as "the perceptions of the school environment, specifically assessing feelings of safety, respect, support, and interpersonal relationships at school" (Furlong et al., 2005, p. 140).

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The review of literature is divided into three parts. It provides a comprehensive and in-depth look at school safety issues, school leadership, and school climate in U.S. public schools.

The first part of the review of literature addresses school safety. It first provides a broad background of the history of school violence and presents statistics of safety issues from the 1990s to the present. Second, federal and state government responses to school safety issues are reviewed because they provide a context for the overall laws, mandates, and policies governing school safety at the state and federal level. Third, two prevalent forms of middle school violence, bullying and fighting, will be discussed, followed, fourth by a discussion of literature that considers the role of the leader in school safety.

School leadership will be addressed in the second part of the review of literature. It examines a paradigm shift in school administration and traces the shift from management to leadership. The Full-Range Leadership Theory and its three components— transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership—are reviewed and conclude this portion of the review of literature.

The third section of the review of literature examines school climate. It begins by describing the difference between climate and culture because it is important to note that there is a difference between the two concepts. This study focuses solely on climate. Next, the concepts and definitions of climate are reviewed. Next, the principal's role in

establishing school climate is explored. To conclude the chapter, research that examines a safe school climate is addressed.

School Safety

Within the last 20 years, school safety has made its way to the forefront of most educational agendas across the globe. Specifically, middle and high school leaders have been charged with reducing school violence while creating a safe atmosphere for students to engage in learning (Leinhardt & Willert, 2002). Even though the odds of a fatal attack at school are extremely unlikely (Hancock, 2001), each and every incident, no matter how serious or minor, is a reminder that no school is immune to violence.

Background of school violence and safety. Although the weapons of choice may have changed over the course of world history, recorded depictions of school violence can be traced back to Mesopotamia clay tablets as far as 2000 BC (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). In *Centuries of Childhood*, Aries (1962) cited a myriad of accounts of assaults, riots, and shootings in European schools from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Since America was discovered, colonized, and expanded from coast to coast, there has yet to be a period that has been free of concern for disruptive student behavior (Crews & Counts, 1997). Teachers in Colonial America regularly dealt with violent student mutinies, and the ongoing concern for violent student behavior in the United States was widespread throughout the 19th century (Crews & Counts, 1997; Midlarsky & Klain, 2005; Newman & Newman, 1980). For instance, Newman and Newman (1980) report that in the 1840s, Horace Mann decried the frequent flogging of students for misbehavior and reported on

the dissolution of approximately 400 Massachusetts schools due to student discipline behavior problems.

More recently, the past five decades have produced congressional hearings and government studies related to concerns regarding newly perceived upsurges in school violence (Crews & Counts, 1997). A 1975 senate report concluded that homicide, rape, robbery, and assault in schools were rapidly increasing (Bayh, 1975). Most recently, the last 25 years have produced the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act of 1986, the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990, and the modified Gun-Free School Zones act of 1996, which reflect the notion that schools are dangerous places (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). According to Cornell and Mayer (2010),

> A current PsycINFO search of peer-reviewed journals restricted to the term *school violence* identified 3 articles in the 1970's, 10 in the 1980s, 84 in the 1990s, and 443 since 2000. A 2009 Google Scholar search of *school violence* identified more than 15,000 articles. The term *school violence* is not sufficient to capture all of the relevant research on school safety, but it demonstrates the impressive size of the current literature. (p. 7)

The next section examines the scholarship of school violence from 1990–1999.

1990–1999. Furlong and Morrison (1994) asserted that society had deemed school as a safe place for children to learn and grown, not a place of violence and fear. Moreover, despite the statistical decline, since 1999, school violence, in its myriad of shapes and forms, has been at the forefront of America's attention. School violence may be defined as "any deliberate act that harms or threatens to harm a student, teacher, or other school officials, and which interferes with the purpose of school" (SchoolNet Quarterly Focus, 1996).

Although the first act of documented school violence traces back to 1979, when 16-year-old Brenda Spencer began shooting at a San Diego, California, elementary school, it was the 1999 Columbine High School massacre that left people overwhelmingly concerned about the safety of their school-age children while walking to, attending, and returning home from school. One year following the Columbine shootings, a poll taken by Nagy and Danitz (2000) found that 71% of parents felt that the Columbine shootings had changed their view of how safe their children were at school. Fewer than half (40%) of parents regarded their children as "very safe at school," and 50% described their children as only "somewhat safe."

During the 1990s, school violence became an overwhelming and mind shattering way of life for many youngsters. "Every year, three million thefts and violent crimes occurred on or near school campuses. Once every six seconds, a student or teacher in the United States was a victim of a crime" (Jones, 1998, p.3). Kotulak (1997) illustrated the commonality of violence:

> A study of more than 1,000 students from poor Chicago neighborhoods found that 74% of them had witnessed a murder, shooting, stabbing, or robbery. Nearly half of them were themselves victims of a rape, shooting, stabbing, robbery, or some other violent act. (p. 40)

During the 1996–1997 academic school year, the nation's schools reported that there were approximately 190,000 fights/physical attacks not involving weapons; 115,000 thefts reported; 11,000 fights/physical attacks that included the use of a weapon/weapons; and 4,000 incidents of rape /sexual battery (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 1998). Johnson and Johnson's (1995) study affirmed that between 1990 and 1994 school violence rose 55% in large, metropolitan areas and 41%

in cities that had over 100,000 residents. Kreiner's (1996) national study reported that at least 1 out of 5 students and 1 out of 10 teachers has been victims of school violence. Criminal categories in the study include, but were not limited to murder, rape or other types of sexual battery, suicide, physical attacks and fighting with and without a weapon, robbery, theft, larceny, and vandalism. In 1998, the Department of Education reported that during the 1996–1997 school year, 6,093 students were expelled from school for bringing firearms or explosives to school; 56% of the students expelled were high school students and 34% were junior high students (Department of Education, 1998).

While the quest for solutions to the problem of targeted school violence is of critical importance, reports from the Department of Education, the Justice Department and other sources indicate that few children are likely to fall prey to life threatening violence in school settings.

To put the problem of targeted school-based attacks in context:

> From 1993 to 1997 the [odds] that a child in grades 9-12 would be threatened or injured with a weapon in school were 7 to 8 percent, or 1 in 13 or 14; the odds of getting into a physical fight at school were 15 percent, or 1 in 7. In contrast, the odds that a child would die in school–by homicide or suicide–are, fortunately, no greater than 1 in 1 million. In 1998, students in grades 9-12 were the victims of 1.6 million thefts and 1.2 million nonfatal violent crimes, while in this same period 60 school-associated violent deaths were reported for this student population. (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, &Modzeleski, 2002, p. 12)

Although these statistics [odds] show a general overview of a variety of school incidents that occur, 60 violent deaths, regardless of the overall number of children attending school in the United States is tragically high.

Schools continually grapple with violence, as students become a source of trouble for other students, school faculty and staff, and parents. There are many reasons for

school violence; unfortunately there is no medicine that can reduce violent behavior. Jones (1998) argued that although the causes of school violence are difficult to detect, there are additional factors that are generally associated with the occurrence of violence. For example, factors that may be unrelated to school (i.e., environment, severe family violence, psychiatric and psychological disorders, and emotional depravation) may reinforce violent tendencies in youth. Moreover, the availability of weapons, cruelty to animals, substance abuse, the loss of a love relationship, or a decrease in self-esteem due to victimization all may play a crucial role in precipitating a violent event (Rich, 1992).

Guetzloe (1995) stressed that overcrowding of schools and classrooms also exasperate violent situations. Dority (1999) contended that neither violent media and music, nor availability of weapons, nor being targeted as an as outcast or part of a shunned group is the main reason for school violence. She stated that "all these simplistic solutions avoid confronting the much more difficult problems affecting children like reducing poverty, improving child-rearing skills, and funding child-care services" (p. 9).

There is research from this decade that suggests that there are practices and policies within the system that may contribute to school violence by arousing anger, resentment, and distrust for authority among students who may not otherwise be prone to violence (Hart, 1997; Hyman & Perone, 1998). Practices and policies identified include discipline procedures, such as corporal punishment and paddling; alienation through the excessive use of "time-out" or other social exclusionary punishments; using police or law enforcement to intervene when unnecessary (i.e., routine or minor incidents that do not call for police intervention); and teacher overuse of sarcasm, ridicule, or derogatory statements that berate the student or negatively affect their self-worth and self-esteem.

The next section examines the scholarship of school violence from 2000 to the present.

2000–present. One of the fundamental goals listed in the National Education Goals 2000 that came from the Office of The President of the United States was that we would have "safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools offered in an environment conducive to learning" (Executive Office of the President, 1990, as cited in Newman, 1999). As school leaders, it is our primary responsibility to ensure the safety of all. According to Nelson, Palonsky, and McCarthy (2004):

> Violent behavior is one of the most frequent studied social phenomena of our day. The social and behavioral sciences have learned a lot about violence, and we have every reason to assume schools can successfully stem the tide of violent behavior and protect children and society from the violent among us. (p. 474)

Henry (2000) asserted that any instance of crime or violence at school not only affects the individuals involved, but also may disrupt the educational process and affect bystanders, the school itself, and the surrounding community. Although school shootings make headlines far more often than less violent crimes, that does not negate the fact that other less critical incidents, including but not limited to bullying, peer-pressure, sexual harassment, sexually-oriented hate-crimes, fighting, theft, and the psychological maltreatment of students by teachers also contribute to a hostile school environment (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002).

Within the last 20 years, school safety has made its way to the forefront of most educational agendas across the globe (Leinhardt & Willert, 2002). In 2002, the collaborative effort between the U.S. Secret Service and the Department of Education resulted in the publication of the final report and findings of the *Safe School Initiative:*

Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States, which was an extensive examination of 37 incidents of targeted school shootings and school attacks that occurred in the United States beginning with the earliest identified incident in 1974 through May 2000. The findings suggested that there are measures that school administrators, law enforcement officials, and others can implement that will prepare them for school violence. The result produced ten key findings:

- Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
- Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack.
- Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.
- There is no accurate or useful "profile" of students who engage in targeted school violence.
- Most attackers engage in some behavior, prior to the incident that caused concern or indicated a need for help.
- Most attackers were known to have difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Many had considered or attempted suicide.
- Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.
- Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.
- In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
- Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most shooting incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement interventions. (Vossekuil et al., 2002, p. 17)

The *Safe School Initiative* report suggested that the psychological (and sometimes physical) trauma sustained by the victim sometimes resulted in the victim becoming the attacker. Unfortunately, the severity compelled the victim to use drastic measures, which, in some cases, resulted in mass casualties within our schools.

A study by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (2004) revealed that 11% of eighth graders admitted they brought a weapon such as a gun, knife or club to school at least once during the previous month. Results from the 2005 Gallup Youth Survey revealed that teens aged 13–17 most often mention "violence, fighting, and school safety," when asked to name the biggest problem their schools must deal with (Lyons,

2005). Safety issues garnered the most mentions (13%), nearly twice as many as any other specific problem, including lack of funding (7%), overcrowded classrooms (7%), use of drugs and alcohol (7%), and lack of student effort (7%) (Lyons, 2005).

Shore's (2005) research concluded that bullies victimized 15 to 20% of all students at some time during their school lives. Nationwide, almost one in three students is involved in bullying—either as a bully or a victim (Shore, 2005). Data from the study confirmed 80% of students who reported being bullied at school indicated that the bullying occurred inside the schoolhouse, the bus, or other parts of the school campus. Research conducted through surveys of school principals in over 1,500 school districts by Xavier University in Cincinnati found that violence was not confined to urban areas: 64%, 54%, and 43% of principals in urban, suburban, and rural areas, respectively reported that violence had increased at their schools during the past 5 years (Xavier University, 2005).

In the United States, an estimated 25,383,000 students were reported for the 2008–2009 school year (Snyder & Dillow, 2010). Preliminary data showed that across the country among youth ages 5–18, there were 38 school-associated violent deaths from July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009. In 2008, among students ages 12–18, there were about 1.2 million victims of nonfatal crimes at school, including 619,000 thefts and 629,800 violent crimes (simple assault and serious violent crime). In 2009, 4.5 million students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club, on school property (Robers et al., 2010).

The National School Safety Center (2008) reported that approximately 40,000 students are physically attacked in America's school each month (Lunenberg, 2010).

Student reports of bullying varied over time. In 2005, 28% of students between ages 12–18 reported being bullied at school during the school year. In 2007, the percentage rose to 32%, then returned to 28% during the 2009 school year (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007; Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009; Robers et al., 2010; Robers, Zhang, & Truman 2012).

According to Mayer and Furlong (2010), the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data showed that from simple assault to rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault, 29 per 1,000 students were victims (Dinkes et al., 2009). Dinkes et al. also discovered that 909,500 secondary students (3.4%) experienced theft at school. Moreover, the data also varied by gender, race, age, and location of school (urban, suburban, or rural). Unfortunately, about one in four students across the nation has reported serious problems with hostile or threatening remarks among different groups of students; bullying and cyberbullying; threats of physical violence and physical violent acts; other destructive acts, and gang violence (Anthony, 2011; Friedman, 2011; Guillain, 2012; Jones, 2011; Lunenberg, 2010; McCaw, 2012; Merino, 2011; Shariff, 2010).

Federal and State Government Responses to School Safety Issues

Federal and state laws, mandates, and programs have been developed and implemented to address the ongoing concerns of violence in schools. The federal government, in addition to the ongoing grant funding from the "Safe School Act of 1994," has put into place school violence prevention initiatives under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. For example, under Title IV of NCLB, states are required to allow students that either attend a violent school, or have been the victim of a violent crime while at school, to transfer to a safer school. In addition, federal, state and private funding

has prompted states and local education agencies to create and implement programs to reduce violence in schools.

NCLB and school safety. In order to fully understand the underlying federal laws and state statutes as they pertain to individual school districts and safety, it is imperative to determine when and where the need for school safety and emergency preparedness became prevalent in today's society. Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, contains the provisions for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA). The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Advisory Committee, authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act, were appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. The Committee was established to provide advice to the Secretary on federal, state, and local programs designated to create safe and drug-free schools, and on issues related to crisis planning. The advisory committee is made up of representatives from federal agencies and private citizens who have high levels of expertise and experience in the areas of drug, alcohol, and violence prevention; safe schools; mental health research and crisis planning. The advisory committee plays a paramount role in designing, creating and implementing protocols that will provide school districts with a plethora of valuable information to assist in creating safe schools. The state of Florida, in turn, was to incorporate the NCLB law into its state policies by infusing the protocols set forth by the Secretary of Education and the Department of Education.

Florida Statute and school safety. Florida State Statute 1006.07: "District school board duties relating to student discipline and school safety," states that:

> The district school board shall provide for the proper accounting for all students, for the attendance and control of students at school, and for proper attention to health, safety, and other matters relating to the welfare of students. Specifically, as it relates to school safety, the school board shall formulate and prescribe policies and procedures for emergency drills and for actual emergencies, including, but not limited to, fires, natural disasters, and bomb threats, for all the public schools of the district that comprise grades K-12. District school board policies shall include commonly used alarm system responses for specific types of emergencies and verification by each school that drills have been provided as required by law and fire protection codes. (Fla. Stat. §1006.07)

Furthermore, the state set forth a Safety and Security Best Practices Law, under the 2001 Legislature Ch. 2001-125, Laws of Florida, Section 40, which is often referred to as the Safe Passage Act, developed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA), to conduct a self-assessment of the school districts' current safety and security practices. Based on these self-assessment findings, each district school superintendent shall provide recommendations to the district school board that identifies strategies and activities that the board should implement in order to improve school safety and security (Florida Senate, Fla. Stat. §1006.07). Clearly, the state of Florida, in conjunction with OPPAGA and other federal and state law enforcement agencies has created and implemented a policy that incorporates protocols and strategies to successfully implement best practices to effectively assess the safety of the schools.

The Safe Passage act also requires all school districts to conduct a self-assessment of their school safety and security using best practices originally developed by the OPPAGA, an office of the Florida Legislature. The act also requires that OPPAGA and the Partnership for School Safety and Security make annual recommendations for adding, deleting, or revising those practices.

According to Hughes and Bishop's research (2002a),

> School districts reported meeting an average of 90% of the state's 26 safety and security best practices. However, between 19% and 25% of Florida's school districts reported not meeting or partially meeting the following four best practices: establishing accountability mechanisms to ensure performance, efficiency, and effectiveness; conducting regular organizational structure reviews; identifying personnel who need safety training and providing an appropriate level of safety training for all personnel in the master plan for in-service training; and having appropriate equipment to protect property and records. (p. 1)

The result of the Safe Passage Act led to its revision, and on November 8, 2002, the Commissioner of Education, in conjunction with OPPAGA and the Department of Education, released a revised Safety and Security Best Practices Law which was organized into seven program areas: efficiency and effectiveness; safety planning; discipline practices and code of student conduct; school climate and community outreach; safety programs and curricula; facilities and equipment; and transportation (Hughes & Bishop, 2002b, p. 2).

On April 24, 2007, the Florida House of Representatives passed HB 575, The Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up For All Students Act, also known as the "Anti-Bullying Bill." The bill resulted from the suicide of Cape Coral, Florida, student Jeffrey Johnson, who took his life due to extensive cyberbullying. The bill provided a model policy that was implemented in all Florida school districts and prohibits bullying and harassment against any student, faculty, staff, or employee of a public K–12 school district. The policy established a framework for students, teachers, and parents to determine and implement the necessary level of communication between the schools and parents about incidents of bullying either by their children or against their children so as to avoid acts of violence in the future and make our schools a safe place to learn for all of our children (Anti-Bullying bill passes through Florida House, 2007).

Bullying and Fighting

Violence in today's schools has taken many shapes and forms, from verbal abuse and bullying to physical attacks, rape, fights, and shootings. Families had believed that schools were a safe place for children to learn (Bluestein, 2001), yet, sadly, times have changed and so has the safety of children in school systems (Capozzoli & McVey, 2000). In the middle school setting, two of the major types of safety issues encountered by students are fighting and bullying. Bullying and fighting will be reviewed next to provide a more in-depth look at the contexts, causes, and students that are affected by these two forms of school violence.

Bullying. The American Educational Research Association (AERA) has identified bullying as one of the major health risks to children and young adults in U.S. society. The epicenter for bullying is schools, colleges, and universities, where vast numbers of children youth, and young adults spend much of their time (2013, p. 1). Bullying in schools is a multifaceted phenomenon that occurs among schoolchildren for a variety of reasons (Arora, 1996, Kogan, 2011).

Bullying research began in the 1970s with a few seminal studies. Dan Olweus, a Swedish psychologist who is considered to be the father of modern bullying research (Seeley, Tombari, Bennett, & Dunkle, 2009), began his seminal research studying bullying among boys in the 1970s and 1980s (Olweus, 1973, 1978, 1980). Olweus' interest in bullying began as a result of school children in Norway who had committed suicide due to brutal torment by their peers (Olweus, 1993, Seeley et al., 2009). Smith and Brain's (2000) research in Japan was also sparked by a succession of school suicides caused by school bullying. In the United States, the 1999 massacre/suicides at Columbine

High School in Littleton, Colorado, set the stage for bullying research (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). There was an eruption of bullying research following the traumas of school shootings and student suicides (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Seeley et al., 2009; Smith, 2004; Smith & Brain, 2000).

Bullying refers to unprovoked physical or psychological abuse of an individual by one or a group of students over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Hoover, Oliver, & Thomson, 1993; Olweus, 1991). According to Newman (1999), the ongoing nature of bullying is the key component that must be present, regardless of whether it is physical or psychological intimidation or harassment (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993).

Bullying and the victims of bullying are estimated to affect about 20% of the school-age population in the United States, especially in the forms of verbal ridicule and aggressive intimidation (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Furlong, Chung, Bates, & Morrison, 1995). Olweus (2001) argued that:

> It is a fundamental democratic or human right for a child to feel safe in school and to be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation implied in peer victimization or bullying. No student should be afraid of going to school for fear of being harassed or degraded, and no parent should need to worry about such things happening to his or her child. (pp. 11–12)

Research concludes that boys bully more than girls (Berger, 2007; Charach, Pepler, & Zeigler, 1995; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Marttunen, Rimpela, & Rantanen, 1999; Nansel et al., 2001; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Victims of bullying seem to be reported more by boys than girls (Furlong et al., 1995), especially peaking in the middle school years (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Furthermore, boys are crueler to boys and girls are crueler to girls (Tarshis & Huffman, 2007). Males seem to utilize direct tactics, such as

taunting, teasing, hitting, and stealing, whereas females use more indirect tactics, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation (Ahmad & Smith, 1994; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Newman, 1999; Varjas et al, 2009). Research also shows that boys were more likely to report being victims of bullying (Graham, Bellmore, & Mize, 2006; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007), whereas girls were more likely to report suicidal thoughts and plans (Park, Schepp, Jang, & Koo, 2006).

Day-to-day acts of bullying and victimization have become a pervasive problem in schools across the country (Leff, Kupersmidt, Patterson, & Power, 1999; Nansel et al., 2001). Researchers estimate that at least 15% of students are either bullied regularly or are the instigators of bullying, and school size, racial composition, setting (rural, suburban, urban) do not seem to predict occurrence (Olweus, 1993). Bullies and victims experience a wide range of academic, social, behavioral and emotional difficulties as they get older (Leff, Power, Costigan, & Manz, 2003; Loeber et al., 1993; Moffit, Caspi, Dickson, Silva, & Stanton, 1996). "Students tease, taunt, and bully their fellow pupils, and subject them to abusive name calling and racist and sexist epithets; these non-fatal but highly destructive behaviors are increasing" (Leinhardt & Willert, 2002, p. 32).

Bullying consists of repeated taunting, teasing or any physical or psychological torment; an imbalance of power between the bully and victim; and the tormenting is purposeful. Although there are a variety of definitions of bullying, most agree that bullying includes:

(a) Attack or intimidation with the intention to cause fear, distress, or harm that is either physical (hitting, punching), verbal (name calling, teasing), or psychological / relational (rumors, social exclusion);

(b) A real or perceived imbalance of power between the bully and the victim; and

(c) Repeated attacks or intimidation between the same children over time (Elinoff, Chafouleas, & Sassu, 2004; Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000; Farrington & Ttofi, 2010; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993, 2001, 2003; Seeley et al., 2009; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefooghe, 2002).

According to Slonje and Smith (2008), there are many forms of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Physical—hitting, tripping, shoving
- Verbal—name calling, taunting, teasing
- Psychological—excluding, rumor, gossip, bossing, threatening
- Sexual orientation—ostracism based on gender preference
- Sexual harassment—taunting, unwanted touching, coercion, offensive sexual comments
- Cyberbullying—harassment through the Internet, email, cell phone, texting.

Bullying and middle school. Ample studies have indicated that bullies and victims tend to be middle school age (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Espelage, 2004; Kogan, 2011; Nansel et al., 2001; Pergolizzi et al., 2009). Moreover, researchers have concluded that bullying tends to peak in middle school (Brown et al., 2005; Hoover et al., 1993; McConville & Cornell, 2003; Pellegrini, 2002; Varjas et al., 2009) and wane with age (Smith, Madsen, & Moody, 1999; Varjas et al., 2009). Certain research suggested that bullying increased in quantity and sophistication in middle school children up to ages

14 and 15, and then sharply declined in later adolescence (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Kogan, 2011; Long & Pellegrini, 2003; Smith & Levan, 1995).

Previous research discovered that middle school students are more apt to feel unsafe in places were bullying likely occurs (Hoover et al., 1993; Safer, 1986; Varjas et al, 2009). Brown et al. (2005) revealed that about 10% of 11-year-olds were afraid to go to school "once in a while, but not every week because of bullying," whereas 6.9% of 12-year-olds and 7.8% of 13-year-olds were afraid to go to school. Dinkes et al. (2009) found that 43% of all middle school students reported weekly incidents of school bullying during the 2005–2006 school year. A 2009–2010 study revealed about 28% of 12- to 18-year-old students reported having been bullied at school during the school year and 6% reported having been cyber-bullied. In addition, about 39% of sixth graders reported being bullied at school, compared with 33% of seventh graders, and 32% of eighth graders (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011; Robers et al., 2010).

The Constitutional Rights Foundation (2007) offers two reasons as to why middle school violence is higher. First, early adolescence is difficult, and young teens are often more physically hyperactive and have yet to learn acceptable social behavior. Second, middle school is a time when students first come into contact with other young teens from different backgrounds and distant neighborhoods. Simonsen's (2008) research concluded that middle-school students are more vulnerable than students of other ages to problem behaviors, including but not limited to substance abuse, bullying, and violence. In addition, rapid biological and social changes that middle-school students encounter during these years also contribute to the rise of violence. Furthermore, researchers have concluded that students who were bullies or victims are more likely to vandalize

property, participate in physical altercations, and drop out of school (Olweus, 1993; Pergolizzi et al., 2009; Rudatsikira, Siziya, Kazembe, & Muula, 2007). This study focuses on bullying in the middle school.

Fighting. Physical fights on school grounds promote high-risk behaviors that disrupt an engaged learning environment, and the students involved in fighting may face difficulties succeeding in their studies (Payne, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 2003; Robers et al., 2010). Fighting is the actual and intentional touching or striking of another person against his or her will, or the intentional causing of bodily harm to an individual (Dinkes et al., 2009). Fighting also involves "two or more teens who have chosen to use physical force to resolve a conflict or argument" (Jones et al., 2009). There can be a myriad of reasons why a fight begins, but usually it stems from a disagreement (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1989). Most fights that students encountered were with acquaintances, such as family members, friends, and romantic dates (Bureau of Justice Statistics).

Lines' (2007) research concluded that when students fight, it occurs in stages. The first stage commences with minor physical engagement, including but not limited to pushing, shoving, tripping, tackling, or with verbal attacks, such as name calling or teasing. Stage two happens rapidly, when a crowd of students rushes from one place to another to gather around the students that are prepared to fight. The third and final stage occurs when the fight stops because an adult arrives, or an adult arrives and breaks up the fight. The conclusion of the fight results in disciplinary action taken against the students, and a record of the fight is kept in the student's file.

School leaders knowledgeable about the stages of fighting may recognize that each stage provides clues, which may be used to deter fighting on school grounds. This

would be advantageous since research concluded that physical attacks without a weapon are the most common incidents, occurring in 64% of all public schools (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005).

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1989), an estimated 18 physical fights occur per 100 students per month. A 2009 study conducted by the NCES and the U.S. Department of Education reported that approximately 14.4% of sixth graders, 12.3% of seventh graders, and 11.6% of eighth graders were physically injured during the 2006-2007 school year. Other studies suggest that fighting in middle school (37–60% of students) is even more common than fights that occur in high school (approximately 33%) (Aspy et al., 2004; Clubb et al., 2001; Cotton et al., 1994; Jones et al., 2009; Malek, Chang, & Davis, 1998; Oman et al., 2001). Overall, the percentage of students who reported being in a physical fight decreased from 42% in 1993 to 31% in 2009 (Robers et al., 2010). This study focuses on fights in the middle school.

Role of the School Leader in School Safety

Law enforcement officials say that there are two types of schools: schools that have faced critical incidents and schools that will face critical incidents. The lessons learned from critical incidents like the Columbine High School Massacre in Littleton, Colorado, and the suicide of Cape Coral, Florida, student Jeffrey Johnson, who took his life due to extensive cyberbullying, have altered the way school leaders respond to safety issues within their schools. Moreover, understanding that no school is impervious to violence, school-based administrators are now encouraged, even mandated (i.e., Florida Principal Leadership Standards, 2010; ISLLC Standards, 1996; and ELCC Standards,

2002), to create school climates that promote caring, collaboration, a positive school climate, and a safe and secure learning environment.

Even though research indicated a decline in school violence since the turn of the century (Grier & Chaddock, 1999), safety and order in schools are still two quintessential conditions necessary for teaching and learning. "It is the school leader that creates the atmosphere that will ultimately determine the tone, culture and climate. Schools are no exception" (p. 8). Bogotch, Miron, and Murry, Jr. (1998) concluded that leadership builds on a sense of caring, social justice, critique, and creating a new sense of school community. "When students perceive their school personnel to be caring, especially the principal, students will play an integral role in making the school safe" (Hyman & Perone, 1998, p. 12). Conversely, Bulach, Pickett, and Boothe (1998b) argued that a school leader who demonstrates poor human relations (i.e., abrasive, arrogant, uncaring, or either unable or unwilling to give compliments or create a school culture of caring, warmth, and collaboration) might contribute to creating a climate that fosters violence.

The Hamilton Fish Institute's (2001) Comprehensive Framework for School Violence Prevention illustrated the importance of school leadership:

> Principals who are effective, visible leaders and who treat teachers, staff, and students with dignity and respect create an environment conducive to learning, school attachment, and non-violent behavior. Superintendents and principals who are innovative, provide adequate resources, and are actively involved in all aspects of violence prevention increase the likelihood of success. (p. 2)

School leaders are primarily responsible for creating and maintaining a climate in which students experience academic success in a safe, orderly environment. Furthermore, it is the school leader's responsibility to foster and nurture meaningful relationships between all school stakeholders to ensure that a collaborative, respectful climate is ever-

present within the school (Hamilton Fish Institute, 2001). Blum (2005b) asserted that administrators and teachers that create a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear, and fair are far more likely to connect their students to school.

Benbenishty and Astor (2005) asserted that student assessments of school safety reflected the school's climate and culture, relationships with the teachers and staff, and the way in which the school responded to violent events. Astor et al. (2009) concluded that schools with low levels of violence are organized, prompted, and initiated through the role of a strong, visionary, influential, and well-respected principal. More importantly, it was through the principal's cunning ability to "sway, mobilize, endear, convince, and delegate their mission to the school community as a whole" (p. 443), that the principal was able to create and sustain a violent-free school culture, which suggested that "the selection of an organizationally strong and visionary principal may be the single most important intervention that reduces the incidence of violence in a given school" (p. 452).

School Leadership

This section of the review of literature focuses on school leadership. First, a paradigm shift in school administration, which traces the shift from management to leadership, will be explored. Next, The Full-Range Leadership Theory and its three components: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership will be defined and examined.

A paradigm shift in school leadership. The latter part of the 20th century brought about radical change in leadership development. Newton (1980) asserted that the

educational leadership theories that school leaders committed themselves to had substantial implications for the atmosphere created within their school. And, the more reflective and consistent the leaders were with adhering to their theories, the more likely that the school established and maintained a positive sense of direction and purpose.

School leadership, across the globe, started moving away from the transactional management school of thought to a more transformational style, which in terms of true school improvement, was necessary to select, recruit, and develop future school leaders. According to seminal researcher and scholar Ronald Edmonds, instructional leadership, teacher expectations, and school climate were all found to play prominent roles in student achievement (1979, 1980, 1982, 1983). Edmonds (1982) defined the following factors that were crucial for success:

> (a) The principal's leadership and focus on quality instruction; (b) a strong focus on instructional leadership; (c) a structured and safe climate conducive to teaching and learning; (d) teacher expectations and (e) student performance data employed to evaluate and adjust instruction and curriculum. (p. 4)

Historically, organizations functioned under a top-down leadership approach, where the executive gave orders and subordinates complied (Hickman, 1998). The organization's hierarchy was established to encourage centralized decision-making, which assisted middle management in differentiating talents and functions (Toregas, 2002). Hallinger (1992) discovered that in the 1960s and 1970s, an effective leader possessed more managerial skills, leading in more of a transactional style with contingent reward. The late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, an effective leader's role shifted to instructional leadership (Hallinger, 1992; Wilmore & Cornell, 2001). An effective instructional leader created a school climate that was safe and augmented teaching and

learning. Program effectiveness was measured by student achievement (Hallinger, 1992; Wilmore & Cornell, 2001).

Hickman (1998) also discovered that organizations began shifting from traditional hierarchical management approaches to a more open network of people who work closely together to achieve interrelated goals. This fresh approach to leadership valued people, and recognized that everyone involved can participate in creating a shared vision to help transform the organization (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; John-Steiner, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Senge, 1994).

Although the term transformational leadership was first coined by Downton (1973) with his work on charismatic leadership, the emergence of transformational leadership began with the seminal work by James MacGregor Burns. Transformational leadership involves shifts in the beliefs, the needs and the values of followers. The result of transforming leadership is the relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders' and many convert leaders into moral agents (Burns, 1978, p. 4).

Transformational leadership began to emerge as a theory in the 1990s, which moved leadership from a control-oriented "transactional" manager or instructional leader to a collaborative, culture-building transformational leader (Fullan, 1992; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1993; Mitchell & Tucker, 1992; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992; Wilmore & Cornell, 2001).

In 1991, Bass and Avolio further developed Burns' work into the Full-Range Leadership Theory, which suggests that every leader, at some point, may exhibit, to some

degree, transactions, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors (Bass, 1998).

The next section describes The Full-Range Leadership theory and its three styles: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire leadership.

Full-Range Leadership Theory (FRLT). In 1985, Bernard Bass expanded Burns' (1978) transformational leadership concept into a formal theory known as transactional / transformational leadership theory. Bass' (1985a) analysis differed from Burns (1978) in that he believed that instead of viewing both leadership styles as separate entities, he argued that transformational leadership builds on the foundations of transactional leadership (Bass, 1985b; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino, 1990). Bass further stated that both styles of leadership are necessary, to some degree, to be an effective leader (Bryant, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Bass and Avolio (1994) further expanded Bass's theory into the Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT). Table 1 illustrates the development of this theory.

Table 1

Development of the Full Range Leadership Theory

Leadership Style	Researcher	Theory
Transactional & Transformational	Burns	The two styles are opposite
Transactional & Transformational	Bass	The two styles build on each other and both are necessary to be an effective leader
Transactional, Transformational, & Laissez-Faire	Bass & Avolio	Every leaders possesses some amount of the three leadership styles

Note. Adapted from Avolio & Bass, 1991.

The FRLT, which encompasses transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, is one of the most widely studied theories of leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), and has been applied to a variety of settings outside education, including religious organizations, branches of the military, nonprofit establishments, and corporations. Bass' (1998) research concluded that every leader may exhibit, to a certain degree, transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership behaviors.

The FRLT was chosen for this study because transformational leadership is currently the most researched leadership theory in the educational field (Gurr & Drysdale, 2008). Second, the FRLT highlights the researcher's assumption that effective leaders motivate, inspire, and nurture their subordinates and their ability to successfully participate in achieving the goals of the organization. Third, The FRLT encompasses observable and measurable transformational and transactional leadership behaviors, in addition to the leadership instruments that have been created by researchers to measure transformational leadership behaviors (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997). Bass' (1985a) online Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Form 5X) will be used for this study to measure the three styles of leadership: transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire.

The three leadership styles that will be explored and described next are Bass and Avolio's (1994) Full-Range leadership styles: Transactional, Transformational, and Laissez-Faire.

Transactional leadership. Transactional leadership essentially includes an exchange between the leader and employee (Burns, 1978). The exchange provides subordinates with an opportunity to effectively communicate likes and dislikes as well as

advantages and disadvantages of their work and environment. For the manager, it provides an ability to understand and adhere to their subordinates' wants and needs while simultaneously affording the subordinate the chance to understand the needs of the organization. According to Bass (1985b), clarification, completion, and compliance are factors that underlie transactional leadership. This theory proposes that leaders use simple organizational frameworks to tell subordinates what to do and what rewards they get for following orders (Bass, 1997; Burns, 1978). As-Sadeq and Khoury (2006) found transactional leadership to be the most employed style.

Subordinates in a transactional environment depend on those above them in the organization for achieving their goals and satisfying their needs (Pedersen, 1980). A transactional leader will determine what the subordinates need to do in order to fulfill their needs and the needs of the organization. The leader will organize the objectives, assist subordinates in feeling confident that they can successfully achieve the objectives by putting forth the required effort, and provide some form of extrinsic reward for successfully completing the objectives. For instance, Yukl (1994) suggested that reward is contingent upon the subordinate's effort and the performance level achieved. In short, the subordinates' effort for better performance is solely based on extrinsic reward.

A transactional leader neither seeks employee input regarding administrative decisions nor promotes professional development or increased job performance. Erhart and Naumann (2004) pointed out that a transactional leader is satisfied with simply meeting organizational objectives and expects nothing more than what is minimally required from the employee to complete a task. If a non-routine event arises, employees

are not encouraged to find a solution but rather directed to let the transactional leader intervene and resolve the matter (Bass, 1985b; Bass, 1990).

Leaders that employ transactional strategies assume the culture and climate of the organization that already exists, regardless of its productivity. If the organization's culture is positive, thriving, and conducive to success, it is a win-win situation for everyone. Conversely, if the organization's culture is toxic, employee morale may become polluted and negatively affect the organization's success. Glen (2003) summed up transactional leadership by arguing that it is a form of bribery: the leader simply bribes his or her subordinate(s) to perform their tasks satisfactorily.

Transactional leadership is often connected with management because the monitoring behaviors employed by the transactional leader often parallel managerial concepts (Friedman, 2004). Avolio and Bass (2004) described two behaviors associated with transactional leadership (as measured by the MLQ-5X, the instrument that was utilized in this research):

- Contingent Reward: a constructive behavior that clarifies what rewards subordinates will receive if they achieve certain goals for the organization. (p. 50)
- Management-By-Exception (Active): a corrective behavior that focuses on setting standards. (p. 3)

The two transactional behaviors displayed by leaders represent minimal forms of leader activity and involvement. As long as subordinates meet organizational objectives, the transactional leaders keep their distance. In contrast, transformational leadership theory involves much more hands-on leadership and subordinate interaction.

Transformational leadership. As mentioned, the emergence of transformational leadership began with the seminal work by James MacGregor Burns (1978). Burns

asserted that on one hand, a leader could exhibit transactional leader behaviors by extracting results from subordinates through exchange of things of value. On the other hand, Burns argued that the other end of the leadership continuum would have the leader using transformational leadership behaviors where the leader and followers would raise each other to, "higher levels of motivation and morality." Burns' view appeals to social values that encourage people to engage in a continual process of collaboration.

According to Leithwood (1994), transformational leadership encourages employee motivation and commitment to get the extra effort required; involves changes to the whole organization as well as the core technology; empowers staff and disperses influence, which is more viable than maintaining the principal as the instructional leader and encourages teachers to become more professional. Bass and Avolio (1993, 1994) concluded that transformational leadership includes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Avolio and Bass (2004) described these four behaviors associated with transformational leadership (as measured by the MLQ-5X):

- *Idealized Influence*: the influence that transformational leaders exert over their associates so that they want to identify with leaders and their mission (p. 50). Idealized influence is split into *Idealized Influence Attributed* and *Idealized Influence Behavior* because Idealized Influence can be viewed as "both a behavior and an impact in the eye of the beholder linked to the relationship of the leader and the follower (p. 75).
- *Inspirational Motivation*: behavior that motivates and inspires those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work (p. 29).
- *Intellectual Stimulation*: leader influence that helps others to become independent thinkers with the ability to come up with new solutions to old problems (p. 29).
- *Individualized Consideration*: helping associates to achieve their fullest potential by addressing their unique concerns and developmental needs (p. 29).

Avolio and Bass (2004, p. 3) claimed that transformational leadership "builds on earlier leadership paradigms -- such as those of autocratic versus democratic leadership, directive versus participative leadership, and task versus relationship oriented leadership." As the name implies transformational leadership is based upon the idea that leadership is used to effect transformation in an organization. Transformational leaders are values-driven, visionary, understanding of change, empowering of others to become change agents, believers in shared decision making, and experts in dealing with complex and difficult situations (Leithwood, 1992; Schlechty, 1990). Bass and Avolio (1990, p. 22) defined transformational leadership as elevating the, "desires of followers for achievement and self-development, while also promoting the development of groups and organizations"" These results are achieved by the charisma of the leader, by meeting the emotional needs of subordinates, or providing for the intellectual stimulation of the subordinates (Bass, 1990).

Transformational leaders try to replace negative values with positive values among organizational members so that motivation can be triggered intrinsically rather than extrinsically. A transformational leader possesses the ability to effectively operate in the technical, managerial, institutional, and environmental arenas. Transformational leaders strive to quench their employees' higher order needs by transforming the followers' self-interest into collective concerns, and overall "engaging the full person of the mindset" (Burns, 1978, p. 4). Essentially, transformational leadership provides a more realistic and reasonable concept of self (Burns, 1978; Howell & Avolio, 1992).

The impact of a transformational leader can potentially be truly remarkable, whereby change is sustainable and enduring once the principal has left the organization

(Friedman, 2004). Transformational leadership is found to stimulate the greatest satisfaction, willingness to exert extra effort, and effectiveness among employees (As-Sadeq & Khoury, 2006).

Laissez-faire leadership. The third leadership style of the FRLT is laissez-faire, which translates in French to "leave it be." Bass (1985a) characterized laissez-faire as the nonexistence of leadership. The Laissez-Faire method is basically a hands-off approach to leadership. In this school of thought, although it is inferred that agreement between the leader and subordinate exists, the leader and subordinate interact on a necessary basis. Hartog and Van Muijen (1997) argued that "The Laissez-Faire leader avoids decision making and supervisory responsibility. The leader is inactive, rather than reactive or proactive. In a sense, this extremely passive type of leadership indicates the absence of leadership" (p. 21).

Harland, Harison, Jones, and Reiter-Palmon (2005) concluded that laissez-faire leaders give complete autonomy and all decision making to the subordinates. A laissez-faire leader avoids all leadership duties and responsibilities, including decision-making and intervening when appropriate (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). In addition, this leadership style is not concerned with meeting organizational goals and objectives, and barely provides support to subordinates (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). In essence, laissez-faire leaders provide no leadership.

Avolio and Bass (2004) described two behaviors associated with laissez-faire leadership (as measured by the MLQ-5X, the instrument utilized in this research):

- Management-By-Exception (Passive): a corrective behavior that focuses on waiting for mistakes to occur rather than being proactive (p. 3).

- Laissez-Faire: avoidance of leadership (p. 3).

Laissez-faire leaders perpetuate a wearisome and ineffective leadership approach. Webb (2007) found that the lack of direct interaction between leaders and workers consistently demonstrates a negative correlation with motivating employees to provide extra effort. Furthermore, Eyal and Kark (2004) discovered that laissez-faire supervisors behave in ways that do not inspire employees, stifle innovation and creativity, or positively promote change. Lack of employee interaction on the part of the laissez-faire leader results in a confused and disorganized environment that negatively affects employees' work. Laissez-faire leadership reveals itself to be the most inactive, least effective and most frustrating, leadership style (Barbuto, 2005).

School Climate

The third and final section of the review of literature examines school climate. It begins by describing the difference between climate and culture because it is important to note that there is a difference between the two concepts. This study focuses solely on climate. Second, the concepts and definitions of climate are reviewed. Third, the principal's role in establishing school climate is explored. To conclude the chapter, research on a safe learning climate is considered.

The difference between climate and culture. During the 1990s, climate and culture were terms used synonymously (Deal, 1993); however, there are key differences that distinguish them from one another (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; Owens, 1995; Schein, 2004) and they are no longer typically used interchangeably. School climate refers to the physical and psychological characteristics of the school, which are more prone to change, but necessary for teaching and learning to take place (Tableman &

Herron, 2004). Conversely, school culture reflects the shared ideas—assumptions, values, and beliefs—that give an organization its identity and set the standard for expected behaviors (Tableman & Herron).

Sackney (1988) concluded that culture deals with how the work of the school gets done, whereas climate deals with the feeling or tone of the school. Changes to climate are considered to be more achievable than changes to culture due to the fact that climate deals with the everyday, transactional-level interactions of people (Tableman & Herron, 2004).

On the one hand, school climate is derived from organizational research. On the other hand, school culture is deeply rooted in organizational culture and anthropology (Van Houtte, 2005). Rousseau (1990) defined culture as "a set of cognitions shared by members of a social unit" (as cited in Van Houtte, p. 74). However, all revolve around the historic anthropological definition of culture: "transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behavior and the artifacts produced through behavior" (Van Houtte, 2005, p. 74).

Definitions and concepts of school climate. Although school climate research dates back to the late 1950s and early 1960s, there has yet to be consensus among researchers regarding a decisive definition (Coral & Castle, 2005; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). Various definitions of school climate include:

- "A quality of the internal environment of an organization that (a) is experienced by its members, (b) influences their behavior, and (c) can be

described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics or attributes of the organization" (Tagiuri, 1968, p. 27).

- "The relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perception of behavior in schools" (Hoy et al., 1991, p, 10).
- "The set of internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influences the behaviors of each school's members" (Hoy & Miskel, 2005, p. 185).
- Perceptions of the school environment, specifically assessing feelings of safety, respect, support, and interpersonal relationships at school (Furlong et al., 2005), which best represents the researcher's concept of school climate for the study.

Halpin and Croft (1963), pioneers in research involving school climate, found that each school had special characteristics and qualities that distinguished it from all other schools, thus making it a unique institution. They compared school climate to the following analogy: "Personality is to the individual what climate is to the organization" (Halpin & Croft, p. 1). Researchers have agreed that school climate is unique to each school (Anderson, 1982; Hoy et al., 1991). School climate refers to the physical and psychological characteristics of the school, including the physical appearance of the school building, temperature inside the building, how teachers interact with each other and with students, and how safe people feel when they are on school grounds (Sweeney, 1992). Furthermore, it involves the quality and consistency of social interactions among the school's members (Furlong et al., 2005).

Halpin and Croft (1963) conceptualized school climate as either "open" or "closed." Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, and Bliss (1996) later added two more dimensions to school climate: "engaged" or "disengaged." These four stipulations are used to describe ways in which group members interact that ultimately affect the climate of the school. An open school climate refers to a school that is safe and orderly, students are engaged in learning and motivated to work hard, and student work is prominently displayed throughout the school (Hoy & Tarter, 1992). Contrariwise, a closed climate produces a rigid, controlling and unsympathetic principal where collaboration and teamwork are absent and the faculty is uncaring toward students (Hoy et al., 1991). An engaged climate describes a school in which the principal closely supervises teachers yet is unsupportive (Hoy et al., 1996). A disengaged climate demonstrates the opposite: a supportive principal but uncooperative teachers that do not work together and do little to help students reach their potential (Hoy et al., 1996).

The principal and school climate. The climate represents the first impression people encounter when entering the schoolhouse and has been studied for decades. It influences the daily experiences of all stakeholders, including but not limited to students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members, and impacts the quality of education each student receives (Gilmer, 1966). As early as 1981, the principal, as the leader of the school, was found to be the single most significant factor in determining school climate (Allen, 1981, as cited in Moore, 1998). Principals need to be conscious of their leadership style and how it impacts school climate.

A Safe School Study (Pink, 1982) showed that a school's climate significantly influenced a student's behavior. For example, the study revealed that a safer school

resulted when the principal was strong, committed, and available; students were proud to attend their school; and community members supported the school. Jenkins, Heidermann, and Caputo (1985) discovered that principals who reward academic success, respect students, require good attendance, and enforce appropriate student behavior promote a positive school climate. Nicholson, Stephens, Elder, and Leavitt (1985) found that safe schools required strong administrative support from the principal. Barth (1990) further illustrated the importance of the role of the principal:

> One finding that constantly emerges from the recent waves of studies is the importance of the principal within the school. The principal is the key to a good school. The quality of the educational program depends on the school principal. The principal is the most potent factor in determining school climate. (p. 63–64)

Sergiovanni (1991, 1992a, 1992b) concluded that the principal is paramount in creating a school climate based on mutual trust, high moral expectations, and a strong focus on student social and academic development. Sybouts and Wendel (1994) illustrated the needed dynamic relationship between the principal and school climate:

> The principal more than any other individual is responsible for the climate in the building…. A principal has a choice to build a constructive climate conducive to quality education or let some undesigned climate emerge in which there is only a chance that it will be positive. A school climate that emerges from a principal's thoughtful consideration will have a much better possibility of exerting a positive and constructive influence on the inhabitants of a building than a climate that simply happens as a result of chance and random influences. (p. 7)

Research concluded that effective school leadership produced a more orderly school, with particular attention on creating a positive school climate (Duke, 1990). Effective leadership is critical for schools to promote a safe climate. The behaviors of the principal are directly linked to the climate of the school. Researchers discovered that school climate is greatly affected by the school principal's leadership style (Bulach,

Pickett, & Boothe, 1998a; Deal & Peterson, 1990, 1999; Kelley, Thornton, &Daugherty, 2005; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 1998). A principal that is well versed in creating a positive school climate possesses the skills and know-how to involve teachers, students, and the community and provides the school with a larger pool of talent to assist in maintaining a climate where everyone flourishes. Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2002) determined that "school organizations and communities may begin to look and behave more like ecosystems where more have access to the whole, and people support and nurture one another with trust" (pp. 132–133).

A safe school climate. Most relevant to this study, school climate has been linked to school safety. Literature suggests that certain components of school climate are consistent through research: caring relationships between students and teachers, clear mission of the school, and a safe and orderly environment (Edmonds, 1981; Furlong et al, 2005; Giani, 2008; Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Lezotte, 1991, 2002). Although there is ample research that links school climate to student achievement, Anderson (1982) found that more research was needed that examined school climate and its relationship to disruptive student behavior (Anderson, 1982; Giani, 2008). More recently, McEvoy and Welker (2000) asserted that a school climate study must take into account student behavior and its impact on student success at school.

Studies of school climate have supported the notion that a positive school climate positively affects student behavior (Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997; Giani, 2008; Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmonds, & Blatt, 1997; Weishen & Peng, 1993). Haynes et al. (1997) asserted that the school climate influenced a student's sense of safety and well-being as well as student behavior. The National Association of Attorney Generals (1999)

concluded that research demonstrates a supportive school climate to be the most important step in ensuring that schools provide a safe and welcome environment for all students. Moreover, Hansen and Childs (1998) asserted that working to create a positive school climate involves "dedicated individuals [who] are making conscious efforts to enhance and enrich the culture and conditions in the school so that teachers can teach better and students can learn more" (p. 14).

McEvoy and Welker (2000) found that positive interpersonal relationships for all students both increase student achievement and reduce maladaptive behavior. In addition, they concluded that in order to promote a positive school climate, the first requirement is a safe environment. A safe environment allows the teacher and student to focus on academics and social skills development, which promote academic achievement and appropriate student behavior. McEvoy and Welker further argued that effective learning climates have a direct, positive effect on the academic and prosocial behaviors of students.

Current research has revealed that effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts are correlated with safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climates (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkinds, 2002; Cohen, 2001; Greenberg et al., 2003). Safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climates have a tendency to nurture greater attachment and belonging to the school in addition to providing an ideal foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning (Blum, 2005a, 2005b; Osterman, 2000). Understanding school climate and its relationship to school leadership and school safety is a giant step toward creating a positive, safe learning environment that will decrease school violence.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology that was used to determine the relationship between school leadership, a safe school climate, and bullying and fighting in middle school. The chapter is divided into nine sections: It begins with research design, site and sample, data collection, instrumentation, and data analysis. This is followed by presenting researcher assumptions, role of the researcher, and significance of the study.

Research Design

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the relationship between principal leadership style (as measured by the 9 MLQ-5X subscales), a safe school climate (as measured by the Broward County Annual Customer Survey), and school safety (specifically, the number of reported fights and bullying incidents) in Broward County, Florida's middle schools. The overarching research question was: Is there a relationship between specific principal leadership behaviors (as measured by the dimensions of transformational/transactional/laissez-faire), a safe learning climate, and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? More specifically, this study addressed the following three research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transformational leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

2. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transactional leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

3. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of laissez-faire leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

The instruments needed to measure principal leadership style and school climate were readily available. The numbers of reported fights and reported bullying incidents per middle school were solicited from the school board's Office of Preventative Programs.

Site and Sample

Broward County, a large, urban county in southeast Florida, was the site of this study. Broward County is the second largest school district in the state of Florida, sixth largest school district in the country, and it is the largest fully accredited school district in the nation. Currently, there are 324 elementary, middle, high, and special education schools (included are 95 charter schools and elementary, middle, and high virtual schools) that serve a total population of 262,563 students—49,135 of which are middle school students. Out of 31,880 employees, 14,368 are teachers and 1,240 are administrators (Broward County Public Schools, 2013).

There are 40 traditional, non-charter, non-behavioral centered middle schools spanning Broward County. For this study, schools across the district were chosen based on principals that were present at their schools consecutively for the 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 school years.

All 40 middle schools in the district were included in the initial screening for three reasons. First, the number of middle schools that met the criteria for principal longevity would most likely provide a variance in principal leadership styles. Second, all middle schools utilized the same discipline management system and implemented the same policies and procedures for collecting and reporting discipline data; and third, all middle schools participated in the annual customer survey that assessed climate.

Based on an analysis of the school district's archival data conducted on August 1, 2011, out of 40 traditional, non-charter, non-center middle schools, 21 qualified. They met the criteria that the principals were present at their schools consecutively for 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011. The teachers that voluntarily participated in the MLQ-5X questionnaire were the Language Arts department head, Mathematics department head, Science department head, Social Studies department head, Special Interest (electives) department head, ESE Specialist, ELL Coordinator, Reading Coach, Media Specialist, or Guidance Director for the three years being studied. Teachers were made aware that the principal they were rating was the principal of the school during the 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 school years, in case the current principal during the time of data collection was different than the one being rated. The research conducted for this study was unobtrusive and did not interfere with the teachers' day-to-day routines. Participation in this study was voluntary, and there were no foreseeable risks. Identities of participants and schools were kept in strict confidence. The school district, however, consented to reveal its identity, thus a pseudonym was not used.

Permission was sought first from Broward County Public Schools (see Appendix A) and secondly from the principals that met the sampling criteria (see Appendix C). The

school principals were contacted by email (see Appendix G). If the current principal was not the principal that was there during the aforementioned years, the researcher sought permission from the current building principal. The researcher explained the project with the intent of gaining support for the teachers' participation to complete the survey, and was available via phone or email for questions. Although the principals would not be completing the MLQ-5X, they were offered a copy of the final results of the study.

The 10 teachers that were asked to participate in the MLQ-5X were the Language Arts department head, Mathematics department head, Science department head, Social Studies department head, Special Interest (electives) department head, ESE Specialist, ELL Coordinator, Reading Coach, Media Specialist, and Guidance Director. The researcher identified these teacher positions as the sample when the principal was contacted for approval. Avolio and Bass (2004) found that the MLQ scores are inflated when the principal is allowed to choose the teachers that will assess his/her leadership style; hence, the validity of the MLQ-5X is better in this study because the teachers were selected based on job title.

Once the principal granted approval, the researcher asked him or her for the teachers' emails. The teachers from the participating sites were contacted via email to complete the MLQ-5X in order to assess the leadership style of his/her principal. The email sent to the teachers explaining the study also contained a link to access the MLQ-5X. Informed consent was embedded in the introduction to the survey (see Appendix H). Teachers, principals, and individual schools were not identified, and all participants remained confidential. All data were stored on a password-protected computer to which the researcher only has access, thus increasing security measures for strict confidentiality.

Data Collection

Instrumentation. The MLQ-5X (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire; see Appendix E) was used to assess principal leadership style. Three overarching constructs broken into 9 measureable leadership behaviors comprise the MLQ. Transformational Leadership, the first construct, is comprised of *Idealized Attributes* (IA), *Idealized Behavior* (IB), *Inspirational Motivation* (IM), *Intellectual Stimulation* (IS), and *Individualized Consideration* (IC). Transactional Leadership, the second leadership construct, contains *Contingent Reward* (CR), and *Management-By-Exception: Active* (MBEA). Laissez-Faire Leadership, the third construct, includes *Passive/Avoidant Behavior* (LF), and *Management-By-Exception: Passive* (MBEP). Together, these measure the Full Range Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994), which was used to determine leadership style for this study.

In addition, results from the 2010–2011 School Board of Broward County's Annual Customer Survey were used to determine a school's climate. The district's Discipline Management System (DMS) was accessed in order to gather discipline data regarding the number of fights and bullying incidents that occurred on the middle school campuses.

MLQ-5X (leadership style). There are a variety of survey instruments that have been designed specifically to assess leadership style. One of the most popular, effective and widely used instruments based on the literature is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Rowold & Heinitz, 2007). As discussed in the previous chapter, the MLQ was developed by one of the leading innovators in the field of educational leadership, Bernard Bass, along with his esteemed colleague, Bruce Avolio. The MLQ is

based on the FRLT (full range leadership theory discussed in Chapter 2) and encompasses the full range of transformational/transactional/and laissez-faire leadership behaviors. Bass' online MLQ (Form 5X) was used for this study. Since the principals did not conduct a self-assessment, the MLQ-5X Subordinate Rater Form (see Appendix E) was the only survey used to capture the principal's behaviors.

The MLQ has been used in over 30 countries and in a variety of settings, including Fortune 500 companies, government, and education settings (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 13). The MLQ is used most frequently when assessing transformational leadership theory (Hunt & Conger, 1999; Kirkbride, 2006; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramanian, 1996). Ozaralli (2003) asserted that it "is considered the best validated measure of transformational and transactional leadership" (p. 338).

The MLQ-5X questionnaire measures nine facets of leadership: five transformational behaviors, two transactional behaviors, and two Laissez-Faire behaviors. Table 2 illustrates the dimensions and subscales of the MLQ-5X.

Table 2

Breakdown of MLQ Dimensions and Subscales

Dimension	Subscales	Description of leader	No. of questions	Item sample
Transactional Leadership	Contingent Reward	Rewards Achievement	4	Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts
Transactional Leadership	Management-by-Exception (Active)	Monitors mistakes	4	Focuses attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards
Transformational Leadership	Idealized Influence (Attributes)	Builds trust	4	Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her
Transformational Leadership	Idealized Influence (Behaviors)	Acts with integrity	4	Talks about their most important values and beliefs
Transformational Leadership	Inspirational Motivation	Inspires others	4	Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished
Transformational Leadership	Intellectual Stimulation	Encourages innovative thinking	4	Seeks different perspectives when problem solving
Transformational Leadership	Individualized Consideration	Coaches others	4	Spends time teaching and Coaching
Laissez-Faire Leadership	Laissez-Faire	Avoids involvement	4	Avoids making decisions
Laissez-Faire Leadership	Management-by-Exception (Passive)	Waits for problems to appear before taking corrective action	4	Waits for things to go wrong before taking action

Note. Adapted from Avolio & Bass, 2004.

Reliability and validity of the MLQ-5X. The MLQ, which includes several variants, is the most common measure of transformational leadership (Judge, Woolf, Hurst, & Livingston, 2006). It has been administered worldwide and in a myriad of venues. The MLQ Form 5X-Short (Avolio & Bass, 2004) is often utilized to assess the leadership style of supervisors or managers at various levels.

Certain criticisms have resulted in the MLQ's revisions, which Avolio, Bass and Jung (1995) argued has created a better instrument of leadership style. For instance, the original versions of the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1997), based on one-factor and three-factor models, were criticized for their conceptual frameworks (Yukl, 1994). The seven-factor model assessed a leader's Charisma, Inspiration, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized consideration, Contingent Reward, Management-By-Exception, and Laissez-Faire behaviors (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 45). The current model, the MLQ-5X, added two more dimensions, creating a nine-factor model. Charisma was divided into two categories and renamed Idealized Influence Attributed and Idealized Influence Behavior. Management-by-Exception was also divided into two categories: passive and active (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). Descriptive information of the nine leadership behaviors is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

MLQ-5X Normative Sample Descriptive Statistics

Leadership Behavior	Mean	Standard Deviation	No. of Questions
Idealized Attributes	2.93	.82	4
Idealized Behavior	2.73	.76	4
Inspirational Motivation	2.97	.79	4
Intellectual Stimulation	2.76	.75	4
Individualized Consideration	2.78	.88	4
Contingent Reward	2.84	.78	4

(table continues)

Table 3 *(continued)*

Leadership Behavior	Mean	Standard Deviation	No. of Questions
Management-by-Exception (Active)	1.67	.92	4
Passive/Avoidant Behavior	1.02	.79	4
Management-by-Exception (Passive)	0.66	.72	4

Note. N = 4,376. Adapted from Avolio & Bass, 2004.

Antonakis et al. (2003) concluded that the MLQ-5X is a valid and reliable instrument that effectively captures, measures, and analyzes the nine behaviors that comprise the FRLT. The MLQ-5X has repeatedly shown alpha reliability coefficients over 0.90 in over ten years of published research (Antonakis et al., 2003; Avolio & Bass, 1999; Avolio et al., 1995; Tepper & Percy, 1994). In addition to measuring transformational leadership, the MLQ-5X also assesses transactional and laissez-faire leadership. Alpha reliability for the subscales range from .69 to .83 (see Table 4; Bass & Avolio, 2000).

Table 4

Reliability Analysis of the MLQ Leadership Behaviors

Leadership Behavior	Leadership Style	Construct Reliability Score
Idealized Attributes	Transformational	.75
Idealized Behavior	Transformational	.70
Inspirational Motivation	Transformational	.83
Intellectual Stimulation	Transformational	.75

(table continues)

Table 4 *(continued)*

Leadership Behavior	Leadership Style	Construct Reliability Score
Individualized Consideration	Transformational	.77
Contingent Reward	Transactional	.69
Management-by-Exception (Active)	Transactional	.75
Passive/Avoidant Behavior	Laissez-Faire	.70
Management-by-Exception (Passive)	Laissez-Faire	.71

Note. Adapted from Bass & Avolio, 2000.

Many researchers have tested the MLQ to ensure its validity (Ozralli, 2003). Muenjohn and Armstrong (2008) conducted confirmatory factor analysis testing on all three models to determine overall fit (see table 5).

Table 5

Comparison of Overall Fit Among the Three Separate Factor Models

Model	x^2	*df*	x^2/df	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
One Factor	916.85	570	1.61	.73	.69	.06
Three Factor	924.62	569	1.62	.74	.69	.07
Nine Factor	540.18	474	1.14	.84	.78	.03

Note. All models were significant at $p < .01$.

Different goodness of fit indices were calculated to determine overall fit. One of the first measures utilized the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ($X^{2/}df$) (Hoelter, 1983), which shows that as the fit becomes better, the ratio becomes smaller. Byrne (1989) argued that a value of 3.00 or less resulted in an adequate fit. The GFI (Goodness of Fit index) and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) were the next indices of fit applied. Joreskog, Sorbom, and Jhoreskog (1989) concluded that values greater than 0.9

for the GFI and greater than 0.8 for the AGFI both result in good overall fits. The RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) concluded the goodness of fit testing for the three models. Brown and Cudeck (1993) found that an RMSEA value of .05 or less illustrated an appropriate fit. Muenjohn and Armstrong (2008) concluded that

> The version of the MLQ, form 5X (Bass & Avolio, 1997), is successful in adequately capturing the full leadership factor constructs of transformational leadership theory. Therefore, this should provide researchers with confidence, to some certain extent, in using the MLQ-5X version to measure the nine leadership factors representing transformational, transactional, and non-leadership behaviours. (p. 10)

Survey procedures. The sample of 10 teachers per middle school participating in this study completed the MLQ-5X Subordinate Rater form. The MLQ-5X took the teachers approximately 15 minutes to complete (Bass & Avolio, 2004, p. 15). The participants were asked to give their honest response by selecting the best anchor that represents their viewpoint for each item on the survey. The MLQ-5X contains a Likert-type scale response and contains a 5-point rating system based on a tested list of anchors provided by Bass, Cascio, and O'Connor (1974; see Appendix F). The anchors are provided chronologically in a horizontal fashion from left to right: *0 – Not at all; 1 – Once in a while; 2 – Sometimes; 3 – Fairly often; and 4 – Frequently, If not always.*

District Discipline Management System (fighting and bullying incidents). The number of fights and bullying incidents that were reported by each school for the 2010–2011 school year were accessed through the School Board of Broward County's DMS upon District approval. No identifiable student information was collected; numbers were recorded in the aggregate. The researcher measured school safety by totaling the number

of fights and the number of bullying incidents that were reported in the DMS by the school's administration during the 2010–2011 school year.

The DMS, fully implemented in all Broward schools in 2008, is a data collection model that tracks discipline data. As a way of ensuring disciplinary equity from school to school, a Discipline Matrix was created in conjunction with the DMS for elementary and secondary schools. The matrix is a tool for school-based administrators to respond appropriately when students have committed serious violations. The matrix allows administrators to assign consequences consistently, regardless of the school a child attends.

Using the District Discipline Matrix as a starting point, the DMS is intended to create accuracy and consistency of reporting and alignment with district, state, and legal requirements by aligning incidents with appropriate discipline matrix actions. The DMS is accessed through Virtual Counselor, a password protected data warehouse utilized by the Broward School District. There is a separate discipline matrix for elementary and secondary schools. The researcher focused on the secondary schools discipline matrix that aligns with the DMS.

The School District piloted the system at 25 schools from October 2007 until full implementation at the onset of the 2008–2009 school year. Teachers have the ability to generate a disciplinary referral via Virtual Counselor. The referral goes directly to the school administration. Teachers have an automatic track of all the referrals they have written along with the corresponding administrative actions. Bullying is also included in the system and on the Discipline Matrix.

Once the referral is generated and the school administrator processes the referral, the action(s) and the consequence(s) are automatically recorded and saved. The data are archived and readily available. The data collected in the DMS supplies many reports, such as: rates of student violations of the Student Code of Conduct, the different types of incidences, if certain groups of children are being disciplined more over others, and different audit reports.

All school-based administrators are provided professional development on navigating the DMS, recognizing and investigating bullying complaints, and analyzing and interpreting behavior-related incidents at school that require administrative referrals and consequences deemed appropriate by the discipline matrix. The discipline matrix has delineated Student Code of Conduct behavior infractions and appropriate consequences for the first and multiple times. At the conclusion of each school year, reports may be generated that total each disciplinary infraction and consequences. For this study, the researcher looked at the 2010–2011 school year for the total number of fights and total number of bullying incidents that were reported by middle schools.

Contextual data. Assorted types of Broward County Public School data were used to provide additional information regarding demographics and characteristics of the middle schools that participated in this study; however, these data were used for reporting purposes only and not used in the data analysis portion of this study.

First, school location was determined by deciding whether or not the school is located in an urban or suburban setting (Broward County does not have a rural setting). Next, individual school size was categorized by either "Small Middle" (500–1,200 student population) or "Large Middle" (1201 and above student population). Kaplan

(2011, p. 76) noted that the school categorizations are similar to those utilized by Southworth (2004) and suggested by Allen (2002) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2009).

In addition, socioeconomic status (SES) was determined by which schools carry a Title I status. It is important to note that federal law changed its criteria for Title I schools. In the past, 40% or more of the student population that received free or reduced lunch met the Title I criteria. Currently, Title I schools are defined as those schools that serve a student population where 50% or more qualify for free or reduced lunch, which suggests that more schools are meeting the free and reduced lunch criteria than ever before. Finally, a safe school climate was determined by utilizing data from The School Board of Broward County's Annual Customer Survey, which is described in the next section.

Annual Customer Survey (safety climate). The School Board of Broward County's Annual Customer Survey is conducted annually by the school district and has been for the past 16 years. The findings of the survey are intended to inform and assist the school staff members in making decisions to improve school strategies. The data are readily available to the public, which means no permission is needed. The Customer Survey assesses school climate, and provides data organized into three surveyed groups: students, parents, and staff. The data from the 2010–2011 Annual Customer Survey was used in this study to identify school safety climate.

The data collected from parents, teachers, and students are analyzed individually per school and collectively by the school district, providing an overall picture of the school district. Each question is scored based on the response and reported to the school

in an Excel file. The district receives a compiled report of elementary school totals, middle school totals, high school totals, and center totals.

The survey is administered to all students in Grades 3–12, all full-time instructional staff, and a random-sample of one-third of parents of all students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12. Since the first administration of the customer survey in 1997, the School District has vowed to keep all participants' responses strictly confidential, which is mentioned in the survey.

Data for the Customer Survey are collected two ways. Students and staff are surveyed entirely online. Parent surveys are distributed on paper, although parents have the option of logging on to Virtual Counselor, a data warehouse, to complete their survey electronically. In order for the customer survey to have an acceptable level of generalizability, the response rate must equal or exceed 80% (Broward County Public Schools, 2011).

For this study, the researcher measured safety climate using the student response based on the 2010–2011 Annual Customer Survey. Due to the fact that schools administer the survey to the students through scheduled computer lab times, the student response rate is much greater than teachers and parents, whose participation is voluntary, yet highly encouraged by school administration. Therefore, parent and teacher responses were not factored in to this study.

The researcher looked at one specific question on the Student Annual Customer Survey that directly relates to school safety: *I feel safe at school* (Question #8). The Annual Customer Survey questionnaire carries a 6-point Likert-type scale: 5 points for

Strongly Agree, 4 points for *Agree*, 3 points for *Neutral/Uncertain*, 2 points for *Disagree*, 1 point for *Strongly Disagree*, and zero points for *Don't Know*.

In order to reduce the complexity of the data analysis, the Likert-type scales were reduced to the trinomial level by combining both *Agree* categories, both *Disagree* categories, and *Neutral/Uncertain* and *Don't Know* categories. The categories were weighted 2 (*Agree*): 1 (*Disagree*): 0 (*Uncertain/Don't Know*). In simpler terms, the positive responses in the Likert-type scale that includes Strongly Agree and Agree were grouped to create the overall Agree category. Conversely, the negative responses in the Likert-type scale that includes Strongly Disagree and Disagree were grouped to create the overall Disagree category. It is important to note that all Uncertain and Don't Know responses were factored in to the data analysis as these categories had an impact on the climate of the school.

Data Analysis

Principal leadership style was determined from the MLQ-5X regarding whether the principal was perceived to be transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire. School safety climate was determined from the school district's Annual Customer Survey as the degree to which the school was perceived to have a positive school climate. The reported number of fights and bullying incidents recorded in the school district's DMS were collected via records request for each participating middle school and tallied.

Data from the MLQ-5X, the Annual Customer Survey, and the DMS were entered into SPSS for analysis. The data were examined for outliers, skewness, and kurtosis. The reliability of the various MLQ subscales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

Descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation and frequencies and percentages (where relevant), were calculated for all variables.

The overarching research question was: Is there a relationship between specific principal leadership behaviors (as measured by the dimensions of transformational/transactional/laissez-faire), a safe school climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? More specifically, this study addressed the following three questions using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations and multiple linear regressions:

1. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transformational leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

2. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transactional leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

3. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of laissez-faire leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

Research Question 1. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transformational leadership, a safe school climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? Research Question 1 was analyzed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations and multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between the various dimensions of transformational leadership, a safe school climate (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's Annual Customer

Survey), and the number of reported fights (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS), as well as the number of reported bullying incidents (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS).

Research Question 2. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transactional leadership, a safe school climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? Research Question 2 was analyzed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations and multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between transactional leadership, a safe school climate (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's Annual Customer Survey), and the number of reported fights (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS), as well as the number of reported bullying incidents (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS).

Research Question 3. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of laissez-faire leadership, a safe school climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? Research Question 3 was analyzed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations and multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between laissez-faire leadership, a safe school climate (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's Annual Customer Survey), and the number of reported fights (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS), as well as the number of reported bullying incidents (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS).

Assumptions Held by the Researcher

There were six assumptions held by the researcher. First, participants completed the MLQ-5X and the demographics questionnaire in a truthful, unbiased manner. Second, the administration of the MLQ-5X is an effective method for determining principal leadership style. Third, the participating middle schools followed the same disciplinary guidelines and implemented the same consequences set forth by The School Board of Broward County's Discipline Matrix. Fourth, the MLQ-5X and the Annual Customer Survey instruments collected perceptual data, which were not direct measurements of behavior. Fifth, the researcher was aware that this is foundational formative research, and, sixth, that there may be difficulty in controlling the error rate.

It was also the researcher's assumption that in order to improve student behavior, school leaders must demonstrate behavior that is conducive to learning in an environment that is free from conflict, hostility, and negativity. The researcher was an administrator in the same middle school for 9 years, and watched the amount of violence become significantly reduced over these years because the leadership team created a positive, high-performing school climate. Students, parents, and teachers are the primary stakeholders, and it is the researcher's supposition that if they feel the leadership does not exemplify these positive attributes, the likelihood of the school performing to its greatest potential will be diminished.

Role of the Researcher

On a personal note, the researcher was a middle school student in the early 1980s that suffered at the hands of a student constantly engaged in bullying behavior. I know all too well what it feels like to be the defenseless victim who had no way of fighting

back due to the imbalance of power between the bully and me. Afraid to talk to anyone about this for fear of retaliation, the worst part was the anticipation of the encounter: I would look down every hallway, every stairwell, and turn every corner with the utmost caution never knowing when he was coming. The constant state of fear was paralyzing. Not knowing who to talk to, who even knew where to find the principal? The school administration was invisible—they were never seen in the hallways, or in the cafeteria, or in the classrooms. Was it the culture? Was it the "times?" It is my sincere hope that this study informs school leaders of today so students never have to experience the prolonged fear and intimidation as I did in middle school.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant because it adds to our understanding of how school leadership affects school climate and safety in middle schools. Certain literature suggests that the administration is responsible for setting the school climate, and when a climate is inviting, warm, nurturing, and positive, everyone is lifted to a much higher purpose and connection to the school. Possessing the knowledge and skill to be a transformational leader provides one with a fundamental understanding of how to create a climate whereby all stakeholders play an integral role in establishing a safe, learning-rich environment where people and relationships are carefully built and sustained. School leadership may provide schools with a climate that connects all stakeholders to the school, resulting in an increase in student achievement and a decrease in school violence (Blum, 2005b; Schapps, 2003; Wilson & Elliott, 2003). The findings of this study may encourage school administrators to create a positive school climate that is safe and productive

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a relationship between transformational principal leadership style, a safe school climate (as measured by perceived school safety) and school safety (specifically, the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents) in Broward County, Florida's middle schools. The overarching research question was: Is there a relationship between specific principal leadership behaviors (as measured by the dimensions of transformational/transactional/laissez-faire), a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? More specifically, this study addressed the following three research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transformational leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?
2. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transactional leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?
3. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of laissez-faire leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

This chapter describes the data analysis conducted to determine the relationship between school leadership, a safe school climate, and bullying and fighting in middle school. The chapter is divided into the following 11 sections: sample; descriptive statistics of leadership behaviors, school violence and school climate; transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership; school violence and school climate; correlations between leadership dimensions, school climate, and school violence; analysis of the three research questions; analysis for Research Question 1; analysis for Research Question 2; analysis for Research Question 3; and the Chapter Summary.

Sample

There are 40 traditional, non-charter, non-behavioral centered middle schools spanning Broward County. For this study, middle schools across the district were chosen based on principals that were present at their schools consecutively for the 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 school years. Based on an analysis of the school district's archival data conducted on August 1, 2011, out of 40 traditional, non-charter, non-center middle schools, 21 qualified. For this study, 12 out of 21 schools chose to participate.

Assorted types of Broward County Public School data were used to provide additional information regarding school demographics and characteristics; however, these data were used for descriptive reporting purposes only and not used in the data analysis portion of this study because of its limited statistical power. Table 6 describes the participating middle schools indicating location, socioeconomic status and size.

Table 6

Descriptions of the Participating Middle Schools

Middle School	Location	Socioeconomic Status	Size
1	Suburban	Non-Title I	Large
2	Suburban	Non-Title I	Large
3	Suburban	Non-Title I	Large
4	Suburban	Title I	Large
5	Suburban	Title I	Large
6	Suburban	Title I	Large
7	Suburban	Title I	Large
8	Suburban	Title I	Small
9	Suburban	Title I	Small
10	Urban	Title I	Large
11	Urban	Title I	Small
12	Urban	Title I	Small

Note. A "small" middle school is 500–1200 students; a "large" middle school is 1201 and above students. School sizes are comparable to those used by Southworth (2004) and proposed by Allen (2002) and Leithwood & Jantzi (2009).

The 10 teacher positions that were identified to participate in the MLQ-5X were the Language Arts department head, Mathematics department head, Science department head, Social Studies department head, Special Interest (electives) department head, ESE Specialist, ELL Coordinator, Reading Coach, Media Specialist, and Guidance Director. The minimum amount of teachers responding to the MLQ-5X could be no less than 5 out of the 10 chosen teachers. Therefore, the number of participants could have ranged from a minimum of 50 to a maximum of 210 respondents.

A total of 69 teachers participated in the survey, with at least 5 teachers participating from each school, a criterion for school participation. There were no schools that were excluded from the study that failed to have at least five teachers participate. Data from the 69 participants were analyzed in SPSS using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations and multiple linear regression analysis.

Description of Leadership Behaviors, School Violence, and School Climate

The reliability of the various MLQ subscales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Alpha reliability for the subscales ranged from .68 to .87 (see Table 7). In addition, the descriptive statistics for specific principal leadership behaviors (as measured by the dimensions of transformational/transactional/laissez-faire), as measured by the MLQ, are presented and discussed in this section (see Table 8).

Table 7

Reliability Analysis of the MLQ Leadership Behaviors

Leadership Behavior	Leadership Style	Construct Reliability Score
Idealized Attributes	Transformational	.87
Idealized Behavior	Transformational	.70
Inspirational Motivation	Transformational	.85
Intellectual Stimulation	Transformational	.79
Individualized Consideration	Transformational	.74
Contingent Reward	Transactional	.76
Management-by-Exception (Active)	Transactional	.81
Passive/Avoidant Behavior	Laissez-Faire	.68
Management-by-Exception (Passive)	Laissez-Faire	.76

Note. Adapted from Bass & Avolio, 2000.

Transformational leadership. According to Bass and Avolio (1994), there are five measurable leadership behaviors in transformational leadership: *Idealized Attributes* (IA), *Idealized Behavior* (IB), *Inspirational Motivation* (IM), *Intellectual Stimulation* (IS), and *Individualized Consideration* (IC). The average score for the transformational leadership variables was 3.06 and they ranged from 2.71 to 3.35. For transformational leadership, inspirational motivation is important because the leader leads by inspirational example, leads toward the vision and mission, provides positive buy-in motivation to followers, empowers followers to be inspirational motivational leaders themselves, emphasizes positive teamwork through support, encourages team participation, builds constructive and supportive relationships both internal and external to the team, and provides the organization with unconditional support to ensure success.

Transactional Leadership. Transactional Leadership contains two measurable leadership behaviors: *Contingent Reward* (CR), and *Management-By-Exception: Active* (MBEA). The average score for the transactional leadership variables (Contingent Reward, Manage-by-Exception-Active) varied. The average score for Contingent Reward was 3.10 (*SD* = 0.74) and the average score for Manage-by-Exception (Active) was 1.73 (*SD* = 0.69). Contingent reward is an integral part of transactional leadership as it provides the subordinate with tangible rewards for achieving certain goals for the organization. For this study, contingent reward had the highest average score in the transactional leadership construct.

Laissez-Faire Leadership. Laissez-Faire Leadership also contains two measurable leadership behaviors: *Passive/Avoidant Behavior* (LF), and *Management-By-Exception: Passive (MBEP)*. The descriptive statistics for the Passive/Avoidant

Leadership (Laissez-Faire) dimension indicate that the respondents were less likely to rate their leader using this leadership style than transactional leadership or any of the dimensions of transformational leadership. The average score for Manage-by-Exception (Passive) was 1.01 (*SD* = 0.70) and the average score for Laissez-Faire Leadership was 0.63 (*SD* = 0.66).

The transformational and transactional leadership dimensions were more highly endorsed and exhibited by the school leaders being rated by the teachers than the Laissez-Faire Leadership dimension.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for the Leadership Variables (N = 69)

Leadership Characteristics	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
Transformational Leadership				
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	.25	4.00	3.12	0.76
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	.75	4.00	3.20	0.68
Inspirational Motivation	.75	4.00	3.35	0.68
Intellectual Stimulation	.50	4.00	2.92	0.71
Individual Consideration	.25	4.00	2.71	0.80
Transactional Leadership				
Contingent Reward	.50	4.00	3.10	0.74
Manage-by-Exception (Active)	.00	3.75	1.73	0.69
Passive/Avoidant Leadership (Laissez-Faire)				
Manage-by-Exception (Passive)	.00	3.00	1.01	0.70
Laissez-faire Leadership	.00	3.25	0.63	0.66

School violence and school climate. The descriptive statistics for school violence and school climate (as measured by perceptions of school safety) for the 2010–2011 school year can be found in Table 9. An average of 861.00 (*SD* = 429.00) students per school felt their school was safe; an average of 230.00 (*SD* = 69.00) students felt their school was unsafe; and an average of 293.00 (*SD* = 63.00) students were uncertain about the safety of their school. In order to reduce the complexity of the data analysis for the safe school climate, the Likert-type scales were reduced to the trinomial level by combining both *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* categories, both *Strongly Disagree* and *Disagree* categories, and *Neutral/Uncertain* and *Don't Know* categories. While the data are presented here for the perceptions of safety and lack of safety, the focus from this point forward will be on perceptions of school safety.

The average number of fights was 47.00 (*SD* = 29.00) and the number of fights ranged from 4.00 to 99.00. The average number of bullying incidents was 2.00 (SD = 2.00) and the number of bullying incidents ranged from 0 to 9.00.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for the School Violence and School Climate Variables (N = 69)

School Climate and School Violence	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
School climate				
Students who agree the school is safe	209.00	1704.00	861.00	429.00
Students who agree the school is unsafe	109.00	364.00	230.00	69.00
Students who were uncertain the school is safe	117.00	404.00	293.00	63.00
School violence				
Number of fights	4.00	99.00	47.00	29.00
Number of bullying incidents	.00	9.00	2.00	2.00

Relationships Between Leadership Dimensions, School Climate, and School Violence

Pearson correlations were conducted to examine the bivariate association between the leadership dimensions, school climate (as measured by perceived school safety), and school violence; the results can be found in Table 10. The results indicated there were no statistically significant correlations between the leadership dimension and the number of students who agree that the school is safe.

The number of fights was positively and significantly correlated with Idealized Influence (Behavior) (r = .28, p = .01), Individual Consideration (r = .21, p = .04), Contingent Reward (r = .20, p = .04), and Manage by Exception (Active) (r = .24, p = .02). Conversely, the number of fights was negatively and significantly correlated with Manage-by-Exception (Passive) (r = -.25, p = .01) and the number of students who agree that the school is safe (r = -.34, p = .00).

The number of bullying incidents was negatively and significantly correlated with Manage-by-Exception (Passive) (r = -.23, p = .02).

Table 10

Two-Tailed Pearson Correlations Leadership Styles, School Violence, and School Climate (N = 69)

Correlations	*r/ p*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. *II(A)*	*r*	1											
	p												
2. *II(B)*	*r*	.78	1										
	p	.00											
3. *IM*	*r*	.76	.80	1									
	p	.00	.00										
4. *IS*	*r*	.67	.64	.78	1								
	p	.00	.00	.00									
5. *IC*	*r*	.66	.65	.64	.63	1							
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00								
6. *CR*	*r*	.74	.74	.79	.76	.65	1						
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00							
7. *MBEA*	*r*	-.04	.01	.03	.03	.01	.12	1					
	p	.37	.44	.39	.39	.46	.15						
8. *MBEP*	*r*	-.47	-.51	-.59	-.58	-.52	-.42	.05	1				
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.33					
9. *LF*	*r*	-.50	-.43	-.56	-.50	-.50	-.45	-.06	.57	1			
	p	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.30	.00				
10. Students who agree the school is safe	*r*	.00	-.04	-.02	-.03	-.18	-.02	.02	.13	.05	1		
	p	.48	.35	.43	.38	.06	.40	.42	.14	.33			
11. No. of fights	*r*	.18	.28	.14	.09	.21	.20	.24	-.25	-.19	-.34	1	
	p	.06	.01	.12	.22	.04	.04	.02	.01	.05	.00		
12. No. of bullying incidents	*r*	.01	-.02	.08	.20	.01	.08	-.04	-.23	-.19	.05	.02	1
	p	.43	.41	.24	.05	.44	.23	.34	.02	.05	.34	.40	

Note. The nine leadership behaviors are abbreviated: *II(A)* is Idealized Influence (Attributes); *II(B*) is Idealized Influence(Behavior); *IM* is Inspirational Motivation; *IS* is Intellectual Stimulation; *IC* is Individualized Consideration; *CR* is Contingent Reward; *MBEA* is Management by Exception (Active); *MBEP* is Management by Exception (Passive); *LF* is Laissez-Faire.
r = Pearson correlation.

Results: Analysis for the Three Research Questions

What relationship exists between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and middle school safety? For Research Question 1, multiple linear regression models were used to examine the relationship between leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), and the number of reported bullying incidents and reported fights (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS). Two separate regression models were conducted to address this research question (i.e., one with the number of reported fights as the dependent variable and another with the number of reported bullying incidents as the dependent variable).

What relationship exists between principal leadership style and the number of bullying incidents? To test the relationship between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and the number of bullying incidents (the dependent variable), a multiple linear regression was used. The model as a whole was not statistically significant, $F(9, 59) = 1.17$, $p = .32$, and it accounted for only 15% of the variance in the number of bullying incidents ($R^2 = .15$). Given the lack of a statistically significant model, the regression coefficients in Table 11 were not interpreted. Per Aiken and West (1991) and Cohen, Aiken, and West (2004), the results indicated that multicollinearity was not an issue given that Tolerance values were above .10 and VIF values were less than 10.00. Based on the analysis of the data, a relationship could not be determined between school leadership style and the number of bullying incidents.

Table 11

Regression Coefficients for Principal Leadership Style and Number of Bullying Incidents (The Dependent Variable)

Model	*B*	Std. Error	*β*	*t*	*p*	Tol.	VIF
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	-.27	.57	-.10	-.47	.63	.28	3.45
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	-.66	.68	-.22	-.96	.33	.25	3.90
Inspirational Motivation	-.32	.78	-.11	-.41	.68	.19	5.06
Intellectual Stimulation	.73	.62	.26	1.18	.23	.28	3.52
Individual Consideration	-.45	.44	-.18	-1.02	.30	.43	2.30
Contingent Reward	.47	.65	.17	.71	.47	.23	4.22
Manage-by-Exception (Active)	-.21	.35	-.07	-.61	.54	.92	1.07
Manage-by-Exception (Passive)	-.68	.49	-.24	-1.40	.16	.47	2.09
Laissez-faire Leadership	-.46	.48	-.15	-.97	.33	.55	1.81

What relationship exists between principal leadership style and the number of student fights? To test the relationship between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and the number of student fights (the dependent variable), a multiple linear regression model was calculated. The model as a whole was not statistically significant, $F(9, 59) = 1.96$, $p = .07$, and the model accounted for only 11% of the variance in number of student fights ($R^2 = .11$). Given the lack of a statistically significant model, the regression coefficients in Table 12 were not interpreted. Multicollinearity was not an issue given that Tolerance values were above .10

and VIF values were less than 10.00. Based on the analysis of the data, a relationship could not be determined between school leadership style and the number of student fights.

Table 12

Regression Coefficients for Principal Leadership Style and Number of Student Fights (The Dependent Variable)

Model	*B*	Std. Error	*β*	*t*	*p*	Tol.	VIF
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	.54	8.11	.01	.06	.94	.28	3.45
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	15.51	9.72	.36	1.59	.11	.25	3.90
Inspirational Motivation	-15.85	11.08	-.36	-1.43	.15	.19	5.06
Intellectual Stimulation	-10.97	8.77	-.26	-1.25	.21	.28	3.52
Individual Consideration	2.06	6.32	.05	.32	.74	.43	2.30
Contingent Reward	7.80	9.24	.19	.84	.40	.23	4.22
Manage-by-Exception (Active)	10.37	4.98	.24	2.08	.04	.92	1.07
Manage-by-Exception (Passive)	-12.38	6.92	-.29	-1.78	.07	.47	2.09
Laissez-faire Leadership	-3.35	6.81	-.07	-.49	.62	.55	1.81

What relationship exists between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and middle school climate? For Research Question 2, a multiple linear regression model was used to examine the relationship between leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), and middle school climate (as measured by perceived school safety).

To test the relationship between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and middle school climate, a multiple linear regression was used (see Table 12). The dependent variable was operationalized as the number of students indicating they felt the school was safe. The model as a whole was not statistically significant ($F(9, 59) = 0.51$, $p = .85$), and accounted for only 7% of the variance in middle school climate ($R^2 = .07$). Given the lack of a statistically significant model, the regression coefficients in Table 13 were not statistically significant and they were not interpreted. Multicollinearity was not an issue given that Tolerance values were above .10 and VIF values were less than 10.00. Based on the analysis of the data, a relationship could not be determined between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and middle school climate.

Table 13

Regression Coefficients for Principal Leadership Style and School Climate as Measured by the Number of Students Who Indicate They Feel the School is Safe (The Dependent Variable)

Model	*B*	Std. Error	*β*	*t*	*p*	Tol.	VIF
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	88.22	130.04	.15	.67	.50	.28	3.45
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	-11.71	155.78	-.01	-.07	.94	.25	3.90
Inspirational Motivation	71.26	177.64	.11	.40	.69	.19	5.06
Intellectual Stimulation	45.17	140.59	.07	.32	.74	.28	3.52
Individual Consideration	-170.09	101.35	-.32	-1.67	.09	.43	2.30
Contingent Reward	-14.39	148.17	-.02	-.09	.92	.23	4.22
Manage-by-Exception (Active)	8.49	79.87	.01	.10	.91	.92	1.07
Manage-by-Exception (Passive)	90.48	111.00	.14	.81	.41	.47	2.09
Laissez-faire Leadership	-20.34	109.16	-.03	-.18	.85	.55	1.81

What relationship exists between middle school climate and middle school safety? For Research Question 3, multiple linear regression models were used to examine the relationship between middle school climate (as measured by perceived school safety), and the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS). Two separate regression models were conducted to address this research question (i.e., one with the number of reported fights

as the dependent variable and another with the number of reported bullying incidents as the dependent variable).

What relationship exists between middle school climate and number of bullying incidents? To test the relationship between middle school climate (number of students who feel safe and the number of students who feel unsafe) and the number of bullying incidents (the dependent variable), a multiple linear regression was used. The model as a whole was not statistically significant ($F(2, 66) = 1.59$, $p = .21$) and accounted for only 4% of the variance in the number of bullying incidents ($R^2 = .04$). Given the lack of a statistically significant model, the regression coefficients in Table 14 were not statistically significant and they were not interpreted. Multicollinearity was not an issue given that Tolerance values were above .10 and VIF values were less than 10.00. Based on the analysis of the data, a relationship could not be determined between middle school climate and the number of bullying incidents.

Table 14

Regression Coefficients for School Climate and the Number of Bullying Incidents (The Dependent Variable)

Model	*B*	Std. Error	*β*	*t*	*p*	Tol.	VIF
Students who agree that the school is safe	.00	.00	-.03	-.23	.81	.87	1.14
Students who agree that the school is unsafe	-.00	.00	-.22	-1.73	.08	.87	1.14

What relationship exists between middle school climate and number of student fights? To test the relationship between middle school climate (number of students who

feel safe and the number of students who feel unsafe) and the number of student fights (the dependent variable), a multiple linear regression was used. The model as a whole was statistically significant ($F(2, 66) = 7.87$, $p < .01$) significant and accounted for 19% of the variance in the number of student fights ($R^2 = .19$). The test of the regression model indicated that the number of students who agree that the school is safe ($B = -.01$, $p = .04$) and the number of students who agree that the school is unsafe ($B = .12$, $p = .01$) are significantly associated with the number of student fights. Based on the regression coefficients in Table 15, with all other variables being constant, when the number of students who agree that the school is safe increases by one unit, the number of student fights decreases by 1%. In addition, when the number of students who agree that the school is unsafe increases by one unit, the number of student fights increases by 12%. Multicollinearity was not an issue give that Tolerance values were above .10 and VIF values were less than 10.00. Based on the analysis of the data, there was evidence of a relationship between middle school climate and the number of student fights.

Table 15

Regression Coefficients for School Climate and the Number of Fights (The Dependent Variable)

Model	*B*	Std. Error	*β*	*t*	*p*	Tol.	VIF
Students who agree that the school is safe	-.01	.00	-.24	-2.05	.04	.87	1.14
Students who agree that the school is unsafe	.12	.05	.28	2.43	.01	.87	1.14

Chapter Summary

The study included 69 participants and examined three research questions. At the descriptive level, the transformational leadership and transformational leadership dimensions were more highly endorsed than the laissez-faire leadership dimension. An average of 861.00 (*SD* = 429.00) students per school felt their school was safe, an average of 230.00 (*SD* = 69.00) students felt their school was unsafe, and an average of 293.00 (*SD* = 63.00) students were uncertain about the safety of their school. The average number of fights was 47.00 (*SD* = 29.00), and the number of fights ranged from 4.00 to 99.00. The average number of bullying incidents was 2.00 (SD = 2.00), and the number of bullying incidents ranged from 0 to 9.00.

Correlational analysis indicated there were no statistically significant correlations between the leadership dimensions and the number of students who agreed that the school was safe. The number of fights was positively and significantly correlated with Idealized Influence (Behavior), Individual Consideration, Contingent Reward, and Manage by exception (Active), and negatively and significantly correlated with Manage-by-Exception (Passive), and the number of students who agreed that the school was safe. The number of bullying incidents was negatively and significantly correlated with Manage-by-Exception (Passive).

For Research Question 1, multiple linear regression models were used to examine the relationship between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), and the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents. The first multiple linear regression model examined the multivariate relationship between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and the

number of bullying incidents (the dependent variable). The model as a whole was not statistically significant. The second multiple linear regression model examined the multivariate relationship between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and the number of student fights. The model was not statistically significant. Therefore, a relationship could not be determined between leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), and the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents.

Research Question 2 asked what relationship exists between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and middle school climate. For Research Question 2, a multiple linear regression model was used to examine the relationship between leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), and middle school climate. The dependent variable was operationalized as the number of students indicating they felt the school was safe. The model as a whole was not statistically significant. Therefore, a relationship could not be determined between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and middle school climate.

Research Question 3 asked what relationship exists between middle school climate and middle school safety. For research question three, multiple linear regression models were used. The first multiple linear regression model examined the multivariate relationship between middle school climate (number of students who feel safe and the number of students who feel unsafe) and the number of bullying incidents. The model as a whole was not statistically significant. Therefore, a relationship could not be determined between middle school climate and the number of bullying incidents.

The next multiple linear regression model examined the multivariate relationship between middle school climate (number of students who feel safe and the number of students who feel unsafe) and the number of student fights. The model as a whole was statistically significant and accounted for 19% of the variance in the number of student fights. The number of students who agree that the school is safe and number of students who agree that the school is unsafe were significantly associated with the number of student fights. With all other variables being constant, when the number of students who agree that the school is safe increases the number of student fights decreases; when the number of students who agree that the school is unsafe increases, the number of student fights also increases. Therefore, a relationship was found between middle school climate and the number of student fights.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

In Chapter 5, the major sections include limitations and delimitations of the study, discussion of the findings, conclusions and implications, recommendations, and a closing summary.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there is a relationship between transformational principal leadership style, a safe school climate (as measured by perceived school safety), and school safety (specifically, the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents) for middle schools in Broward County, Florida.

The three research questions below framed this study and each is further elaborated in the discussion of findings:

1. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transformational leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

2. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of transactional leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

3. Is there a relationship between the various dimensions of laissez-faire leadership, a safe learning climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school?

To recap, out of 40 traditional, non-charter, non-behavioral centered middle schools spanning Broward County, 21 middle schools qualified based on principals that were present at their schools consecutively for the 2002–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 school years. Twelve schools chose to participate. Principal leadership style was determined from the MLQ-5X, school safety climate was determined from the school district's Annual Customer Survey, and the number of fights and bullying incidents recorded in the school district's DMS were collected via a records request for each participating middle school. The 10 teacher positions that were identified to participate in the MLQ-5X were the Language Arts department head, Mathematics department head, Science department head, Social Studies department head, Special Interest (electives) department head, ESE Specialist, ELL Coordinator, Reading Coach, Media Specialist, and Guidance Director.

The next section explains the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Limitations of the study. There were limitations that emerged throughout the study. First, the sample had limitations. Middle schools were the sole focus, thus excluding elementary and high school participation, as well as omitting charter and private school involvement. Out of 21 eligible middle schools, 12 participated, which significantly decreased the statistical power to generate substantial results. Moreover, out of 210 eligible teacher participants, 69 chose to participate, once again, decreasing statistical power. Furthermore, the absence of principal participation was another limitation because this study did not incorporate their self-analysis using the MLQ-5X. Leadership, therefore, was exclusively assessed based on the teachers' perceptions of

their school leaders. Due to the small sample and participation rate, it was difficult to generalize the findings. Hence, caution is forewarned in generalizing these findings to other settings.

Second, the study was limited to one urban county in the state of Florida, so the findings will not represent the rest of the state, or the nation.

Third, there were no observations and stakeholders were not interviewed.

Fourth, the researcher did not attempt to establish causality.

Fifth, there are a myriad of other variables that may affect school climate and school safety that were not included nor could be controlled for in this study. Examples include parenting and community behavior, mobility rates, media coverage of recent disturbing events, television, movies, and video games.

Sixth, the overall participation was disappointing, especially since the researcher has known a majority of the principals for many years. However, due to the heightened levels of public school accountability, high-stakes testing, ever-changing evaluation systems, revising of leadership standards and a contentious political environment, a school leader's focus is sharply tuned to the aforementioned issues, which, unfortunately, does not lend itself to participation in dissertation studies.

Seventh, only one year's worth of climate and safety data were collected, which diminished the ability to analyze trends in the data that may establish climate or violence patterns. Also, each statistical analysis conducted based on the 69 participants utilized identical bullying, fighting, and climate data (see Table 9). As a result, due to the lack of variance in these data sets, there was minimal, if any statistical significance.

Delimitations of the study. There were delimitations of this study as well. First, the study was confined to middle schools located in one large, urban school district in Florida. Second, the study was delimited to schools whose principal had been in his/her position for the 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 school years. Third, the data collected in the DMS were based on the reported incidents of bullying and fighting within the school. Therefore it is important to note that unreported incidents, i.e., incidents that occurred but went unreported due to victim fear of retaliation, or incidents that occurred but were deemed something other than "fighting" or "bullying" after an investigation occurred, were not included in this study.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings are explored in this section by answering each research question and by discussing each finding in relationship to prior research. The first research question addresses the relationship between school leadership and school safety, specifically the relationship between the transformational leadership behaviors and the amount of bullying incidents and student fights. The second research question addresses the relationship between school leadership and school climate. The third research question and final part of this section addresses school climate and school safety, specifically the relationship between a safe school climate and the amount of bullying incidents and student fights.

Relationship between school leadership and school safety. Research Question 1 examined the relationship that existed between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and middle school safety. The first multiple linear regression model was used to examine the degree of relationship between

the schools' mean numbers of bullying incidents and the mean score on transformational principal leadership style. The second multiple linear regression model was used to examine the degree of relationship between the schools' mean numbers of student fights and the mean score on transformational principal leadership style. Because this study was limited to 12 participating middle schools and 69 teachers, the models were not statistically significant. Therefore, a relationship could not be determined between leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), and the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents.

Although there is some literature (Clabough, 2006; Moore, 1998; Wilson, 2004) to suggest a possible relationship between principal leadership style and school violence, and this was an anticipated outcome, this study may challenge those assumptions as no relationship was found. To support this notion, Moore's earlier research (1998) found that chaos theory may play a role because acts of violence sometimes happen for no reason, and concluded that generalizing such connections between school violence and school leadership cannot be made. The relationship between principal leadership style and violence in middle schools remains unclear (Clabough, 2006; Moore, 1998; Wilson, 2004). Further research is needed to determine if a relationship does exist between these variables, and to what extent, if any, does transformational leadership positively affect the amount of school violence.

Relationship between school leadership and the number of bullying incidents. Although the data analysis did not reveal a significant relationship between school leadership and the amount of bullying incidents, a negative correlation was found (see Table 10) between the amount of bullying incidents and Management-by-Exception

(Passive), a laissez-faire construct, which is a corrective behavior that focuses on waiting for mistakes to occur rather than being proactive (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 3). Roland and Galloway (2004) found that the schools with the highest bullying rates were categorized as schools with poor leadership, a poor professional climate, little professional cooperation, and low consensus about professional matters. This finding suggests that principals with a more laissez-faire leadership style have more bullying incidents than principals that behave in a more transformational or transactional leadership style.

Relationship between school leadership and the number of student fights. The study did not reveal a significant relationship between school leadership and the amount of student fights. It is important to note, however, that the number of fights was positively and significantly correlated with Idealized Influence, Individual Consideration, Contingent Reward, and Manage by Exception (Active).

Idealized Influence and Individualized Consideration, two of the transformational constructs, were positively and significantly correlated with the number of student fights. This discovery is both perplexing and unexpected, based on the assumption that transformational leadership positively affects school climate, which, in turn, should negatively affect the amount of fighting. Idealized Influence is the influence that transformational leaders exert over their associates so that they will want to identify with leaders and their mission (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 50). Individualized Consideration stands for the leader helping associates to achieve their fullest potential by addressing their unique concerns and developmental needs (p. 29). These incongruous and surprising findings suggest that principals that exhibit these two specific transformational behaviors

have more fights in their schools than principals that exhibit Inspirational Motivation or Intellectual Stimulation behaviors.

Contingent Reward and Management by Exception (Active) are the two transactional behaviors that a leader may display. Contingent Reward clarifies what rewards subordinates receive if they achieve a certain goal (p. 50) and Management by Exception (Active) is a corrective behavior that focuses on setting standards (p. 3). Based on the findings, transactional leaders also have a higher number of fights in their schools.

Conversely, the number of fights was negatively and significantly correlated with Manage-by-Exception (Passive). Barbuto (2005) found that this is perhaps the most inactive, least effective and most frustrating leadership style. In an environment where the leader reacts to situations once they've occurred, one may expect a positive correlation with the number of fights. One would expect that this "absence of leadership" style, where leaders avoid getting involved, avoid decision-making altogether, and delay in responding to critical situations (Harland et al., 2005), would promote an unsafe school climate and the amount of fights would be much higher in a school lead with a passive-avoidant leadership style. Yet that is not the finding. This may be explained by the possibility that fighting is not happening or that it is happening, but the school leadership is not responding to the fights, which also means that there is a lack of reporting, which could explain the negative correlation.

Relationship Between School Leadership and School Climate. Research Question 2 examined the relationship between principal leadership style (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and middle school climate (as measured by perceived school safety). A multiple linear regression model was used and

because this study was limited to 12 participating middle schools and 69 teachers, the models were not statistically significant and a relationship could not be determined. Although the model as a whole was not statistically significant and a relationship could ne be determined, the literature has already established that school climate is affected by the school principal's leadership style (Bulach & Malone, 1994; Deal & Peterson, 1990, 1999; Kelley et al., 2005; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 1998). Despite this study's finding, the style of leadership a principal employs is important because of the effect it may have on school climate (Clabough, 2006; Goens & Clover, 1991; Goldman, 1998). Moreover, a healthy and positive school climate is important because of its effect on staff, students, and school effectiveness (Bulach & Malone, 1994; Clabough, 2006; Fullan, 1992; Geijsel et al., 2003; Goens & Clover, 1991; Halpin & Croft, 1963; Lambert, 2003; Leithwood, 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Leithwood et al., 1999).

Relationship Between School Climate and School Safety. Research Question 3 examined the relationship between middle school climate (as measured by perceived school safety), and the number of reported fights and reported bullying incidents (as measured by The School Board of Broward County's DMS). The first multiple linear regression model was used to examine the degree of relationship between the number of students who feel safe at school and the number of reported bullying incidents. The second multiple linear regression model was used to examine the degree of relationship between the number of students who feel safe at school and the number of reported fights. No evidence was found to suggest a relationship between school climate and the number of reported bullying incidents. There was statistically significant evidence to suggest a relationship between school climate and the number of reported fights.

Relationship between school climate and the number of bullying incidents.

Because this study was limited to 12 participating middle schools and 69 teachers, the model was not statistically significant and a relationship could not be determined between school climate and the number of bullying incidents. This may be explained by the low numbers of reported bullying incidents in a one-year period (ranging from zero to nine). One reason for low numbers may be that there is minimal bullying in the participating middle schools. A second reason may be due to the private nature of the relationship between the bully and the victim (whereas physical fights are usually out in the open for an audience to gather), and the power that the bully exerts that results in the victim being silenced due to innate fear. The act may not be witnessed or reported by the victim, which may explain the low numbers of reported bullying incidents. This is consistent with research that has suggested that students may deny their involvement in bullying, or minimize embarrassing experiences of victimization by not reporting (Cornell, 2006b; Cornell & Loper, 1998; Cross & Newman-Gonchar, 2004). Third, the investigation of alleged bullying consumes an inordinate amount of time for the school administrator. As a practicing administrator in the Broward County School District, a bullying investigation takes up to ten days to complete, less the appeal process. There are nine steps a Broward school-based administrator follows to complete thoroughly a bullying investigation:

1. Receive and/or complete the Broward County Public Schools Bullying Complaint or Bullying Anonymous Reporting Form. Document reports and interventions in writing and on the specific data systems.
2. Interview the complainant within (2) school days (If a student, assure students that his or her name will be kept confidential).
3. Interview the suspected victim within two (2) school days.
4. For situations involving students, contact the suspected victim's parent(s)/guardian(s) within two (2) school days.

5. Interview the accused within two (2) school days, and have accused prepare a written response to the complaint and record receipt.
6. For situations involving students, contact the accused student's parent(s)/guardian(s) within (2) school days.
7. Interview any person who witnessed the bullying incident, has knowledge of the bullying incident, or who may have related information. Complete and have this person or persons sign the Broward County Public Schools Bullying Witness Statement.
8. Document the findings of the investigation, interventions, and any corrective action consistent with the Discipline Matrix, specified Data System, any employee collective bargaining agreements or School Board Policies within 10 days of initiating the investigation.
9. Notify all parties in writing of the final decision within ten (10) days along with their right to appeal to the Area Superintendent/designee or Executive Leadership Team member within five (5) school days. Maintain all documentation on file. (Broward County Public Schools, 2010, p. 36)

Due to the extreme nature of the investigation, coupled with a plethora of teacher evaluations and classroom visits, a variety of managerial duties, dealing with everyday discipline and student behavior, as well as attending a multitude of meetings and professional development for administrators, the likelihood of calling the act something other than "bullying" may be a reason for low reported numbers of bullying incidents.

Unnever and Cornell (2003) found that students that attend middle schools with a "climate of bullying" tend to believe that chronic bullying behavior is tolerated or overlooked by authorities at their middle school, which may also explain why this type of school climate creates passivity among bystanders and hesitancy to seek help among victims (Olweus & Limber, 2000; Unnever & Cornell, 2003). Previous research discovered that possibly the most crucial element in getting students to report bullying is a climate shift that has no tolerance for bullying. When students know that school faculty, staff, and administration take this pervasive bullying problem seriously and work

tirelessly to address and eradicate it, they may be more apt to seek adult help (Eliot, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2010; Unnever & Cornell, 2003, 2004). In an atmosphere where trust is limited or non-existent between adults and students, and students know the prevalence of bullying either goes undetected, or gets reported and goes untreated, the likelihood of accurate reporting may be tainted, thus resulting in low reported numbers.

In addition, the bullying and fighting data were identical for all 69 participants, which limited the amount of variance found in schools where bullying was reported. Thus, there was not enough statistical power to generate substantial results. Surprisingly, this finding is inconsistent with other research that found that a school atmosphere that is rampant with bullying can produce a climate of fear and intimidation that results in harmful implications for student adjustment and learning (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003; Olweus & Limber, 2000).

Relationship between school climate and the number of student fights. The study revealed a relationship between school climate and the number of student fights. Based on the regression coefficients (see Table 15), with all other variables being constant, when the number of students who agreed that the school was safe increased by one unit, the amount of fights decreased by 1%; and when the number of students who agreed the school was unsafe increased by one unit, the amount of student fights increased by 12%. The finding is important because it clearly illustrates the adverse impact fighting has on school climate (perceived school safety).

This finding links to the previous research that suggests a positive school climate has a shielding effect on school violence (Battisch & Horn, 1997; Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2009; Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, & Hill,

1999; Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009; Resnick, Bearman, Blum, & Bauman, 2011). Students that attend schools with a positive atmosphere where they are connected and engaged are much less apt to engaging in problem behaviors, such as substance abuse, school misconduct, physical fights, and feeling unsafe (Byrk & Driscoll, 1988; Li & Lerner, 2011; McBride et al., 1995; Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie, & Saylor, 1999). The literature argues that safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climates have a tendency to nurture greater attachment and belonging to the school in addition to providing an ideal foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning (Blum, 2005a, 2005b; Osterman, 2000). In order to promote a safe school climate, the school leader's first requirement is to provide a safe environment for all stakeholders. Once a safe environment is in place, teachers and students will be able to focus on academic and social skills development, which promotes academic achievement and appropriate student behavior.

Conclusions and Implications

School violence is a recurring nationwide problem (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Fong, et al., 2008). For a growing number of students, increased violence, bullying, cyberbullying, and chaos in the classroom are a regular part of the school day (Ayres, 2009; Barter, 2012; Carlson, 2011; Davis, 2010; Ellis, 2011; Espelage, 2011; Lane, 2011, Ludwig, 2011; Lunenburg, 2010; Scott-Coe, 2011; Shapiro, 2011). Reducing school violence and creating a safe school climate are a daily part of school life that a principal, as the leader of the school, must deal with directly. This research adds to the literature that addresses the relationships between middle school leadership, a safe school climate, and school safety.

Although overall the study did not identify statistically significant relationships, it did find a significant relationship between school climate and the amount of fights. This implies that schools with positive climates have less student fights. Surprisingly, a positive relationship was found between two transformational leadership behaviors and the number of student fights, suggesting that school leaders that employ Idealized Influence and Individualized Consideration have more fights at their schools. The overall findings indicate that schools with a safe climate and less violence may not have a significant relationship to principal leadership style.

This study could not determine a relationship between middle school leadership and climate, however, it builds on a robust literature that investigates the relationship between principal leadership behavior and school climate (Barth, 1990; Clabough, 2006 Goens & Clover, 1991; Goldman, 1998; Hallinger, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991, 1992a, 1992b; Sybouts & Wendel, 1994), and school climate and school violence (Blum & Rinehart, 1997; Bonny et al., 2000; Clabough, 2006; Moore, 1998; Schapps & Solomon, 1990; Wilson, 2004). What remains unclear is the relationship between school leadership behavior and its effect on school violence (Clabough, 2006; Moore, 1998; Wilson, 2004).

Recommendations

Recommendations are made in the following sections for leadership practice, policy, and future research, followed by a closing summary of this study.

Recommendations for leadership practice.

1. Although the study did not find a strong relationship between middle school leadership, climate, and safety, principals may want to examine their own school climate and determine whether it is perceived as safe and identify areas for improvement and

change. One way Broward school leaders can assess climate is to have the school leadership team conduct an in-depth analysis of the Annual Customer Survey. They can compare the parent, teacher, and student responses to first determine the school climate, then make adjustments according to the data to ensure a positive, safe school climate. In addition to locally developed surveys, there are instruments available to measure stakeholders' perceptions of school climate. For example, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) developed the Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments (CASE) School Climate Surveys (1986) which measure 10 facets of school climate: (1) teacher-student relationships, (2) security and maintenance, (3) administration, (4) student academic orientation, (5) student behavior, (6) guidance, (7) student-peer relationships, (8) parent and community-school relationships, (9) instructional leadership, and (10) student activities. According to the NASSP, each stakeholder group (i.e. teachers, parents, students, school faculty, staff, and administration, and community members) should participate in the survey to obtain a holistic view of the school's climate.

2. The study found that schools with lower amounts of fights had safer school climates. This study suggests that without a positive, safe school climate, the number of fights a school faces may be greater, thus creating an unsafe climate. In order to cultivate and nurture a positive, safe school climate, school leaders must focus their efforts on fostering positive relationships between all school stakeholders in order to create a collaborative, respectful environment. The absence of these positive qualities in a school may result in a toxic climate, which is the antithesis of a productive, flourishing, safe school. Schmoker (1999) pointed out that although we live and act in a time of data-

driven and goal-oriented school improvement schemas, "the most important ingredient in results-oriented leadership is overlooked" (p. 12), which is school climate.

3. Although this study did not find a strong relationship between middle school leadership, a safe school climate and school safety, other scholars have established that principals with a transformational leadership style have a positive effect on student achievement, whole-school reform, and climate and culture (Clabough, 2006; Fullan, 1992; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood, 1993; Mitchell & Tucker, 1992; Murphy & Hallinger, 1992; Wilmore & Cornell, 2001). Given that the principal is the key determinant in creating school climate, and that a safe school climate was found in this study to have a positive correlation to the number of fights in schools, school districts should hire principals with the propensity to impact school climate positively.

4. Research has identified school climate as a factor that is associated with school violence and bullying (Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, & Johnson, 2004; Ryan, 2009; Skiba et al., 2004). The most recent literature (AERA, 2013) found that a positive school climate is essential to bullying reduction and to student retention in school and there are research-based steps educators can take to improve school climates and reduce bullying. Some of those strategies include:

- Developing a shared vision among educational leaders and the entire school community about what kind of school they want their school to be.
- Assess the school's strengths and needs in a comprehensive, reliable, and valid manner.
- Teaching prosocial skills in regular classes, advisory classes, and other small-group experiences with opportunities for practice.
- Engaging in prevention efforts that range from on-the spot teaching with students who engage in teasing or bullying behavior to formal school-wide programs.
- Supporting partnerships among parents, educators, and mental health professionals who seek to interrupt the bully-victim-bystander cycle and

> encourage bystanders to be upstanders who do not allow bullying to continue. (p. 48)

5. Research-based violence prevention curricula and anti-violence intervention programs need to be implemented with fidelity in schools so that students have the necessary tools to identify violent and bullying behavior as well as the appropriate social-emotional skills to properly handle these situations.

Recommendations for policy.

1. Policymakers are recommended to seek advice from practicing school leaders regarding the current state of school climate and safety and what can be done to support educators to eradicate school violence. For example, school safety should be placed at the forefront of this country's educational agenda. Research shows that students cannot learn if they do not feel safe (Chavis, 2011; Lunenburg, 2010; Lunenburg & Irby, 2006; Melvin, 2012; Robers et al., 2010).

2. The inordinate amount of money that is invested into the myriad of curricula and school reform program should be reallocated to intervention programs that teach children to grow socially, as well as academically. For example, Espelage and Low (2012) found that social and emotional learning help students become more respectful and considerate of others. Furthermore, policy should include schools and communities joining forces to create and promote stronger home-school partnerships, coupled with greater community-influenced efforts to teach students appropriate social-emotional skills, genuine concern for others, and an appreciation for civility, that are paramount to the well-being of our schools and society (AERA, 2013).

3. Most legislation focuses on reporting, investigating, and intervening when school violence has occurred, but prevention efforts should be a key focus for school-based safety efforts (AERA, 2013). Therefore, policymakers should focus their efforts on understanding what actually produces reductions in bullying and fighting in schools, and then create policy that addresses the reduction and eradication of violence in schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research include:

1. Future research incorporating the same design used in this study but with a larger sample, that is, more than 10 teacher-leaders per middle school, might yield statistically significant results.

2. In addition to middle schools, the inclusion of elementary schools, high schools, and behavioral centers may establish a relationship between school leadership, a safe school climate, and school safety.

3. It is recommended to collect climate and violence data for a multi-year period (i.e., the amount of years that the principal served at the school). The data analysis determining the relationships between school leadership, school climate, and school safety may be stronger, and provide more clarity to the current scholarship.

4. The inclusion of descriptive statistics about the schools (i.e., SES, location, school size) may lend themselves to a comparative study of schools with similar characteristics, which may provide further insight into the relationships between school leadership, school climate, and school safety.

5. A qualitative study is recommended in order to provide thick, rich data regarding student, teacher, and administrative perceptions of their school climate, levels

of safety, and leadership style, adding to our understanding of how and why principal leadership behaviors affect school climate and school safety.

6. A quantitative study using other leadership theories (i.e. Servant, Distributive, Authoritarian, etc.) to determine if there is a relationship with school climate and school safety.

Closing Summary

The wide-ranging problem of school violence has been one of the most pressing educational issues in the United States (Rogers, 2004). Internationally, concerns about school violence reveal that this is a serious global problem (Due et al., 2005; Due, Merlo, Harel-Fisch, & Damsgaard, 2009). According to Byrk and Schneider (2002) the principal is "the single most influential actor in a given school community" (p. 26). It is the principal's responsibility to model behaviors that foster a safe organizational climate. Effective principals that lead successful schools create a safe and secure environment, as well as promote student achievement, professional development, enhance positive staff morale, and behave in an ethical manner that demonstrates genuine caring, respect, and trust.

Does leadership matter? In any organization, leadership matters. School leaders especially are charged with a multi-faceted job that involves balancing instructional leadership, student achievement, organizational leadership, and ensuring a safe school. The leadership style of a principal has an effect on many facets of school effectiveness. Although this study did not find a relationship between principal leadership style and school safety, previous research has found that schools with low levels of violence are organized, prompted, and initiated through the role of a strong, visionary, influential, and

well-respected principal, and that the selection of this principal may be the single-most important factor in reducing the incidences of violence in a given school (Astor, et al., 2009). This indicates further research is needed to understand the relationship between school leadership and school safety.

In closing, the researcher was extremely surprised that no major statistically significant relationships were found between middle school leadership, a safe school climate, and school safety as expected. There was, however, some evidence to suggest that leadership behaviors influence school climate and that school climate influences school safety. The relationship between school leadership and school safety, specifically fighting, yielded the most unexpected result, citing a positive correlation between specific transformational leadership behaviors and the amount of student fights. Another big surprise was the negative correlation between laissez-faire behaviors and the amount of fights, oddly suggesting that an absence of leadership produces an environment with less fighting. This is contrary to the literature and like other findings, demands further investigation.

Despite all the research and programs, worldwide the problem with school violence persists. Violence, bullying, and fighting in the classroom have become a regular part of the school day for a growing number of students (Ayers, 2009; Barter, 2012; Carlson, 2011; Davis, 2010; Ellis, 2011; Espelage, 2011; Lane, 2011; Ludwig, 2011; Lunenberg, 2010; Scott-Coe, 2011; Shapiro, 2011). The challenge remains for educational leaders to create a safe, positive school climate that responds to all children's academic needs, provide a safe and secure campus where students may focus on their studies, and reduce and even eradicate the bullying and fighting that middle schools face.

Appendix A

IRB Approval Broward County

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
600 SOUTHEAST THIRD AVENUE • FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33301-3125 • TEL 754-321-2580 • FAX 754-321-2722

DEAN W. VAUGHAN
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair
dean.vaughan@browardschools.com

February 26, 2013

Mr. Jonathan Leff
9121 NW 11th Court
Plantation, FL 33322

Dear Mr. Leff:

Thank you for submitting your research proposal, #725 — ***Leadership Matters: The Relationship of School Leadership to a Safe School Climate, Bullying and Fighting in Middle School*** — for consideration by Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). Staff has reviewed your research proposal and approval has been granted for you to *contact and request participation from the Principals of the following Middle Schools* ***only:***

Middle Schools:
Coral Springs, William Dandy, Falcon Cove, Forest Glen, Glades, Indian Ridge, Lyons Creek, Millennium, New Renaissance, Parkway, Pines, Pioneer, Plantation, Pompano Beach, Ramblewood, Rickards, Silver Lakes, Sunrise, Tequesta Trace, Westpine, Walter C. Young

This approval means that we have found your proposed research methods to be compatible with a public school setting and your research questions of interest to the school district. The expiration date of your proposal is ***Wednesday, February 26, 2014.*** If you are unable to complete your research by the expiration date, you must submit a Request for Renewal, (http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/sar/docs/IRB.pdf) to the Student Assessment & Research Department ***four weeks*** prior to the expiration date. If a renewal is granted, a Renewal Approval Letter and Approval Memorandum will be issued.

Implementing your research, however, is a decision to be reached by the affected school-based staff on a ***strictly voluntary basis***. To assist the school-based staff in their decision to participate, please outline the operational steps to be performed by staff at their school. Based upon this information, each school-based staff would then be ***asked to make a decision to participate or not*** and ***inform you or the requesting research parties of their decision at the time of your/their request.*** School-based staff has been instructed not to cooperate unless you **provide this District Approval Letter and the Principal Approval Memorandum**.

The anticipated date for submitting an electronic copy of your research findings is ***Thursday, June 26, 2014.*** If additional assistance is needed from our staff, **please contact me at 754-321-2500**.

Sincerely,

Dean W. Vaughan

DWV/RWC:bt
Attachments

Appendix B

IRB Approval Florida Atlantic University

FAU
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
Mailing Address:
Division of Research
777 Glades Rd., SU-80, Suite 106
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Tel: 561.297.0777 Fax: 561.297.2573

http://www.fau.edu/research/researchint

Nancy Aaron Jones, Ph.D., Chair

DATE:	February 13, 2013
TO:	Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, PhD
FROM:	Florida Atlantic University IRB
IRBNET ID #:	344843-2
PROTOCOL TITLE:	[344843-2] Leadership Matters: The Relationship of School Leadership to a Safe School Climate, Bullying and Fighting in Middle School
PROJECT TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE:	February 13, 2013
EXPIRATION DATE:	February 12, 2014
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Expedited review category # B7

Thank you for your submission of Response/Follow-Up materials for this research study. The Florida Atlantic University IRB has APPROVED your New Project. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

- This study is approved for a maximum of 210 subjects.
- Please provide the IRB with a copy of the Broward County School District approval letter once secured.
- It is important that you use the approved, stamped consent documents or procedures included with this letter.
- **Please note that any revision to previously approved materials or procedures, including modifications to numbers of subjects, must be approved by the IRB before it is initiated. Please use the amendment form to request IRB approval of a proposed revision.
- All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All regulatory and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed, if applicable.
- Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.
- Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.
- **This approval is valid for one year.** A Continuing Review form will be required prior to the expiration date if this project will continue beyond one year.

If you have any questions or comments about this correspondence, please contact Elisa Gaucher at:

Institutional Review Board
Research Integrity/Division of Research
Florida Atlantic University
SU-80, Suite 105
Boca Raton, FL 33431
Phone: 561-297-0777

* Please include your protocol number and title in all correspondence with this office.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within our records.

Appendix C

Principal Approval Memo for Research

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
STUDENT ASSESSMENT & RESEARCH

DEAN W. VAUGHAN
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) CHAIR

Telephone: 754-321-2500 Facsimile: 754-321-2722

APPROVAL EXPIRES WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2014.

February 26, 2013

TO: Principals of the Middle Schools listed below

FROM: Mr. Dean W. Vaughan
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair

VIA: Desmond K. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Chief School Performance and Accountability Officer

SUBJECT: **PRINCIPAL APPROVAL MEMORANDUM FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL #725 — LEADERSHIP MATTERS: THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TO A SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE, BULLYING AND FIGHTING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Staff has reviewed the research proposal, #725 — ***Leadership Matters: The Relationship of School Leadership to a Safe School Climate, Bullying and Fighting in Middle School*** — submitted by Mr. Jonathan Leff, a Doctoral Student at Florida Atlantic University and approval has been granted for this researcher and/or members of the Research Team to *contact and request participation from the Principals of the following Middle Schools **only:***

Middle Schools:
Coral Springs, William Dandy, Falcon Cove, Forest Glen, Glades, Indian Ridge, Lyons Creek, Millennium, New Renaissance, Parkway, Pines, Pioneer, Plantation, Pompano Beach, Ramblewood, Rickards, Silver Lakes, Sunrise, Tequesta Trace, Westpine, Walter C. Young

The recently completed review of the proposed research involved school- and/or district-based staff, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals, and a review of the proposed research methods. These steps were taken to determine if the proposed methods demonstrated reasonable promise of generating data/analyses that will accurately answer the main research questions of interest.

Your ***participation*** in this research project is ***strictly voluntary***. To aid in your decision, Mr. Horowitz has been instructed to share, with each selected school-based staff, a complete description of research activities, as well as **provide the District Approval Letter and this Principal Approval Memorandum** for their review. Based upon this information, each school-based staff would then be ***asked to make a decision to participate or not*** and ***inform the requesting research parties of their decision at the time of their request.***

DKB/DWV/RWC:bt

Appendix D

MLQ-5X Permission Letter

mind garden

www.mindgarden.com

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for the above named person to use the following copyright material;

Instrument: ***Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire***

Authors: ***Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass***

Copyright: ***1995 by Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass***

for his/her thesis research.

Five sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any other published material.

Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

Appendix E

MLQ-5X Subordinate Rater Form

MLQ Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
Rater Form (5x-Short)

Name of Leader: _____ Date: _____

Organization ID #: _____ Leader ID #: _____

This questionnaire is to describe the leadership style of the above-mentioned individual as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. **If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank.** Please answer this questionnaire anonymously.

IMPORTANT (necessary for processing): Which best describes you?

___ I am at a higher organizational level than the person I am rating.
___ The person I am rating is at my organizational level.
___ I am at a lower organizational level than the person I am rating.
___ I do not wish my organizational level to be known.

Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits the person you are describing. Use the following rating scale:

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

THE PERSON I AM RATING. . .

1.	Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate	0	1	2	3	4
3.	Fails to interfere until problems become serious	0	1	2	3	4
4.	Focuses attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards	0	1	2	3	4
5.	Avoids getting involved when important issues arise	0	1	2	3	4
6.	Talks about their most important values and beliefs	0	1	2	3	4
7.	Is absent when needed	0	1	2	3	4
8.	Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems	0	1	2	3	4
9.	Talks optimistically about the future	0	1	2	3	4
10.	Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her	0	1	2	3	4
11.	Discusses in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets	0	1	2	3	4
12.	Waits for things to go wrong before taking action	0	1	2	3	4
13.	Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	0	1	2	3	4
14.	Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose	0	1	2	3	4
15.	Spends time teaching and coaching	0	1	2	3	4

Continued =>

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

16.	Makes clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved	0	1	2	3	4
17.	Shows that he/she is a firm believer in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."	0	1	2	3	4
18.	Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group	0	1	2	3	4
19.	Treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of a group	0	1	2	3	4
20.	Demonstrates that problems must become chronic before taking action	0	1	2	3	4
21.	Acts in ways that builds my respect	0	1	2	3	4
22.	Concentrates his/her full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures	0	1	2	3	4
23.	Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions	0	1	2	3	4
24.	Keeps track of all mistakes	0	1	2	3	4
25.	Displays a sense of power and confidence	0	1	2	3	4
26.	Articulates a compelling vision of the future	0	1	2	3	4
27.	Directs my attention toward failures to meet standards	0	1	2	3	4
28.	Avoids making decisions	0	1	2	3	4
29.	Considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others	0	1	2	3	4
30.	Gets me to look at problems from many different angles	0	1	2	3	4
31.	Helps me to develop my strengths	0	1	2	3	4
32.	Suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments	0	1	2	3	4
33.	Delays responding to urgent questions	0	1	2	3	4
34.	Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission	0	1	2	3	4
35.	Expresses satisfaction when I meet expectations	0	1	2	3	4
36.	Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved	0	1	2	3	4
37.	Is effective in meeting my job-related needs	0	1	2	3	4
38.	Uses methods of leadership that are satisfying	0	1	2	3	4
39.	Gets me to do more than I expected to do	0	1	2	3	4
40.	Is effective in representing me to higher authority	0	1	2	3	4
41.	Works with me in a satisfactory way	0	1	2	3	4
42.	Heightens my desire to succeed	0	1	2	3	4
43.	Is effective in meeting organizational requirements	0	1	2	3	4
44.	Increases my willingness to try harder	0	1	2	3	4
45.	Leads a group that is effective	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix F

MLQ-5X Scoring Key

MLQ Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
Scoring Key (5x) Short

My Name: _____ Date: _____

Organization ID #: _____ Leader ID #: _____

Scoring: The MLQ scale scores are average scores for the items on the scale. The score can be derived by summing the items and dividing by the number of items that make up the scale. All of the leadership style scales have four items, Extra Effort has three items, Effectiveness has four items, and Satisfaction has two items.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

Idealized Influence (Attributed) total/4 =	Management-by-Exception (Active) total/4 =
Idealized Influence (Behavior) total/4 =	Management-by-Exception (Passive) total/4 =
Inspirational Motivation total/4 =	Laissez-faire Leadership total/4 =
Intellectual Stimulation total/4 =	Extra Effort total/3 =
Individualized Consideration total/4 =	Effectiveness total/4 =
Contingent Reward total/4 =	Satisfaction total/2 =

1.	Contingent Reward	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Intellectual Stimulation	0	1	2	3	4
3.	Management-by-Exception (Passive)	0	1	2	3	4
4.	Management-by-Exception (Active)	0	1	2	3	4
5.	Laissez-faire	0	1	2	3	4
6.	Idealized Influence (Behavior)	0	1	2	3	4
7.	Laissez-faire	0	1	2	3	4
8.	Intellectual Stimulation	0	1	2	3	4
9.	Inspirational Motivation	0	1	2	3	4
10.	Idealized Influence (Attributed)	0	1	2	3	4
11.	Contingent Reward	0	1	2	3	4
12.	Management-by-Exception (Passive)	0	1	2	3	4
13.	Inspirational Motivation	0	1	2	3	4
14.	Idealized Influence (Behavior)	0	1	2	3	4
15.	Individualized Consideration	0	1	2	3	4

Continued =>

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

16.	Contingent Reward	0	1	2	3	4
17.	Management-by-Exception (Passive)	0	1	2	3	4
18.	Idealized Influence (Attributed)	0	1	2	3	4
19.	Individualized Consideration	0	1	2	3	4
20.	Management-by-Exception (Passive)	0	1	2	3	4
21.	Idealized Influence (Attributed)	0	1	2	3	4
22.	Management-by-Exception (Active)	0	1	2	3	4
23.	Idealized Influence (Behavior)	0	1	2	3	4
24.	Management-by-Exception (Active)	0	1	2	3	4
25.	Idealized Influence (Attributed)	0	1	2	3	4
26.	Inspirational Motivation	0	1	2	3	4
27.	Management-by-Exception (Active)	0	1	2	3	4
28.	Laissez-faire	0	1	2	3	4
29.	Individualized Consideration	0	1	2	3	4
30.	Intellectual Stimulation	0	1	2	3	4
31.	Individualized Consideration	0	1	2	3	4
32.	Intellectual Stimulation	0	1	2	3	4
33.	Laissez-faire	0	1	2	3	4
34.	Idealized Influence (Behavior)	0	1	2	3	4
35.	Contingent Reward	0	1	2	3	4
36.	Inspirational Motivation	0	1	2	3	4
37.	Effectiveness	0	1	2	3	4
38.	Satisfaction	0	1	2	3	4
39.	Extra Effort	0	1	2	3	4
40.	Effectiveness	0	1	2	3	4
41.	Satisfaction	0	1	2	3	4
42.	Extra Effort	0	1	2	3	4
43.	Effectiveness	0	1	2	3	4
44.	Extra Effort	0	1	2	3	4
45.	Effectiveness	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix G

Informed Consent From Principals

INFORMED CONSENT FROM PRINCIPALS

1) **Title of Research Study**: "Leadership Matters": The Relationship of School Leadership to a Safe School Climate, Bullying and Fighting in Middle School

2) **Investigator**: Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Professor, College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership & Research Methodology, FAU; Jonathan Leff, Doctoral Student, FAU.

3) **Purpose**: The purpose of this research study is to investigate the relationship between transformational principal leadership style, school climate, and school safety. This is a topic of utmost concern in our schools, especially bullying. The overarching research question is: Is there a relationship between specific principal leadership behaviors (as measured by the dimensions of transformational/transactional/laissez-faire), a safe school climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? The significance of this study is to add to our understanding of how school leadership and school climate impact safety in middle schools.

4) **Procedures**: This study is investigating the teachers' perceptions of school leadership style, which is why I seek your permission to invite the following teachers to participate: Language Arts department head, Mathematics department head, Science department head, Social Studies department head, Special Interest (electives) department head, ESE Specialist, ELL Coordinator, Reading Coach, Media Specialist, and Guidance Director.

I am fully aware of the time constraints placed upon you as principal. If you choose to assist me, you would be providing consent to use your school and the aforementioned teachers to participate by completing the MLQ-5X questionnaire. I have attached the MLQ-5X Subordinate Rater Form to this email for your review. Once you are in agreement, I would need you to provide me with the names of the Language Arts department head, Mathematics department head, Science department head, Social Studies department head, Special Interest (electives) department head, ESE Specialist, ELL Coordinator, Reading Coach, Media Specialist, and Guidance Director so I can email them the link to the questionnaire with embedded informed consent. The survey takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

The teachers that will be voluntarily participating in the MLQ 5X questionnaire (the instrument being used to assess Transformational, Transactional, and Laisser-Faire leadership behaviors) must be a department head or must have served as a department head for the principal of record during the 3 years being studied. Teachers will be made aware that the principal they will be rating was the principal of the school during the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 school years, in case the current principal is different than the one being rated.

This study is in no way a reflection of you personally; rather it is a comprehensive look at principal behavior in relation to a safe school climate, school size, school SES (Title I/non-Title I), and school location (urban/suburban). Your consent is extremely valuable to me as it will assist me in completing my doctoral degree and add to the literature of school leadership, school climate, and school safety. I genuinely hope you will allow your teachers to participate and I truly appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

FAU Institutional Review Board

Approved on:	2/13/2013
Expires on:	2/12/2014

5) **Risks:** Participation in this study is voluntary and there are no foreseeable risks. All identities (participants and schools) will be kept in strict confidence. No schools, principals, or teachers will be named in the study, providing complete confidentiality.

6) **Benefits:** This study will add to our understanding of school climate, leadership, and the relationships that exist between school stakeholders. The research will inform our understanding of leadership style and may contribute to improving school safety.

7) **Data Collection & Storage:** The school names will be collected strictly for cataloging names with survey responses and descriptive data. Names will not be used in any part of the report. All participants will remain confidential. The middle schools will be identified based on their descriptive statistics (i.e. Large, Small, Suburban, Urban, Non-Title I or Title I). All data will be stored on a password-protected computer to which the researcher only has access, thus increasing security measures for strict confidentiality. Only the researchers working with the study will see the data. All data provided will be kept confidential, unless required by law. We will make every attempt to keep your data secure to the extent permitted by the technology. However, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. Stored data will be deleted from the server and any computers used in this study five years after the study is completed.

8) **Contact Information:** For related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Florida Atlantic University Division of Research at (561) 297-0777. For other questions about the study, you should call the principal investigators, Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, at (954) 236-1036 or Jonathan Leff, at (754) 264-3843 or jleff2@fau.edu.

9) **Consent Statement:**
I have read the information describing this study. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and freely consent to allow the school to participate. I have printed a copy of this consent form for my records. My submission of the teachers' emails is my consent.

FAU Institutional Review Board

Approved on:	2/13/2013
Expires on:	2/12/2014

Appendix H

Informed Consent From Teachers

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERNET-BASED RESEARCH - TEACHERS

1) Title of Research Study: Leadership Matters: The Relationship of School Leadership to a Safe School Climate, Bullying and Fighting in Middle School

2) Investigator: Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Professor, College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership & Research Methodology, FAU; Jonathan Leff, Doctoral Student, FAU.

3) Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to investigate the relationship between transformational principal leadership style, school climate, and school safety. This is a topic of utmost concern in our schools, especially bullying. The overarching research question is: Is there a relationship between specific principal leadership behaviors (as measured by the dimensions of transformational/transactional/laissez-faire), a safe school climate and the number of reported fights and bullying incidents in middle school? The significance of this study is to add to our understanding of how school leadership and school climate impacts safety in middle schools.

4) Procedures: A survey of the teachers' perceptions regarding principal leadership style will be collected using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ form 5X). You will be rating the principal that served there between 2008-2011. School district approval has been obtained. Permission from each principal will be obtained before emailing the teachers. Informed consent is embedded in this email and by acknowledging the consent form, you will be linked to the online survey.

The research conducted for this study is unobtrusive and will not interfere with your teaching. Please complete the survey and demographic questionnaire that will take you approximately 15 to 20 minutes. The survey is delivered through your school email account, which provides a link to the survey.

5) Risks: Participation in this study is voluntary and there are no foreseeable risks. All identities (participants and schools) will be kept in strict confidence. No schools, principals, or teachers will be named in the study, providing complete confidentiality. The information provided cannot be traced back to the teacher or school. The information in no way can be used against you for evaluation.

6) Benefits: This study will add to our understanding of school climate, leadership, and the relationships that exist between school stakeholders. The research will inform our understanding of leadership style and may contribute to improving school safety.

7) Data Collection & Storage: The school names will be collected strictly for cataloging names with survey responses and descriptive data. Names will not be used in any part of the report. All participants will remain confidential. The middle schools will be identified based on their descriptive statistics (i.e. Large, Small, Suburban, Urban, Non-Title I or Title I). All data will be stored on a password-protected computer to which the researcher only has access, thus increasing security measures for strict confidentiality. Only the researchers working with the study will see the data. All data provided will be kept confidential, unless required by law. We will make every attempt to keep your data secure to the extent permitted by the technology. However, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third

parties. Stored data will be deleted from the server and any computers used in this study five years after the study is completed.

8) Contact Information: For related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Florida Atlantic University Division of Research at (561) 297-0777. For other questions about the study, you should call the principal investigators, Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, at (954)236-1036 or Jonathan Leff, at (754) 264-3843 or jleff2@fau.edu.

9) Consent Statement: I have read the information describing this study. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and freely consent to participate. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I have printed a copy of this consent form for my records. By clicking the "I consent" button below, I am giving my consent to participate in this research study.

I consent I do not consent to participate in this research study

FAU Institutional Review Board

Approved on:	2/13/2013
Expires on:	2/12/2014

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