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IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE ON  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN MEMPHIS CITY SCHOOLS' ALTERNATIVE HIGH  
SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Mississippi

Billy Joe Carter Walker II

May 2012

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## ABSTRACT

Walker, Billy Joe Carter. Ph.D. The University of Mississippi. May 2012. Impact of Leadership Effectiveness and Organizational Climate on Academic Achievement in Memphis City Schools' Alternative High Schools.

Professors: Dr. Douglas R. Davis and Dr. Dennis A. Bunch

The primary purpose of this study was to conduct an investigation to determine the relationships between leadership effectiveness, organizational climate, and academic achievement in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. In this quantitative study, the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was used to gather leadership effectiveness perceptions, and the Gallup Q12 was used to gather organizational climate surveys from the four regional alternative high schools in Memphis City Schools. The survey instruments were distributed to over 120 principals, teachers, and educational support staff with 103 (85.83%) responding. Analysis of variance (ANOVA), two-way analysis of variance (Two-Way ANOVA), and a Pearson's correlation were used to examine the relationships between the independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate and the dependent variable of academic achievement.

The study yielded significant findings. First, leadership effectiveness had a potentially significant impact on academic achievement. An ANOVA and the Two Way ANOVA showed leadership effectiveness has a potentially significant relationship with academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. Organizational climate

did not have a significant impact on academic achievement. Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate were found to have a highly significant relationship. Additionally, leadership effectiveness and organizational climate were highly correlated to each other. When alternative high schools' leadership effectiveness perceptions increased, so did their positive organizational climate scores. Therefore, leadership effectiveness and organizational climate have a significant relationship for fostering positive work environments when combined with respected leaders in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools.

Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate when combined were not significant variables when compared to academic achievement. Prior research suggested both variables were significant when implemented over an extended period of time. Survey data was taken over a two-week window, and test scores were used from one cycle of the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. When combined, both variables did not have a significant impact on academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. These findings will provide practitioners and legislators with a greater understanding of alternative schools in Memphis and should direct policy decisions and legislation to enhance academic achievement. Further research is needed to examine if leadership effectiveness and organizational climate impact academic achievement over an extended period of time or through other academic measures.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beautiful Earth Angel, Brenda Kay Graves Walker,  
for her support and allowing me to pursue my dreams and be the foundation for our children,

Bethany Joi and Billy JoeCarter Walker III

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank GOD for allowing me to complete His vision for my educational journey. Secondly, I would like to thank Brenda Kay, Bethany Joi, and Billy JoeCarter Walker III, because you are the fire that drives me to achieve in all fields of human endeavor. Being driven to succeed daily for my wife and children is what makes me who I am. I thank GOD every day for the opportunity to be the leader of my family and I ask Him to guide my steps. I would also like to thank my parents, Velma Joyce and Billy Joe Walker, Sr., for always providing a positive family foundation and undeniable work ethic for my sisters and me. We could always dream the biggest dreams and know that hard work, perseverance, and a belief in GOD could overcome any obstacle by following your example.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Alternative schools have been the dumping ground for at-risk children since the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. In this age of accountability, a definite solution must be found for at-risk youth who find themselves in an alternative learning environment. Educational research must focus on the ability of the teacher, school leader, and school culture as a whole to impact student achievement.

Kearney (2008) points out leaders can mobilize unwilling constituents when school climate is improved. Though their improved by many of the values, beliefs, and actions, administrators can improve school climate (McCain & Jukes, 2001). Focusing on the morale of staff and what makes a leader effective is one of the best ways to gauge the results of a school (Breed, 1997). Kearney (2008) further points out the potential of leaders and their influence on the school environment cannot be taken for granted. When leaders show confidence, charisma, care, love, the ability to follow, and shared decision making skills, a more productive environment will be accessible to all stakeholders (McCain & Jukes, 2001). Kearney (2008) states when leaders and constituents share values, the leader-follower relationship can be unified. Leadership is paramount in alternative settings because the challenges faced by teachers, stakeholders, and administration are unique and stretch the very fabric of the educational setting (Fantini, 1973).

When teachers are considered an integral part of the decision making process and have power to control what affects them directly, they have a greater sense of accomplishment and commitment (Knuston & College, 1999). Teachers frequently use the term commitment to describe themselves and each other (Nias, 1981). The author further suggests a strong sense of commitment is attributed to the sharing of values, beliefs, and vision between teachers and administrators. Teacher commitment and engagement have been identified as two of the most critical factors in the success and future of education, and they contribute to teachers' work performance (Jennings, 1995). Breed (1997) discusses teachers being the first line of excellence when it comes to getting the most out of the students and developing a rapport leading to academic achievement. The author further discusses academic achievement and overall educational exposure is critical to schools and prepares students for the options available to them after graduation.

Alternative education as a whole has been studied for a variety of reasons, but needs to be researched more for academic achievement (Cash, 2004). The premise of alternative education was founded on the idea educators were dealing with challenged youth who needed to be separated from the general population. Over time, these institutions became increasingly known for high dropout rates, low academic achievement, and high attrition rates for educators and staff. Cash (2004) further asserts alternative schools are not seen as educationally equal when compared to their traditional counterparts, and many highly qualified educators chose not to teach at these institutions. Effective educators choosing not to be involved in the alternative system led to a perception of it being subpar. Fullan (2002) points out students suffer when teachers have a lack of commitment to the quality work of students and deem them unable to learn under any conditions.

Organizational success is determined in large part by the commitment of the teacher to the students (Fullan, 2002). Fullan went on to note transformational leadership returns the highest yields when searching for efficient organizations and determining what creates their successes. Transformational leadership positively affects teachers, and this fact emphasizes the importance of their being led by this style of leadership. Transformational leaders are able to equip their followers with a sense of ownership, thereby allowing the organization to remain efficient in the absence of the leader (Murphy, 1998). When followers buy into the organization and develop ownership, they are fully committed to the vision and mission of the organization. Murphy (1998) states principals who are able to get teachers to fully commit and take ownership not only of their classrooms, but also of the larger educational community's opportunities available to the children, have truly transformed the learning community.

Schools have a host of problems which include reduced graduation rates, gang influence, gang behavior, reduced academic performance, complex student needs, increased dropout rates, and reduced extracurricular activities (York, Barr, & Duke, 2004). Knuston (1999) states leadership effectiveness and organizational climate can propel lower achieving schools to perform as well or better than their counterparts if the right principal is in place. Positive leadership and ongoing commitment are two qualities on which there should be focus, mainly among the school administrators and teachers (Knuston, 1999).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem addressed is to determine the impact of organizational climate and leadership effectiveness on academic achievement in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Alternative high schools throughout the United States have traditionally had a problem tracking student academic achievement. Students need to be assessed when entering the

alternative program and again when exiting the program to measure academic growth, recession, or no change at all. This research focuses on the relationship between and among organizational climate and leadership effectiveness on academic achievement in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. The study uses a matrix of leadership effectiveness, as measured by the Leadership Principles Inventory (LPI), and organizational climate, as measured by the Gallup Q12 climate survey. Academic achievement is based on results of the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) Does a relationship exist between the leadership effectiveness perceptions of Memphis City Schools' alternative high school faculty and the student achievement of their students?
- 2) Is there a relationship between the organizational climate of Memphis City Schools' high schools and its impact on student achievement?
- 3) Is there a relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools?
- 4) Is there an impact by leadership effectiveness and organizational climate on student achievement as measured by English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses are written in null form and will be answered from the data collected for the two independent variables: leadership effectiveness and organizational climate. The dependent variable is academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course exams.

- 1) There is no significant difference in academic achievement in relation to leadership effectiveness.
- 2) There is no significant difference in academic achievement in relation to organizational climate.
- 3) There is no significant difference between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate.
- 4) There is no significant difference between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate combined and academic achievement.

### **Delimitations**

The study will involve only Memphis City Schools' alternative faculty members and their perceptions on leadership effectiveness and organizational climate.

### **Limitations**

The small sample size does not provide a thorough examination of alternative school's related perceptions of leadership across the state of Tennessee or the United States. The study will include only first time test takers in English II and Algebra I. The students are from the four regional preparatory alternative high schools, and the study will not use a Memphis City Schools' common assessment. Populations from alternative schools are more transient than the regular student population. Past relationship issues at alternative schools that alter staff perceptions of school leaders are not being tied to leadership effectiveness. Similarly, organizational climate is affected by variables other than academic achievement that are not being measured.

## **Definitions**

Alternative education: a non-traditional academic program designed to meet students' educational, behavioral, and social needs (Advisory Council for Alternative Education, 2007).

Alternative school: a unique place of teaching because of the physical characteristics of the school setting, structure of the programs, teachers who willingly take on the most challenging teaching assignments, and the students themselves with their myriad of challenges (Carley, 1994).

Alternative programs: places where groups of students designated an alternative meet. Such programs are found in existing schools and other locations. Often they have encouraging names like Capstone, Crossroads, or Learning Enterprise (Knuston, 1999).

At-risk students: students who experience difficulty in academic settings or various reasons (Knutson, 1999).

Culture: represents a historically transmitted pattern of meanings expressed both explicitly through symbols and implicitly through beliefs (Geertz, 1973).

Distributed leadership: involves teachers' expertise and ideas for supporting school improvement (Marzano, 2003).

Education reform: general actions to improve public education by using organizational theory, learning theory, and program evaluation, and research (Marzano, 2003).

Engaged climate: when teachers work cooperatively to accomplish their goals and are committed to their students. The principals in such environments do not support teachers, do not closely supervise teacher performance, and do not shield the staff from bureaucratic routines. The faculty interacts openly with students and colleagues, but the teacher-principal relationship is closed (Hoy & Sabo, 1998).

Leadership: the ability to inspire followers to achieve certain goals that represent the values and motives of both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978).

Management: the act of handling or controlling something successfully (Burns, 1978).

Open climate: the situation whereby principals support teachers and give them freedom to act. Teachers are not closely supervised, and principals avoid burdening them with busy work. The faculty is respectful, non-critical of each other, and committed to assisting students (Hoy & Sabo, 1998).

Organizational climate: a set of measurable properties of the work environment perceived directly or indirectly by the people who live and work in this environment and assumed to influence their motivation and behavior (Litwin & Stringer, 1968).

Organizational commitment: the level of identification and involvement with an organization as characterized by the belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and objectives by those involved in the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Organizational culture: the distinctive blend of norms, values, and accepted practices that exist within schools. Practices may be formal or informal and encompass the behavioral norms, values, and assumptions of those in the organization (Deal & Peterson, 1990).

Principal behavior: exhibited by a leader, who encourages teacher leadership, builds cultures that value teacher input, promotes collaboration, and provides constructive feedback (Hoy & Sabo, 1998).

School climate: describes the environment that affects the behavior of teachers and students; characterizes the organization at the school building and classroom level (Miskel, 1996).

School culture: a system of shared orientations (norms, core values, and tacit assumptions) held by members and holds the unit together and gives it a distinctive identity (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

Transformational leadership: occurs where the leader takes a visionary position and inspires people to follow (Chance, 1992).

Transactional leaders: those who avoid taking risks, pay close attention to time constraints, and choose process over substance for maintaining control (Bass, 1985).

### **Significance of the Study**

The study will inform the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), Tennessee State Board of Education (TSBE), and the Tennessee Alternative Education Association (TAEA) to know whether academic achievement is impacted by effective school leadership and organizational climate. Also, this study may have policy implications for the TSBE forming educational policies that assist alternative educators and their students. The research will explore the relationships between and among leadership effectiveness, organizational climate, and academic achievement. By providing data-driven research that is related to academic achievement, the study will allow TAEA and its member alternative high schools to further research and improve leadership effectiveness. Traditionally, alternative school leaders have been selected for disciplinary reasons, but they have to be academic leaders as well. The collaboration between universities and practitioners will allow for better preparation opportunities for alternative educators. Studies can be investigated by universities and colleges to equip future practitioners to handle diverse alternative school populations, a preparation that has not existed before.

This study addresses the need for alternative education to be measured for academic growth. Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate are independent variables impacting the dependent variable of academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. The independent variable of leadership effectiveness will be measured using the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) survey. Organizational climate will be measured using the Gallup Q12 survey. Chapter Two will discuss the need to measure the impact of independent variables and their effect on academic achievement. Chapter Three will discuss the study methodology and the statistical tests used to show relationships between independent variables and their effect on the dependent variable.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Alternative schools are designed to allow non-traditional students access to education without the limits of a traditional setting (Knuston, 1999). Children learn in a myriad of ways from auditory to visual to kinesthetic. Children are also highly influenced by the social ramifications of particular educational institutions where they feel a sense of belonging (Lezotte, 2005). Any attempt to recommend a single way to provide the best educational experience or the right fit for all children would be ineffective at best (Lezotte, 2005). Alternative schools allow children and educators to approach the traditional educational path with variations better suited to the success of children with differing needs and abilities. Moreover, when educators attempt to assess students' learning difficulties and plan improvement programs to match such assessments, children benefit (Knuston, 1999).

Although alternative schools are non-traditional educational settings, the successful schools that exhibit excellent organizational climate and high teacher commitment. A strong sense of commitment also can be attributed to shared beliefs and vision between teachers and administrators. Leadership effectiveness has been identified as one of the most critical factors for the success and future of education as it contributes to teachers' work performance (Jennings, 1995). This chapter contains a review of research and related literature pertaining to organizational climate and leadership effectiveness.

## **Alternative Education**

Alternative education is a model that allows students to successfully attain educational and social goals (Hadderman, 2002). Alternative schooling has over a dozen distinctive models across the United States. The term “alternative school” refers to nontraditional public and private organizations that are available to students and parents through their own choice (Advisory Council for Alternative Education, 2007). Alternative programs vary and include many different types and models designed for student success. These programs include single classrooms within a traditional educational institution and freestanding educational institutions designed to house children for the school day. Some alternative schools are residential and allow children to live and complete coursework without leaving the institution daily (Hadderman, 2002).

The evolution of alternative schools in the 1960s and 1970s has grown from a few isolated innovations in local communities into an educational reform movement involving millions of students in the United States (Advisory Council for Alternative Education, 2007). Lezotte (2005) estimates more than 15% of students enrolled in public education in the United States were in a public school of choice by 2000. The Advisory Council for Alternative Education (2007) lists the following types of alternative schools:

- 1) Alternative or optional schools: a variety of alternative schools that educate all kinds of students, regardless of their academic or social level. These schools range from programs serving expelled students, at-risk students, and students who have a history of violence to schools for the exceptionally gifted and talented.

- 2) Career-centered high schools: originally popularized as part of court-ordered desegregation efforts. Specialty high schools have become increasingly prevalent and offer career themes.
- 3) Charter schools: a public school operated independently of the local board, often with a curriculum and educational philosophy different from those of other schools in the system.
- 4) Contract schools: school districts “contract” with an organization or group (usually private) to provide public education services. Examples of these schools include schools to teach suspended students and provide supplemental programs, as well as reading services.
- 5) Open enrollment programs: parents and their children may choose to attend any public schools in their district or in other districts to which their state’s education funds flow.
- 6) Residential alternatives: a number of states, including North Carolina, Maine, Louisiana and Texas, have established academic-focused residential science/mathematics high schools.
- 7) Voucher programs: three states: Wisconsin, Ohio, and Florida, have attempted to establish voucher programs to provide publicly funded vouchers to poor students “trapped” in low-performing public schools. These vouchers may be applied to tuition costs of attending private or parochial schools.
- 8) Home schools: since the 1970s, the home schooling of K-12 students has dramatically increased.
- 9) Internet courses and programs: during the late 1990s, a growing number of courses, programs and schools were made available as the Internet emerged.

10) Blending high school with college: a number of states encourage high school students to begin taking college courses during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

11) Area learning centers: established first in Minnesota, state learning centers are open early morning to late evening year-round (some are open 24 hours a day); they educate students and adults.

These schools and their specific program types are represented and established through successful working models of alternative educational institutions (Advisory Council for Alternative Education, 2007). The alternative schools of choice have offered struggling youths a varied educational platform. The programs have been successfully developed, replicated and distributed throughout the country. There are varied approaches to tailoring specific instruction, management, curriculum, and positive school leadership. According to the Advisory Council on Alternative Education (2007), alternative education models have to be diverse and be expanded to positively influence and change student perceptions of their educational placement and garner to positive results. These models include:

1) Alternatives that focus on experimental learning: based on the ideas of the American philosopher John Dewey, many alternative schools in the United States emphasize learning by doing.

2) Alternatives that focus on organization, administration, governance, and funding: a number of established models for organizing, administering, governing, and funding alternative schools are used in different alternative schools.

3) Schools that focus on unique curricular and instructional approaches: these alternative schools include Montessori schools, multiple intelligence schools, free school, and self-

directed education, as well as continuous progress schools, schools without walls and traditional “back-to-basics” schools.

4) Schools that focus on the needs and interests of students: the vast majority of alternative schools were developed to address specific needs.

5) Schools that focus on career themes: career-themed magnet schools complement academic studies with intensive experience in workplace/career settings. These schools operate primarily at the secondary level.

Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1993) wrote the existence of alternative schools dates to as early as 1900. Alternatives in public education have been in place ever since the beginning of education in America (Miller, 2009). Miller concludes having educational options for all students would allow them to be more successful in their academic careers and truly focus on what they want to do in the future. In the beginning, alternative schools were established to help children who needed a path that varied from the traditional educational format, but the landscape has changed to include children who are violent and unruly. The 1960s was a period of great innovation and movement with implications for the public school system, but the time for most non-public alternatives was short-lived. Nonetheless, that this period laid the foundation for the alternative school movement cannot be denied (Young, 1990).

Raywid (1994), one of the first to study alternative schools, made three additional observations: (1) Freedom schools were included and helped stop the alienation and exclusion of major sections of the student population; (2) alternative schools had been designed to respond to a group not educated by the regular program and environment; and (3) not all students learn best in the same context. Fullan (2002) points out with the invention of open schools greatly

influenced public education to be greatly influenced and allowed for alternative education on all levels.

According to Miller (2009), open schools greatly influenced the creation of public alternatives at all levels of education, including the following:

- 1) Continuation schools: used an option for those who were failing in the regular school system because of issues such as dropping out, pregnancy, and failing grades; these schools were less competitive and more individualized.
- 2) Fundamental schools: emphasized a back-to-basics approach in reaction to the lack of academic rigor perceived in the free schools.
- 3) Learning centers: intended to meet particular student needs by including special needs and resources such as vocational education in the school setting.
- 4) Magnet schools: developed in response to the need for racial integration; offered a curriculum that emphasized themes meant to attract diverse groups of students from a range of racial and cultural backgrounds.
- 5) Multicultural schools: designed to integrate culture and ethnicity into the curriculum; some had diverse student bodies, and some catered to a specific ethnic group.
- 6) School within a school: intended to make large high schools into smaller communities of belonging; individual groups were designed to meet educational needs and interests of students.
- 7) Schools without walls: emphasized community-based learning; individuals within the community.

Between the 1970s and early 2000s, many well-known researchers commented regarding alternative schools, Raywid (1994), Hadderman (2002), and Fantini (1973). These authors wrote

about the opportunity for children in alternative schools. Alternative schools were designed to alleviate the pressure for non-traditional students to attend traditional schools and offer them extensive opportunities to achieve academically (Raywid, 1994).

Raywid (1999) further points out the definition of alternative schools became more focused on ways to serve at-risk and disruptive students and focus on their achieving academic success. Alternative schools focused on teaching the basics to collectively increase the success of failing and disruptive students. During this same period, magnet and charter schools increased in numbers to provide students with an alternative learning method (Miller, 2009).

Raywid (1994) states alternative schools were in the educational arena for decades without change but were still seen as cutting edge reform because of the population they served and there had not been wide spread change to update the educational system. Alternative schools are designed to handle behavioral irregularities, as well as programmatic and organizational school reform (Raywid, 1999). Cash (2004) concludes the effectiveness of alternative schools in decreasing drop-out rates and providing opportunities for students to stay in school gave them worth. Alternative schools were noted for successfully reducing behavioral problems, reducing truancy, obtaining post-secondary options, accumulating high school credits, and improving attitudes towards school among students. Cash (2004) further concludes successful alternative schools share key characteristics:

- 1) A total commitment to have each student experience success,
- 2) A small student base not exceeding 225 students,
- 3) A flexible school schedule that all stakeholders agree upon,
- 4) A teacher/student ratio of 1:15,
- 5) A teaching program specific to each student's expectations and learning style,

- 6) A staff that has a strong sense of ownership,
- 7) A school staff with high expectations for student achievement,
- 8) A common mission and vision amongst faculty,
- 9) A detailed financial plan with appropriate district funding, and
- 10) A supportive professional community for school leaders/teachers.

Cash (2004) states research has essential elements and lists necessary for alternative school success and the implementation of future academic programs. Some of the research on at-risk students and alternative education focuses on determining key elements of the programs that will help all students achieve academically, socially, and will prepare them for the future (Cash, 2004). Successful alternative schools may shift depending on the focus of the research and whether schools meet the need of their primary school population.

Alternative schools have grown in popularity as a form of educational delivery. Alternative schools differ in their definition and application across the nation, thus making generalizations about their success and needed improvements difficult (Cash, 2004). Spady (1998) notes that there are specific studies focused on alternative schools and their programs. Information about alternative schools is embedded in research areas such as school choice, education of at-risk students, truancy reduction, dropout prevention, and behavioral intervention thereby making it hard to find concrete evidence specific to alternative schools (Spady, 1998).

Raywid (1989) noted that alternative schools came into existence in the late 1950s and have continually evolved into specific tailored programs of study. Croft (2001) further discusses the need for the growth of alternative programs to involve more at-risk youth because of the decline of the two-parent household. This study examines the Memphis City Schools'

alternative high school program and the impact of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate on academic achievement.

### **Leadership Effectiveness**

Norton (2002) defines leadership as the process by which direction of an organization and influences of individuals are used to accomplish an objective and direct the organization in a way making it more cohesive and coherent. The ability to create a cohesive group and make followers achieve above their individual means is what truly defines leadership. Norton (2002) further states leaders influence others through their values, ethics, beliefs, character, knowledge, and skills. The position of manager, leader, supervisor, or boss helps give one the authority to accomplish objectives and achieve goals.

Effective leadership allows respected leaders to concentrate on what they believe, what they know, and what they are able to implement (Norton, 2002). When leaders are able to display their style of leadership, it can be categorized and identified. Bass (1990) asserts transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez faire leadership are varying types of leadership styles that have different effects on the populations they serve. Leadership style is important to an organizational climate and helps to mold and shape those the leader is serving (Norton, 2002).

Transformational leadership characteristics include having charisma and inspiration, and providing intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1990). Norton (2002) further states successful organizations were found to have the highest level of transformational leadership and produce the best results when measured by efficiency and productivity. Transactional leadership characteristics include: passive management, active management, and rewards contingent on goal accumulation (Bass, 1990). Bass also reported that some transactional leadership has some

positive results and leads organizations to a plateau of success. Once contingent rewards are achieved and constituents have bought into active or passive management styles, results are static. Bass (1990) continues by stating the least effective style leads to constituents that are not fully engaged and do not have a common vision to drive the organization toward successful goal attainment.

Bass (1990) noted that an effective, democratic leader drives fear out of the workplace and fosters a community of learners that collaborates on all major issues. The leader must provide members of the organization with opportunities to learn from failure and adjust future decisions to be able to handle swift change. Leaders must also be able to identify when failure occurs within the organization and approach individuals professionally to vet problems and find a way to right the ship (Norton, 2002). In an effort to improve the organization, leaders must also allow their constituents to work in an environment that fosters creativity and does not have overbearing repercussions for mistakes (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Norton (2002) concludes the principal's influence is more direct, hopefully creating a favorable climate for learning. The most effective role is often supportive rather than supervisory or evaluative. As instructional leaders, principals must concentrate on strengthening the role of teachers; as community leaders, principals must embrace an awareness of the role of the school in society; show a commitment that all children will achieve at higher levels, share leadership with fellow constituents, residents, and community partners, and make contact with parents and stakeholders. As visionary leaders, they must inspire others to have a similar belief (Bass, 1990).

Kouzes and Posner (2007) discuss many attributes defining leadership and the ability to lead. In *The Leadership Challenge* (Kouzes & Posner, 2007), they listed five leadership

practices that make successful leaders: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

1) Modeling the way: means exhibiting behaviors and values that an organization wants its individuals to follow and emulate. This type of leadership is influential and allows other leaders and followers to know the leader's values by his daily actions.

Relationships are honest and open, and trusting interactions are developed through those involved doing what they say they are going to do.

2) Shared vision: motivation of an organization is attained through new ideas that capture the attention. The leader's vision can be shaped by constituents in the organization, but as long as it is a common vision, it can drive the organization to success.

3) Challenging the process: leaders are people who identify problems and try to find a resolution which helps the entire team. When leaders find difficult situations, they use innovative ideas to address the problem and fix it for the future. Leaders take risks, set goals for small wins, and exercise courage to create incremental change.

4) Enabling others to act: speaks to the ability to inspire and assist members of the organization to obtain ownership. Obtaining ownership for constituents is very important; stakeholders feel they are part of the team and are able to put their own ideas in place with the support of the leader. Members of the organization are able to inspire confidence, strengthen each other as they work, and set a course to accomplish organizational goals.

5) Encouraging the heart: when people are passionate about the job, they work the hardest. Encouraging the heart to get others to be passionate about their work is very important. The leader's active passion for the organization and visibility will encourage

others to try their best as well. Leaders show appreciation for the community, care about others, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner 2007).

The researchers identified “modeling the way” and “inspiring a shared vision” as the key components to leadership and being an exemplary leader. Modeling the way is the ability of leaders to act in a manner in which they want others to act (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Great leaders model the way through credibility and setting high standards to hold themselves to first and then let others follow. Kouzes and Posner (2007) state great leaders make goals attainable by planning short term goals that are achievable. An example of this is a principal who wants the staff to be on time and at work on a daily basis. The first thing for the principal to do is achieve this by reporting to work first each day and attend at least 95 percent of the days to be worked over a 20-day period. The goal is attainable, and 20 days is a short term goal. Organization members can easily rate themselves and the leader on the results (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Inspiring a shared vision is fundamental to the long-term and short-term success of any organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Effective leaders “inspire a shared vision” by providing a vision of the ideal organization. Kouzes and Posner (2007) point out leaders develop and promote exciting possibilities and enlist others through persuasion to a shared vision. A vision is developed by seeing where the organization is currently and pushing to make the organization to improve in all aspects. Growth and outlook are two main cogs in setting the standard, and constituents need a reason to excel beyond current expectations and set their sights on future goals and accomplishments (Norton, 2002). Effective leaders are able to build their vision while also building collaboration, planning, executing, and evaluating the short-term and long-term needs of the organization.

Bass (1990) cited three basic ways to explain how people become better leaders. In his leadership theory related to personality, these theories are:

- 1) People can choose to become leaders: they can learn leadership skills. This concept is known as the Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT).
- 2) Some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles. This is known as the Trait Theory.
- 3) A crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion, which brings out extraordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person. This is known as the Great Events Theory.

Leadership is one of the most researched topics regardless of how it is defined.

Originally, proponents of the three leadership theories believed leaders were born and made, but after extensive research, leadership has been found to be fostered through environment and experience (Norton, 2002).

Williams (2006) discusses the role of leadership as being very important to the organization and management of an educational institution. An educational institution cannot function effectively without a leader to direct its goals and drive the vision. Williams stated that leaders increase the effectiveness of leadership techniques by adhering to styles of leadership which have been found, after extensive research, to be successful. Transformational leadership has been found to be most effective in producing breakthrough results and improving measurable outcomes. Williams (2006) further noted that transformational leaders look for potential motives in followers, seek to satisfy higher needs, and engage the full person. Transactional leaders approach followers with an eye toward rewarding followers if they accomplish certain goal-driven initiatives.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (2001) identifies 13 areas of knowledge and skills that school principals should possess. According to (SREB, 2001) effective school principals should be able to:

- 1) Set high-level content expectations for all students,
- 2) Create a mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of instructional practices and curriculum that make higher achievement possible,
- 3) Motivate good instructional practices that increase student achievement; such practices should be recognized and encouraged,
- 4) Create a school organization in which every student has the support of a caring adult and a faculty where every student counts,
- 5) Continue improvement in school and classroom practices, and student achievement is data driven,
- 6) Focus staff on student achievement as the number one goal,
- 7) Create a structure for parent, teacher, and student excellence,
- 8) Sustain quality professional development for the benefit of the students,
- 9) Collaborate and use workshops in innovative ways to meet the goals and objective of the schools' improvement plan,
- 10) Use resources wisely and always aim for the best interest of the children,
- 11) Gain support from all stakeholders and the central office and form community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda,
- 12) Use new research and proven practices to help colleagues keep abreast of educational trends,
- 13) Continue to improve teachers to foster academic achievement.

These traits have been found to be precisely what school leaders must know and do to have a positive impact on organizational climate and school improvement.

Kouzes and Posner (2007) discuss leadership effectiveness and the five principles relating to exemplary leadership: 1) modeling the way, 2) a shared vision, 3) challenging the process, 4) enabling others to act, and 5) encouraging the heart. Leaders are change agents and have the ability to encourage their constituents to work. Such individuals are needed in the alternative setting (Raywid, 1999). This study uses the Leadership Practices Inventory to measure leadership effectiveness.

### **Organizational Climate**

Anderson (1982) suggests that early systematic studies of school climate spurred organizational research into school effectiveness. Furthermore, research reflects that organizational climate has a majority of early writings that delve into the topic of organizational school climate and expands to cover all aspects of the culture of all stakeholders. The topic of school climate has been important to educators and school personnel for years and seems to link successful school climates with academic achievement (Croft, 2001). Croft further suggests that early educational writings about school climate were, in essence, case studies grounded in school climate research and could be used to expand and enhance school climate.

Dewey's (1927) focus was not completely on school climate but rather on the social dimensions of school life and the notion that schools should focus on enhancing the skills, knowledge, and dispositions supporting engaged democratic citizens who are affected by the environment the school reflects. Dewey noted that school climate promoted or complicated a student's ability to learn in varied educational settings. For students to be fully successful in a school climate, they need to feel safe, cared for, lovingly "pushed" to exceed academic

expectations, appropriately supported, and nurtured; and then academic achievement would increase. Three aspects of school climate shown to affect students' self-esteem are commitment to school, strong administrative leadership, and positive feedback from teachers (Anderson, 1982). These terms are defined as follows:

1) Commitment to school: the measure of how a student respects the school institution and positively participates within the boundaries to support the school organization.

2) Strong administrative leadership: leadership of a school or organization produces constituents who are driven toward a common goal with a shared vision. Strength of leadership is measured by the ability of the leader to keep everybody on the same page during times of stress, as well as tribulation.

3) Positive feedback from teachers: feedback from teachers that positively affects students and other colleagues. This type of feedback overwhelmingly creates an organization that is strong in team building and generates efficient results.

Lezotte (2005) points out that professionalism and collegiality refer to the manner in which the staff members in a school interact, and the extent to which they approach their duties as professionals is defined as school climate. Lezotte further points out the importance of this factor in noting that differences in school climate explains much of the difference in academic achievement between low-performing schools and their high-performing counterparts. Dewey (1927) proposed climate was related to professionalism and collegiality and was closely related to organizational climate.

Lezotte (2005) states school climate is influenced by factors including

- 1) Feelings of safeness and school size,
- 2) Feelings of trust and respect for students and teachers,

- 3) Number of quality interactions between adults and students,
- 4) Number of quality interactions between teachers and administration,
- 5) Number of quality interactions between teachers,
- 6) Academic performance,
- 7) Teachers' and students' perceptions of their school environment, and
- 8) Environmental factors (i.e., classrooms, materials used for instruction, and physical buildings).

Purkey and Parker (1986) report the general knowledge base regarding school climate affects the behavior and achievement of elementary, middle, and secondary school students. School climate is created, and therefore can be manipulated, by personnel within the school organization. The climate of a school is unique, and no two will be exactly alike. In most cases, school climate can be beneficial, but it can be counterproductive and an obstacle to educational success (Pickeral, 2009). Climate is important because, if it is not cultivated correctly, it can be oppressive and discriminatory for various subgroups within the school. School climate should be used to provide a clear focus and purpose for the school, and it becomes the bond tying the school together to go about its shared mission (Purkey & Parker, 1986).

Six recommendations will help close the current gap between school culture, practice guidelines, climate research, teacher education, and policy (Pickeral, 2009):

- 1) Increase research on the evaluation and dissemination of resources focused on improving school climate,
- 2) Define school climate in ways that are aligned with recent research,

- 3) Recommend that schools routinely and comprehensively evaluate school climate, recognizing students, parents, and school personnel, as well as all of the other major dimensions (i.e., environment, school safety, relationships, and teaching),
- 4) Adopt standards for positive school climate, as well as for school climate assessment procedures,
- 5) Use school climate assessment as a measure of accountability,
- 6) Encourage teacher preparation programs that give teachers and administrators the tools to evaluate classrooms and school climate and take steps to use these findings to promote a climate for learning in our schools.

According to Fantini (1973), staff members need to examine the dominant student culture and look for ways to help students internalize elements of the school culture that will make them support the school's mission. These norms are developed over time and are influenced by the attitudes and beliefs of those inside and outside the school. In turn, these norms define expectations regarding how things are to be done. School culture exerts an influence on beliefs, attitudes, and relationships of persons within the school (Fantini, 1973).

Murphy (1998) states creating a healthy school culture should be a collaborative activity among parents, staff, teachers, students, and principal. The most effective school culture change happens when students, teachers, and principal have a shared vision and model the values and beliefs most important to the institution. Murphy further states the principal's actions are interpreted and noticed by others to deem what is important to the institution. A principal who acts with care and concern for others is more likely to develop a school culture with similar values. The principal must focus solely on improving the school and its processes and elicit organizational leaders' stamp of approval. Most importantly, principals must nurture the

traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and symbols already express and reinforce positive school culture (Murphy, 1998).

Schein (1988) noted the most widely used organizational cultural framework is a functionalist view and described culture as a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptations and internal integration. Schein defines culture on three levels: 1) artifacts—these are difficult to measure, and they deal with organizational attributes that can be observed, felt, and heard as an individual enters a new culture; 2) values—espoused goals, ideals, norms, standards, and moral principles; usually the level measured through survey questionnaires; and 3) underlying assumptions—phenomena that remain unexplained when insiders are asked about the values of organizational culture.

Organizational climate affects the academic achievement of students (Lezotte, 2005). Lezotte further states school climate is affected by building leadership effectiveness of school administrators and the effectiveness of the teaching faculty. Murphy (1998) points out school leadership must focus solely on the improvement of the school and its processes. Creating and maintaining a healthy and efficient climate is important and can enhance or destroy a school (Murphy, 1998). This study addresses school climate by using the Gallup Q12 climate survey to gather perceptions of certified teachers.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of organizational climate and leadership effectiveness on academic achievement in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. This information can be used to help bring effective academic leadership to alternative schools. The study helped determine if academic achievement, as measured by English II and Algebra I End-of-Course tests, is affected by leadership effectiveness and organizational climate.

#### **Research Design**

The design of this project is a non-experimental post test only design that focuses on correlation relationships to aid in determining perceptions of Memphis City Schools' alternative school teachers on organizational climate and leadership effectiveness (Campbell & Stanley, 1968). An ANOVA was used to compare each independent variable and the dependent variable. A Pearson's correlation was used to compare the independent variables of organizational climate and leadership effectiveness. A Two-Way ANOVA was used to compare the combined independent variables and the dependent variable. Independent variable data were converted to Z-scores to compare means from the LPI and Gallup Q12. Demographic instruments were used to collect teacher background information to ascertain any relevant trends regarding leadership effectiveness and organizational climate.

The independent variables are leadership effectiveness and organizational climate. The Gallup Q12 survey was used to determine the impact of organizational climate and to seek

relationships with academic achievement as measured by English II and Algebra I End-of-Course tests. The Leadership Practices Inventory was used to determine the impact of leadership effectiveness and to identify relationships with academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course tests. The dependent variable is academic achievement as measured by English II and Algebra I End-of-Course tests.

### **Description of Participants**

The participants were alternative education students, school teachers, assistant principals, guidance counselors, school support staff, and lead principals from the Memphis City Schools' alternative school system. Participants included individuals from one urban school district representing all Memphis City Schools' alternative high school programs. A wide variety of years of service in education and years of service in alternative education are present among Memphis City Schools' alternative high school teachers.

### **Population and Subjects**

The population of this study includes professional members and students of the four alternative preparatory high schools within the Memphis City Schools' alternative program. School teachers, guidance counselors, school support staff, and assistant and lead principals completed the Gallup Q12 climate survey to determine perception of organizational climate. The Gallup Q12 is a Likert scale survey used to gather staff perceptions from the Memphis City Schools' four alternative high schools. A total of 103 school teachers, guidance counselors, school support staff, and assistant and lead principals completed the Gallup Q12 survey on school climate to assist in determining areas needing improvement within the school organization. The LPI study population included 103 staff members from the four Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools.

## **Instruments**

The Gallup Q12 climate survey instrument was used to measure organizational climate, and the LPI was used to determine perceptions of leadership effectiveness from Memphis City Schools' alternative preparatory school staff members. The instruments are used to collect quantitative data. The Gallup Q12 survey is a 12-item (validity: .775; reliability: .880) survey pertaining to organizational climate (Gallup Organization, 1993).

The LPI is a 30-question survey instrument (validity: .75; reliability: .866) designed to measure perceptions of leadership effectiveness by certified faculty members of the four Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Certified faculty demographic data were collected to determine any trends in overall teaching experience, education level, and overall alternative teaching experience. All certified personnel in the four Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools were invited to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary, and there was no control over the number of returned surveys and responses, although a return rate of 60% was needed for study reliability.

Data are used to determine important categories, interrelationships, and dimensions (Gall & Borg, 2000). Quantitative research is more useful in confirming themes and relationships in contrast to qualitative research, which is useful in discovering themes and relationships in samples and populations. Hoy and Miskel (1996) pointed out the purpose of a survey is to gather statistics for possible correlations. The purpose of the LPI and Gallup Q12 surveys was to gather data that was used to identify correlations and analyze relationships between variables related to organizational climate and leadership effectiveness in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools.

## **Procedure**

Permission was first sought from the dissertation committee at the University of Mississippi to conduct the research study. Second, permission was sought from the University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study once the necessary approvals were obtained prior to the summer session of the 2011 school year, and letters were sent to the four Memphis City Schools' preparatory alternative high school administrators explaining the study and asking for their consent and participation. The LPI and Gallup Q12 survey were administered during the fourth week of the 2011 summer session. An email expressing gratitude was sent to principals for allowing their faculties to return the surveys.

Confidentiality was maintained for participants returning surveys; no personal names were used on forms, only the school name. The goal for participation was 60% from all populations. A coding system identifying schools and numerically identifying teachers was used to ensure anonymity of all study participants. Follow-up emails were sent to principals until the 60% threshold of returned surveys and questionnaires was achieved. A questionnaire packet was sent to principals who distributed them to participating staff in the four alternative preparatory high schools in the Memphis City Schools' district.

This process was intended to build sample size and increase data sets from all participating Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. The principals received directions for returning the packets and confirmation forms to sign. Using the coding previously described, assists in following up with non respondents from the LPI and Gallup Q12 surveys.

## **Statistical Tests and Data Analysis**

For hypothesis one, an ANOVA was performed. The model included the independent variable of leadership effectiveness as measured by the LPI survey. The dependent variable was academic achievement as measured by the Algebra I and English II End-of-Course tests.

For hypothesis two, an ANOVA was performed. The model included the independent variable of organizational climate as measured by the Gallup Q12 survey. The dependent variable was academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course tests.

For hypothesis three, a Pearson's correlation was performed. The model included the independent variables of leadership effectiveness as measured by the LPI survey and organizational climate as measured by the Gallup Q12 survey.

For hypothesis four, a Two Way ANOVA was performed. The model included the independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate combined and the dependent variable of academic achievement.

The tables in Chapter 4 illustrate correlations and relationships between the independent variables (organizational climate and leadership effectiveness) and the dependent variable (academic achievement). Multicorrelational problems were generated through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) correlation table. Gall and Borg (2006) pointed out a Two-Way ANOVA is a statistical procedure determining the strength of relationships between a criterion variable and a combination of two or more predictor variables. Gall and Borg (2000) further pointed out a Two-Way ANOVA is popular because of its flexibility and the information it yields about relationships among variables.

Approval for the research was sought via email and letters to all four Memphis City Schools' preparatory alternative high schools. A cover letter was attached from the State Director of Alternative Schools, Dr. James Witty, and the Memphis City Schools' Innovative Schools Academic Director, Dr. Joris Ray, soliciting participation and approval. Gallup Q12 survey results and LPI results were entered into an SPSS spreadsheet. Surveys were delivered to teachers, counselors, educational support personnel, assistant principals, and principals in the Memphis City Schools' preparatory alternative school division. Surveys participants were given a two-week window to complete both the LPI and the Gallup Q12 climate surveys. Survey participants who had not replied within the two-week window were given an extended time of seven days to respond to their corresponding administrator. Data were then aggregated.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### **Overview**

Academic achievement in most alternative schools is a secondary priority and leads to the educational institution not having a purpose that produces positive outcomes (Croft, 2001). Traditional alternative schools meet only specific academic needs for children who display behavioral issues. Dealing strictly with behavioral issues and not academic achievement leads to low staff morale and a high attrition rate for teachers on a yearly basis (Advisory Council for Alternative Education, 2007). The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of organizational climate and leadership effectiveness on academic achievement in Memphis City Schools' alternative schools. In this study, leadership effectiveness was measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), which measures leadership effectiveness and perceptions of leaders to their constituents. Organizational climate was measured by the Gallup Q12 survey, which illustrates perceptions of the work environment and its conduciveness for growth and productivity. The LPI and Gallup Q12 surveys are both Likert scale surveys.

The LPI and Gallup Q12 surveys were given to all certificated staff members at the four regional alternative high schools in Memphis. The study was designed to answer three specific research questions to determine if a relationship exists between or among leadership effectiveness, organizational climate, and academic achievement. Academic achievement was measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course (EOC) examinations. Question 1 asked: Does a relationship exist between the leadership effectiveness perceptions of Memphis

City Schools' alternative high school faculty and the academic achievement of their students?

Question 2 asked: Is there a relationship between organizational climate of Memphis City

Schools' alternative high schools and its impact on academic achievement? The third question

asked: Is there a relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate?

Question 4 asked: When combined, do leadership effectiveness and organizational climate impact academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations?

The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study included certificated staff members from the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Certificated staff members from each regional alternative high school voluntarily participated in completing the LPI for leadership effectiveness and the Gallup Q12 climate survey for organizational climate. Each school received 30 surveys for a total of 120 surveys given among the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Principals were given a two-week window to have staff complete and return surveys. A survey return rate of 60 percent from all survey respondents was the return rate goal; 103 surveys were returned for a return rate of 85.83 percent.

A cover letter was sent to the State of Tennessee Director of Alternative Schools soliciting participation and permission. Information was kept confidential. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity and returned surveys voluntarily. The surveys were collected and categorized by region. Survey data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet.

Academic achievement was measured in this study by scores on the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations for the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high

schools. These tests were used for an academic achievement measure because they are directly responsible for the school's adequate yearly progress (AYP) status.

### **Data Analyses**

To determine if relationships existed between leadership effectiveness, organizational climate, and academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. Survey respondents completed the LPI, which has 30 questions measuring perceptions of leadership effectiveness, and the Gallup Q12, which has 12 questions measuring organizational climate; both surveys are Likert scales. Corresponding scores for the LPI results were 1 = significantly below the mean, 2 = below the mean, 3 = within 1 standard deviation of the mean, 4 = above the mean, and 5 = significantly above the mean. Responses from the surveys were tallied and compiled into an Excel spreadsheet. To run an ANOVA with survey results, independent variables (leadership effectiveness and organizational climate) had to be broken down into categories by using Z-scores. Average LPI and Gallup Q12 survey scores were converted to Z-scores to categorize them for the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

An ANOVA was performed for the LPI survey to show to which degree the variables were related and if there were significant relationships between the independent variable (leadership effectiveness) and the dependent variable (academic achievement). Once the ANOVA was performed, results were categorized for the LPI into levels 1 through 4. LPI level 1 represented respondents who scored their leadership as minimally effective ( $M = 72.5628$ , std. deviation = 3.93395); six respondents scored in this range. LPI level 2 represents respondents who scored their leadership as somewhat effective ( $M = 74.2452$ , std. deviation = 4.26647); eleven respondents scored in this range. LPI level 3 represented respondents who scored their

leadership as effective ( $M = 75.7406$ , std. deviation = 3.62166); eleven respondents scored in this range. LPI level 4 represented respondents who scored their leadership as highly effective ( $M = 75.7406$ , std. deviation = 3.77782); eleven respondents scored in this range.

Another ANOVA was then performed for the Gallup Q12 survey to show to what degree, if any, the variables were related and if there were significant relationships between the independent variable (organizational climate) and the dependent variable (academic achievement). Once the ANOVA was performed, results were categorized into Gallup Q12 levels 1 through 4. Gallup Q12 level 1 represented respondents who scored their organizational climate as needing improvement ( $M = 72.0283$ , std. deviation = 4.14756); five respondents scored in this range. Gallup Q12 level 2 represented respondents who scored their organizational climate as an area for growth ( $M = 73.2906$ , std. deviation = 4.18487); twelve respondents scored in this range. Gallup Q12 level 3 represents respondents who scored their organizational climate as a positive climate ( $M = 73.2612$ , std. deviation = 3.71480); seventy-three respondents scored in this range. Gallup Q12 level 4 represented respondents who scored their organizational climate as outstanding ( $M = 75.5014$ , std. deviation = 3.40495); twelve respondents scored in this range.

**Research Question 1 Analysis:** Does a relationship exist between the leadership effectiveness perceptions of Memphis City Schools' alternative high school faculty and the achievement of their students?

To understand how leadership effectiveness perceptions impact ratings, an ANOVA was performed, with LPI as the independent variable. The average score for EOC examinations in English II and Algebra I was designated as the dependent variable. The results showed a significant relationship between the LPI and academic achievement as measured by the English

II and Algebra I EOC examinations ( $F = 2.022$ ,  $\alpha = .116$ ). Significance was not highly significant at the 0.05 level ( $P < .05$ ). Results showed that leadership effectiveness does not have a significant relationship with academic achievement. LPI significance (.061, R squared) showed 6.1% of academic achievement scores were related to leadership effectiveness in the four regional alternative high schools.

Table 1: Relationship between Leadership Effectiveness and Academic Achievement

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	R squared
Corrected model	83.901	3	27.967	2.022	.116	.061
Intercept	240771.386	1	240771.386	17403.299	.000	.995
LPI Level	83.901	3	27.967	2.022	.116	.061
Error	1300.472	94	13.835			
Total	529589.032	98				
Corrected total	1384.374	97				

**Research Question 2 Analysis:** Is there a relationship between the organizational climate of Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools and its impact on student achievement?

To understand how organizational climate impacts the ratings of academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations, an ANOVA was performed with climate level scores as the independent variable. The average score for EOC examinations in English II and Algebra I was designated as the dependent variable. The results showed there was not a significant relationship between Gallup Q12 and academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations ( $F = 1.500$ ,  $\alpha = .219$ ). Significance was not highly correlated at the 0.05 level ( $P < .05$ ). Gallup Q12 significance (.044, R squared) showed 4.4% of

academic achievement scores were related to organizational climate in the four regional alternative high schools. Results showed organizational climate did not have a significant relationship impacting academic achievement (Table 2).

Table 2: Relationship between Organizational and Academic Achievement

Source	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig	R squared
Corrected model	63.480	3	21.160	1.500	.219	.044
Intercept	227370.797	1	227370.797	16116.656	.00	.994
Climate level	63.480	3	21.160	1.500	.219	.044
Error	1382.566	98	14.108			
Total	551992.756	102				
Corrected total	1446.046	101				

**Research Question 3 Analysis:** Is there a relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate in Memphis City Schools’ alternative high schools?

To determine if a significant relationship exists between the independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate, a Pearson’s correlation analysis was performed. The results showed a highly significant correlation between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate ( $r = .439$ ,  $\alpha < .01$ ). Significance was highly correlated at the 0.01 level ( $P < .01$ , 2-tailed).

Leadership effectiveness perceptions and organizational climate perceptions have a highly significant relationship in the four Memphis City Schools’ alternative high school. Data showed when leadership effectiveness scores increased, organizational climate scores increased. Results also showed when leadership effectiveness scores decreased, organizational climate

scores decreased. Respondents with higher average ratings on the LPI survey tended to have higher average ratings on the Gallup Q12 (Table 3).

Table 3: Relationship between Leadership Effectiveness and Organizational Climate

	LPI overall	Climate overall
LPI overall Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.439**
Climate overall Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.439** .000	1

\*\* denotes r = 2-tailed Pearson correlation

**Research Question 4 Analysis:** Is there an impact by leadership effectiveness and organizational climate on student achievement as measured by English II and Algebra I EOC examinations?

To determine if the combined independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate impact student achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations, a Two-Way ANOVA was performed. The average score for EOC examinations in English II and Algebra I was designated as the dependent variable. The results showed there was not a significant relationship between the combined independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate and their impact on student achievement ( $F = .917, \alpha = .498$ ). LPI did not show significance (.083, R squared) with 8.3% of academic achievement scores related to leadership effectiveness in the four regional alternative high schools.

Table 4: Relationship between Leadership

Effectiveness and Organizational Climate Combined and Academic Achievement

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	R squared
Corrected model	204.465	13	15.728	1.120	.354	.148
Intercept	136259.224	1	136259.224	9700.556	.000	.991
Climate level	54.358	3	18.119	1.290	.283	.044
LPI level	107.070	3	35.690	2.541	.062	.083
Climate + LPI	90.154	7	12.879	.917	.498	.071
Error	1179.909	84	14.047			
Total	529589.032	98				
Corrected total	1384.374	97				

### Summary

In summary, leadership effectiveness, organizational climate, and academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations were investigated for significant relationships between and among independent and dependent variables. The data presented here reflect the findings of the three research questions and their statistical outcomes for significant relationships. For question one, an ANOVA was performed to determine if a relationship existed between leadership effectiveness perceptions of Memphis City Schools' alternative high school certificated staff and student achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations. The researcher found a potentially significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and student achievement.

An ANOVA was performed for question two to determine if a relationship existed between organizational climate and student achievement as measured by the English II and

Algebra I EOC examinations. Research found no significant relationship between organizational climate and student achievement. A Pearson correlation was performed for question three to determine if there was a relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate. Question four asked if leadership effectiveness and organizational climate combined had a significant relationship on student achievement. Research discovered a significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate. When leadership effectiveness scores increased or decreased, organizational climate scores increased or decreased, respectively, as well. When both independent variables (leadership effectiveness and organizational climate) were combined and a Two-Way ANOVA was performed, there was not a significant impact on student achievement. A discussion on findings and a more complete summary is presented in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

#### **Overview**

The final chapter is an interpretation of the findings. This chapter discusses the conclusions, summary of the findings, and recommendations for further research. This study was designed to explore the significance of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate and their impact on student achievement. Leadership effectiveness was measured in this study using the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) for certificated staff members at the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Organizational climate was measured in this study using the Gallup Q12 climate survey for the same faculty members at alternative high schools in Memphis City Schools. Student achievement data were gathered from an automated database with permission from Dr. Joris Ray for the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations.

Literature on alternative high schools' academic achievement is limited (Fantini, 1973). Administrators and staff members of alternative schools have to be geared to assist students academically and socially to give them a holistic education and make them productive citizens in our society (Knuston & College, 1999). This study provided alternative school certificated staff and administrators data which can support professional development, academic planning, and academic achievement. Policy makers and politicians will also be able to use the findings to create funding opportunities and future legislation that focuses on the academic achievement of alternative students. The findings provide valuable information to district level personnel,

superintendents, policy makers, staff members, and other stakeholders who are interested in replicating this study to determine if the findings have validity and fit their educational needs. Results from this study along with current research will help reshape alternative schools and their approach to academic achievement.

Academic achievement information is important, because under new state standardized tests, schools and school districts must achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the areas of language arts, mathematics, graduation rates, attendance, and test participation to be in compliance with federal guidelines. This study was designed to investigate whether the independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate impact the dependent variable of academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I EOC examinations. Finding which variables impact academic achievement is vital in creating a positive environment for learning and preparing students for future postsecondary educational opportunities (Chance, 1992).

The review of literature is centered around the past research on alternative schools and their acceptance into mainstream education. As early as the 1950s and 1960s, alternative schools began to serve children who needed a varied path to achieve academic, social, and psychological success (Kearney, 2008). Kearney further stated that alternative educators must be the best and brightest in their field to accomplish the goal of advancing students one to two grade levels per year. Academics have taken a secondary role in not only alternative schools, but public and private schools as a whole (Deal & Peterson, 1990). Practitioners and policy makers for alternative legislation must continue to pass legislation and improve the alternative setting so that students who attend these institutions become productive members of society (Cash, 2004). Cash further pointed out funding for incarcerating uneducated and deviant students could be

better spent on research to improve the educational climate. Miller (2009) noted students who are at risk for dropping out and underachieving academically are at the forefront of declining graduation rates and increasing dropout rates.

There are also many examples in the literature which focus on alternative schools and their disciplinary foundations. Raywid (1994) illustrated alternative schools and their need to be geared toward academics first and discipline second is a must. Raywid further illustrated deviant students' ability to learn material that is interesting must somehow be used to force students to learn what is important for their academic futures. In the early years of alternative education, most students were isolated and not given true educational enrichment (Young, 1990). Enriching students in the subjects of English and mathematics will prepare them for secondary and post secondary education which is needed to be successful in all facets of life (Williams, 2006). This study focused on improving the learning environment of students through investigating possible relationships between leadership effectiveness, organizational climate, and academic achievement leading them to complete high school and become productive citizens and workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem addressed is to determine the impact of organizational climate and leadership effectiveness on academic achievement in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Alternative high schools throughout the United States have traditionally had a problem tracking student academic achievement. Students need to be assessed academically when entering the alternative program and again when exiting the program to measure academic growth, recession, or no change at all. This research focused on the relationship between organizational climate and leadership effectiveness on academic achievement in Memphis City

Schools' alternative high schools. The study used a matrix of leadership effectiveness, as measured by the Leadership Principles Inventory (LPI), and organizational climate, as measured by the Gallup Q12 climate survey. Academic achievement was based on results of the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) Does a relationship exist between the leadership effectiveness perceptions of Memphis City Schools' alternative high school faculty and the achievement of their students?
- 2) Is there a relationship between the organizational climate of Memphis City Schools' high schools and its impact on student achievement?
- 3) Is there a relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools?
- 4) Is there an impact by leadership effectiveness and organizational climate on student achievement as measured by Algebra I and English II End-of-Course examinations?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of organizational climate and leadership effectiveness on academic achievement in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. This information can be used to help bring effective academic leadership to alternative schools. The study will help determine if academic achievement, as measured by Algebra I and English II End-of-Course tests, is affected by leadership effectiveness and organizational climate.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The findings are summarized in the paragraphs below and are listed under the corresponding research question. Each question is summarized, and data are interpreted to

explain the significance of the independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate and their impact on the dependent variable of academic achievement as measured by English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. Important findings in this study are discussed, concluded, and given implications for further research.

### **Research Question 1**

1) Does a relationship exist between the leadership effectiveness perceptions of Memphis City Schools' alternative high school faculty and the achievement of their students?

The independent variable of leadership effectiveness was found to not have a significant impact on academic achievement in the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Students' achievement levels did not have a significant impact on the average mean score of English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. Leadership effectiveness as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory showed students whose certificated staff members scored their leadership as effective or highly effective showed significant gains in achievement scores. LPI surveys had a mean score of 27.967 and three degrees of freedom ( $df = 3$ ). The F value for LPI surveys was 2.022 ( $F = 2.022$ ). Results from the ANOVA did not show significance at the .05 level ( $P < .05$ ) and is interpreted to not have a significant relationship ( $\alpha = .116$ ) between leadership effectiveness and academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations.

Six point one percent ( $R \text{ squared} = .061$ ) of leadership effectiveness positively impacted student achievement. This potential significance could be attributed to small sample size and could increase given a larger sample size. Leadership effectiveness in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools, when broken down into individual schools, could show an increased or decreased impact on academic achievement. The independent variable of leadership

effectiveness did not show a significant relationship with academic achievement. Further research is needed for validity and reliability of leadership effectiveness and its impact on academic achievement.

Deal and Peterson (1990) stated leadership in a school shapes the culture of the school and builds morale for teachers and students in an educational environment. They further stated the need for positive leadership to impact academic achievement and produce students who are ready for the global economy. This study concludes that leadership effectiveness has a potentially significant relationship with student achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations in the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative schools. Leadership effectiveness is a vital part of any school community and has to be measured in various ways to see its true impact (Carley, 1994). Leadership effectiveness was found to have a potentially significant relationship with academic achievement in this case, but will be explored further for impact of other measures on academic achievement.

### **Research Question 2**

2) Is there a relationship between the organizational climate of Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools and its impact on student achievement?

The independent variable of organizational climate was found not to have significant impact on academic achievement in the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Students' achievement levels were not significantly impacted in the average mean score of English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. Organizational climate as measured by the Gallup Q12 showed students whose certificated staff members scored their organizational climate as positive or optimal did not show significant gains in achievement scores. Gallup Q12 surveys had a mean score of 21.160 and three degrees of freedom ( $df = 3$ ). The F value for

Gallup Q12 surveys is 1.500 ( $F = 1.500$ ). Results from the ANOVA did not exceed the .05 level ( $P < .05$ ) and is interpreted not to have a significant relationship ( $\alpha = .219$ ) between organizational climate and academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations.

Having a positive organizational climate makes constituents enjoy their work and leads to higher productivity in most cases (Chance, 1992). Bass (1985) wrote people who work in a positive and promoting environment not only succeed better for the company, but they take ownership of the results that are produced. This study concludes organizational climate does not have a significant relationship with student achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations in the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Spady (1998) discussed organizational climate and the numerous ways it has to be measured to see its true impact. Organizational climate was found not to have a significant relationship with academic achievement in this case, but will be explored further for impact of other measures on academic achievement.

### **Research Question 3**

3) Is there a relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools?

A Pearson's correlation was performed on the independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate to investigate significant relationships between the variables. Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) and the Gallup Q12, respectively, showed certificated staff members who scored their leadership effectiveness as effective or highly effective also showed their

organizational climate as positive or optimal. The results signify there is a highly significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate ( $r = .439, \alpha < .000$ ).

#### **Research Question 4**

4) Is there an impact by leadership effectiveness and organizational climate on student achievement as measured by English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations?

The independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate when combined were found not to have significant impact on academic achievement in the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Students' achievement levels were not significantly impacted in the average mean score of English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. LPI and Gallup Q12 surveys had a mean score of 12.879 and seven degrees of freedom ( $df = 7$ ). The F value for LPI and Gallup Q12 surveys was .917 ( $F = .917$ ). Results from the Two-Way ANOVA showed significance below the .05 level ( $p < .05$ ) and is interpreted not to have a significant relationship ( $\alpha = .498$ ) between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate and their impact on academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations.

LPI level ( $sig = .062$ ) showed a potential relationship with academic achievement. Eight point three percent ( $R \text{ squared} = .083$ ) of academic achievement was attributed to leadership effectiveness when the Two-Way ANOVA was used. This did not show a highly significant relationship at the .05 level. Leadership effectiveness and academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I had a positive correlation. This is important to our research because if leadership affects academic achievement in a positive manner, it could lead to more productive students and schools. Once positive leadership is identified, it can be studied to identify leaders who have the most impact on academic achievement and then those results can be duplicated.

Lezotte (2005) pointed out the need for schools to have highly effective leadership and be conducive to learning through their aesthetics and academic focus. Lezotte further pointed out a school's need to combine leadership, a conducive learning environment, motivated teachers, and willing students to reach its maximum potential. This study concludes leadership effectiveness and organizational climate have a significant relationship. The independent variables are highly correlated. Good schools and good leaders exert confidence not only to their students but also to their staff (Pickeral, 2009).

Leadership and positive organizations lead to productivity and increases in efficiency over a period of time (Nias, 1981). Hoy and Miskel (1996) illustrated educational administration as being vital to student achievement. Combining leadership and a positive work environment does not always show immediate results, but the effects will be seen if the combination stays intact (Nias, 1981). Identifying positive leadership which affects academic achievement is the key to successful schools. Researchers have identified leaders who positively impact their schools and administrators have to be able to repeat these results in other locations with other leaders. A tool that is able to not only identify current success, but also predict future performance of school leaders is key (Lezotte, 2005).

This study concludes leadership effectiveness and organizational climate combined do not have a significant relationship with student achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations in the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. The impact of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate on academic achievement will be researched further for their impact on other academic achievement measures.

### **Discussion of Results: Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4**

Four hypotheses were examined in this study. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate and their impact on academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. Null hypothesis 1 was partly accepted. Null hypothesis 2 was not accepted. Null hypothesis 3 was accepted. Null hypothesis 4 was not accepted. The following paragraphs provide a discussion of the findings based on each hypothesis.

The first hypothesis examined the relationship between leadership effectiveness and academic achievement. The ANOVA between-subjects test was used to calculate the mean and standard deviation. The ANOVA indicated the scores were potentially significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was partly accepted. In a similar study, results revealed students in alternative high schools were successful at learning when in a positive learning environment (Knuston & College, 1999).

The second hypothesis examined the relationship between organizational climate and academic achievement. The ANOVA between-subjects test was used to calculate the mean and standard deviation. The ANOVA indicated the scores were not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not accepted. This finding does not support previous research where results revealed students achieved in schools run by successful principals (Raywid, 1999).

The third hypothesis examined the relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate. A Pearson's correlation was used to analyze the relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate. The Pearson's correlation indicated a highly significant relationship. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was accepted.

The fourth hypothesis examined the relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate combined and academic achievement. A Two-Way ANOVA was used to calculate the mean and standard deviation. Two-Way ANOVA scores were not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not accepted. Previous research also stated children are the most successful academically after they have been in a structured system for three to four testing cycles. The students are adapted to testing and knowing what to expect and how to achieve what they have practiced several times before (Williams, 2006).

### **Implications**

The purpose of this study was to explore possible significant relationships between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate and their impact on student achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Raywid (1989) discussed the need for alternative education leaders to be motivators and drive their schools to achieve academic success as the first priority. Once academic success is the focal point of the school culture, the learning environment will be optimal for teaching and academic achievement. Raywid further discussed alternative education leaders and their need for support and future research to establish a standardized system for overall academic achievement. Many students come to alternative schools academically behind and are forced to participate in only behavior modification, which does not help them pursue future postsecondary options (Raywid, 1989). Alternative education and its impact on the academic path of its students have been researched minimally (Young, 1990).

This study showed there is a potentially significant relationship between leadership effectiveness perceptions and academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Leadership

effectiveness results were taken over a two-week window from Memphis City Schools' alternative high school staff members. Academic achievement results were collected from the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools for their English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations over one testing cycle. Leadership effectiveness perceptions could affect academic achievement over a longer span of time. Spady (1998) discussed the need for academic research to be done over an extended period of time to garner the best results. Breed (1997) pointed out the effects of positive leadership are not a quick fix and have to be implemented over a period of time with fidelity to produce efficient work environments. Further research needs to be conducted to find variables with an impact on academic achievement. School districts and schools are judged on their proficiency in English and mathematics. Variables that can move the needle in academic achievement in these areas are needed by practitioners and policy makers to allow their students the best chance for academic success.

Results also showed no significant relationship between organizational climate and academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. Organizational climate results were taken over a two-week window from Memphis City Schools' alternative high school staff members. Academic achievement results were collected from the four regional Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools for their English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations over one testing cycle. Organizational climate could affect academic achievement in other areas or over an extended period of time. Kouzes and Posner (2007) stated climate is affected by leadership and its five principles are the driving force behind successful organizations and their productivity. Kouzes and Posner further stated leaders who are influential create an environment which motivates constituents to produce at their highest level. Productivity and results have to

be seen after the culture of the organization is set and after it is common practice to be in a positive environment (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate were found to have a significant relationship and be highly correlated in this study. Positive alternative school settings allow for the teachers to have purpose and give students their best opportunity for academic success. Memphis City Schools' alternative schools with high scores in leadership effectiveness perceptions also had higher scores in positive organizational climates. Anderson (1982) discussed the need for principals to build a culture that is conducive to learning. Selecting the right team to carry out an objective is not only important, it is a must. Results might not always be immediate, but heading in the direction of team solidarity creates the most optimal climate for success of students and staff members (Anderson, 1982). Litwin and Stringer (1968) pointed out learning environments are tied to the leader of the organization. When teachers trust their leader, they will be able to focus on the overall goal of academic achievement for all children.

According to the findings, alternative school staff members enjoy their work environment when they respect the leader they are working for. Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate showed when leaders focus on academics their schools are better places to work in. Leadership effectiveness perceptions and organizational climate surveys showed there was not an impact on the academic achievement of the students, but respected leadership did foster positive work and learning environments. Academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations could be researched for incremental gains when compared to leadership effectiveness and organizational climate.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

The knowledge gained concerning the relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate and its impact on student achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools can be used to conduct research to further advance alternative education research and policy. A list of recommendations follows.

1. Further study needs to be conducted on Tennessee's alternative high schools and how to implement academic measures that lead to academic achievement for district and statewide accountability for Adequate Yearly Progress.

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is a federally mandated benchmark schools must meet to be in compliance with their local and state governments. This benchmark is met through scores on the English II End-of-Course examination, Algebra I End-of-Course examination, test participation, and graduation rate for Tennessee high schools. Successful schools meet these benchmarks and receive positive scores on their state report cards. Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools are trying to meet and exceed these benchmarks. Research for academic measures that lead to academic achievement is needed throughout Tennessee in the alternative system to improve achievement.

2. Further study needs to be conducted on the relationships among leadership effectiveness, organizational climate, and academic achievement to provide more depth in understanding.

Academic achievement is the number one priority in Memphis City Schools. Identifying variables which positively impact academic achievement is important to obtaining this goal. Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate were researched in this study to evaluate their relationship with academic achievement as measured by English II and Algebra I End-of-

Course examinations. The results were mixed. A highly significant relationship was found between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate. Potentially significant relationships were found between leadership effectiveness and academic achievement. Organizational climate did not have a significant relationship with academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. Further research could lead to a more in depth understanding of leadership effectiveness, organizational climate, and academic achievement.

3. Further study needs to be conducted to provide a more in-depth understanding of the impact between leadership effectiveness and alternative school focus on academics.

Alternative schools have traditionally been the dumping ground for challenged youth and educators who are deemed subpar. The focus of alternative schools began with behavior modification without a strong push on academics (Nias, 1981). Nias further stated positive leadership and an academic focus have produced successful schools in the traditional setting. Further study of the impact of leadership effectiveness combined with an academic focus could have a profound impact on academic achievement in alternative schools.

4. Further study needs to be done on variables that impact academic achievement in alternative high schools and how they can be used to improve academic achievement in those high schools.

Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate were selected to show their impact on academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. The independent variables of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate were also selected for the potential impact on academic achievement between and among each other. Other variables such as teacher tenure, teacher education level, or student intrinsic motivation could play a role in positive results on academic achievement. Extended studies on

other variables which positively impact academic achievement are needed to improve alternative schools and their achievement.

5. Further study is needed in replicating the study, comparing a high school that has met the demands of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), as well as a high school that has not met the demands of NCLB for independent variables affecting academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations.

Challenged youth and overage for grade (OAG) students are unique. Federal mandates have allowed schools to be ranked according to their achievement and impact on No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Successful schools are built with great leaders, teachers, and students who produce outstanding results on a yearly basis. Research needs to be conducted on successful alternative schools that have met NCLB benchmarks and the variables that allowed them to achieve this success. Variables and techniques from schools which have met and succeeded in educating challenged and OAG youth need to be duplicated.

6. Further research needs to be conducted for incremental gains in academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations when compared to leadership effectiveness and organizational climate.

Research indicated there was no highly significant relationship between organizational climate and academic achievement. There was a potentially significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and academic achievement. ANOVA results showed leadership effectiveness positively impacted ( $R^2 = .062$ ) academic achievement and had a potentially significant relationship. Two Way ANOVA results illustrated leadership effectiveness was responsible for 8.2% ( $R^2 = .082$ ) of positive results on achievement

scores. The results from the ANOVA and Two Way ANOVA are not highly significant at the .05 level, but are potentially significant.

## **Conclusions**

Alternative schools are an option allowing scholars to be educated and pursue their academic dreams. All children are unique and have special needs. These needs can be addressed through effective leadership and by focusing on students' academic success for implementation in future endeavors. This study found leadership effectiveness and positive organizational climate are highly correlated and lead to a school in which teachers and leaders have mutual respect and enjoy their work environment. Teachers having ownership of their school and knowing their school leader has a vision are important in building positive school culture. Alternative schools function best when they have a positive school culture and a leader focused on improving the academic and behavioral climate of the organization. Positive school cultures lead to academic success, but have to be given time to work (Raywid, 1999).

This study also found leadership effectiveness and organizational climate did not have a significant impact at the .05 level on academic achievement as measured by the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations. ANOVA results showed organizational climate had a minimal impact on academic achievement (sig. = .219, R squared = .044). Four point four percent of academic achievement scores were correlated to organizational climate. These results indicated organizational climate is not an intricate variable to academic achievement in Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools, but further studies into organizational climate with a larger sample size are needed for more definitive results.

The relationship between leadership effectiveness and organizational climate was found to be highly significant at the .01 level ( $P < .01$ , 2-tailed) in Memphis City Schools' alternative

high schools. There was a strong relationship between certificated staffs who view their leader as effective and those who enjoyed their prospective work environments. This information is useful in building efficient and cohesive alternative schools that produce students who achieve academically and pursue postsecondary options after graduation. Future research can be done to outline specific indicators from the Gallup Q12 survey to support leadership and academic achievement improvement. Burns (1978) stated workplace enjoyment is the soul of an organization. It can produce the best results when colleagues participate and have ownership in their environment and leader.

ANOVA results also indicated leadership effectiveness did not have a significant relationship (sig. = .116, R squared = .061) with academic achievement. Six point one percent of academic achievement scores were credited to the impact of leadership effectiveness within the Memphis City Schools' alternative high schools. These results are important because, although leadership effectiveness was not significant at the .05 level, it did show an impact on academic achievement. Research found leadership effectiveness to not be significant in the Two Way ANOVA results as well (sig. = .062, R squared = .083). Eight point three percent of academic achievement scores were attributed to leadership effectiveness. Data from the ANOVA and Two Way ANOVA results showed there was not a significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and academic achievement. These findings are monumental because finding variables that impact leadership effectiveness opens the door to improving schools. Once leaders have been identified as effective, they can be studied for essential leadership effectiveness variables. A survey tool can then be constructed to identify essential leadership effectiveness variables within potential school leaders.

Academic achievement is measured in various ways and has to be studied to determine which variables have impact on the English II and Algebra I End-of-Course exams. English II and Algebra I End-of-Course examinations were selected because of their importance to AYP and Tennessee high schools scoring proficient as measured by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE). Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate can still have an impact on academic achievement, and an extended research study is needed to explore this. Leadership effectiveness and organizational climate are two essential components to successful and highly positive alternative school environments. Further study needs to be conducted to find variables tied directly to student achievement on state standardized English II and Algebra I examinations.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## Alternative School Demographic Questionnaire

The following survey answers should be checked (x) by the answer that is correct. This survey will be used for research purposes only and is designed to gather demographic information about survey participants

### Personal Demographics

**Gender:** Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

### **Ethnic Group:**

Asian American \_\_\_ African American \_\_\_ Caucasian \_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino \_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_\_\_  
Multi-racial \_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Current Professional Status**

Teacher \_\_\_ Assistant Principal \_\_\_ Guidance Counselor \_\_\_ Principal \_\_\_  
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Educational Level Completed**

Bachelor's \_\_\_ Master's \_\_\_ Master's plus 45 \_\_\_ Educational specialist \_\_\_ Doctorate \_\_\_  
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Write a whole number in the blank below to answer the following questions:**

Years of service as an educator: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of service in an alternative school setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of service in current alternative school setting: \_\_\_\_\_

## Employee Engagement Climate Survey (Gallup Q12)

Directions: on a scale from 1 to 5, list your feelings about your educational institution.

	Almost never true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Frequently true	Almost always true
I know what is expected of me at work.	1	2	3	4	5
I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	1	2	3	4	5
At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	1	2	3	4	5
In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
There is someone at work who encourages my development.	1	2	3	4	5
At work, my opinions seem to count.	1	2	3	4	5
The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.	1	2	3	4	5
My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a best friend at work.	1	2	3	4	5
In the last six months, someone has talked to me about my progress.	1	2	3	4	5
This last year, I had opportunities at work to learn and grow.	1	2	3	4	5

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# LPI OBSERVER

Leadership Practices Inventory

by JAMES M. KOUZES  
& BARRY Z. POSNER

## INSTRUCTIONS

You are being asked by the person whose name appears at the top of the next page to assess his or her leadership behaviors. Below the person's name you will find thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully, and using the RATING SCALE on the right, ask yourself:

**“How frequently does this person engage in the behavior described?”**

When selecting your response to each statement:

- Be realistic about the extent to which this person *actually* engages in the behavior.
- Be as honest and accurate as you can be.
- Do NOT answer in terms of how you would like to see this person behave or in terms of how you think he or she should behave.
- DO answer in terms of how this person typically behaves on most days, on most projects, and with most people.
- Be thoughtful about your responses. For example, giving this person 10s on all items is most likely not an accurate description of his or her behavior. Similarly, giving someone all 1s or all 5s is most likely not an accurate description either. Most people will do some things more or less often than they do other things.
- If you feel that a statement does not apply, it's probably because you don't see or experience the behavior. That means this person does not frequently engage in the behavior, at least around you. In that case, assign a rating of 3 or lower.

For each statement, decide on a response and then record the corresponding number in the square to the right of the statement. After you have responded to all thirty statements, go back through the LPI one more time to make sure you have responded to each statement. Every statement *must* have a rating.

The RATING SCALE runs from 1 to 10. Choose the number that best applies to each statement.

- |                     |
|---------------------|
| 1 = Almost Never    |
| 2 = Rarely          |
| 3 = Seldom          |
| 4 = Once in a While |
| 5 = Occasionally    |
| 6 = Sometimes       |
| 7 = Fairly Often    |
| 8 = Usually         |
| 9 = Very Frequently |
| 10 = Almost Always  |

When you have completed the LPI-Observer, please return it to:

B.J. Walker - SW Prep Academy HS  
1237 College  
Memphis, TN 38166  
Thank you.

Name of Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

I (the Observer) am This Leader's (Check one):  Manager  Direct Report  Co-Worker  Other

To what extent does this leader typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement.

He or She:

1. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.
2. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.
3. Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.
4. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.
5. Praises people for a job well done.
6. Spends time and energy making certain that the people he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards that we have agreed on.
7. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.
8. Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.
9. Actively listens to diverse points of view.
10. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.
11. Follows through on promises and commitments he/she makes.
12. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.
13. Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.
14. Treats others with dignity and respect.
15. Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects.
16. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.
17. Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.
18. Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.
19. Supports the decisions that people make on their own.
20. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.
21. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.
22. Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.
23. Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.
24. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.
25. Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.
26. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.
27. Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.
28. Experiments and takes risks, even when there is a chance of failure.
29. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.
30. Gives the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.

## APPENDIX B



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MISSISSIPPI

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**Office of Research and Sponsored Programs**

The University of Mississippi  
100 Barr Hall  
Post Office Box 907  
University, MS 38677  
(662) 915-7482  
Fax: (662) 915-7577

September 2, 2011

Mr. Billy J. Walker, II  
893 Edgewood Drive  
Southaven, MS 38672

Dr. Douglas Davis  
Leadership and Counselor Education  
University, MS 38677

Dear Mr. Walker and Dr. Davis:

This is to inform you that your application to conduct research with human participants, ***Impact of Leadership Effectiveness and Organizational Culture on Academic Achievement in Memphis City Schools' Alternative High Schools (Protocol 12-019)***, has been approved as Exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

Please remember that all of The University of Mississippi's human participant research activities, regardless of whether the research is subject to federal regulations, must be guided by the ethical principles in *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*.

It is especially important for you to keep these points in mind:

- You must protect the rights and welfare of human research participants.
- Any changes to your approved protocol must be reviewed and approved before initiating those changes.
- You must report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (662) 915-7482.

Sincerely,

Diane W. Lindley  
Coordinator, Institutional Review Board

Reply to the office of:  
John R. Barker, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

Phone (901) 416-5533  
FAX (901) 416-7635  
BarkerJohnR@mcsk12.net

August 19, 2011

B. J. Walker, II  
walkerbillyj@mcsk12.net

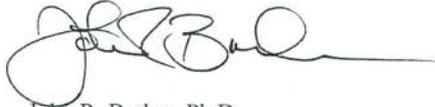
Mr. Walker,

After consideration of your proposal, *Impact of Leadership Effectiveness and Organizational Culture on Academic Achievement in Memphis City Schools' Alternative High Schools*, we have approved your request as amended to conduct a research study in the Memphis City Schools. You should use this letter as official notification of approval for your study.

I look forward to working with you in the completion of this project.

Please direct any inquiries to me via email at [barkerjohnr@mcsk12.net](mailto:barkerjohnr@mcsk12.net).

Regards,



John R. Barker, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

VITA

**Billy J. Walker, II Ph.D.**  
**893 Edgewood Dr.**  
**Southaven, MS 38672**  
**(901)830-7792 mobile (662)449-1193 home**  
walkerbj87@yahoo.com

### **Education**

- May 2012                    *Ph.D. in Educational Leadership*  
*Dissertation: Impact of Leadership Effectiveness and Organizational Climate on Academic Achievement in Memphis City Schools' Alternative High Schools*  
The University of Mississippi- Oxford, MS
- August 2006                *Educational Specialist in Administrative Leadership*  
*Thesis: Teachers' Perceptions African American Students, Corporal Punishment, and Special Education*  
Freed-Hardeman University- Henderson, TN
- May 2002                    *Master of Education, Teaching and Learning*  
Union University- Germantown, TN
- May 2000                    *Bachelor of Science, Biology/ Education*  
University of Tennessee- Martin, TN

### **Honors/Awards**

- **National Ambassador-** McDonald's Men of Mc Café Community Service Award  
2011-2012
- **Recipient-** MCS Newcomer of the Year Award  
2006
- **Recognition-** *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*  
2004, 2005
- **Recognition-** AFLAC National Assistant Coach of the Year Award  
2003
- **University of Tennessee at Martin-** Freshman Ambassador  
1999  
**Recipient-** Harold Conner Honor Scholarship  
1995 -1999

## **Professional Experience**

### **Memphis City Schools: Southwest Prep Academy High School: August 2008 – Present Principal**

- 100% of graduates are accepted into a post-secondary institution (2008 - 2012) (4 yr. university, 2 yr. community college, technical training or military service)
- increased graduation rate for Memphis City Schools from 62.4% (2008) to 74.6% (2012)
- decreased dropout rate for Memphis City Schools from 17.4% (2008) to 1.0% (2011)
- balanced 2.9 million dollar alternative division budget implementation for set up of MCS Prep Schools induction
- implemented dual enrollment through Southwest Tennessee Community College for college credit accumulation for juniors and seniors (2008-2012)
- developed 6 district leaders from teachers to the administrative level (1 principal, 2 asst. principals, 2 instructional facilitators and 1 coordinator)

### **Cambridge College: June 2011 – Present**

#### **Professor – Elementary Education and Administrative Leadership Dept.**

- assisted 52 scholars in improving writing technique scores for pro seminar thesis

### **Southwest Tennessee Community College: August 2007 - Present**

#### **Professor – Education Dept. and Bioscience Career Ladder Program**

- improved enrollment by 12.6% annually

### **Memphis City Schools: Graves Elementary School: June 2008 – July 2008**

#### **Summer School Principal**

- coordinated 345 students gaining credits for mathematics and language arts remediation

### **Memphis City Schools: Stafford Alternative School: August 2006 - August 2008**

#### **Assistant Principal**

- organized academics and logistics plan for Tennessee's first free standing alternative high school
- created first alternative graduation program (2006) that has now been adopted by the Memphis City Schools' charter and alternative schools

### **University of Tennessee Health Science Center (HCOP Program): June 2002 - June 2006**

#### **Administrative Coordinator/ Instructor**

- directed enrollment increase from 87 participants (2002) to 319 participants (2006)

### **Memphis City Schools: Fairley High School: August 2000 - August 2006**

#### **Lead Instructor-Physical Science Instructional Team/ Coach (Football & Track)**

- advised 119 scholar athletes for ACT completion and scholarship accumulation

## Presentations/Speaking Engagements

- **Leadership Effectiveness Initiative-** Board Meeting  
2012: Memphis, Tennessee
- **Haywood County Schools-** REACH Academy Inception Program  
2011: Brownsville, Tennessee
- **West Helena Board Initiative-** Overage for Grade Project  
2010-11: West Helena, Arkansas
- **American Education Association-** *Failure is Not an Option*  
2009: Orlando, Florida
- **Northside Freshman Academy-** Dress for Success  
2008: Memphis, Tennessee
- **Booker T. Washington High School-** Ninth Grade Assembly  
2006, 2007: Memphis, Tennessee
- **Freed-Hardeman University-** School of Education  
*National Education Week*  
2005: Henderson, Tennessee
- **Union University-** School of Education  
2002: Germantown, Tennessee
- **Martin Westview High School-** Upward Bound Program  
2000: Martin, Tennessee

## Professional Affiliations

- Member- **National Education Association**
- Member- **Tennessee Education Association**
- Member- **Memphis Education Association**
- Member- **American School Administration Association**
- Member- **Tennessee Alternative Educators Association**

## Community Involvement

- **McDonald's Executive Internship Program** –  
Great Southern Region: Memphis City Schools
- **Education Consultant-** Haywood County Schools
- **Education Consultant-** West Helena School District
- **Volunteer-** Habitat for Humanity