

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE MICROPOLITICS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION**

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# **AN EXPLORATION OF THE MICROPOLITICS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION**

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Instructional supervision has been one of the most researched, and debated topics in education in the last several decades. It continues to be a topic of relevance, especially in Pennsylvania, where the 2013-2014 school year began with the introduction of the teacher supervision and evaluation framework, Act 82 of 2012 (PSBA, 2013). Instructional supervision is a political phenomenon and social construct, and at any time, conceptually and practically, it is a function of internal and external politics, serving as an advantage to some and a disadvantage for others (Blasé & Blasé, 2002). The forms that supervision takes, the frequency, approaches, goals, values or beliefs are reflected by those leading the organization. The use of a micropolitical lens holds great potential for understanding the critical processes and nuances of the supervisory practices. The purpose of this exploration were to describe the current supervision practices of elementary principals, examine the micropolitical strategies, values and use of power relationships, determine the micropolitical leadership approach of the respondents, and discover the changes in practice as a result of Pennsylvania Act 82 or 2012.

This study was an exploration, involving survey and 11 follow up interviews. The survey was designed in a manner to quantify the Blasé and Anderson Micropolitical Leadership Matrix (1995). The respondents, elementary principals in Western Pennsylvania, were mapped to a

quadrant of the matrix. Responses were analyzed and follow up semi-structured interviews were conducted. From these data, several findings were determined.

The findings indicate that principals reported that they lean towards an open style and transformational approach. The concepts of instructional supervision and evaluation are approached synonymously, and efforts to grow teachers is through the clinical supervision model and practice of walkthroughs. Finally, Pennsylvania Act 82 of 2012 is reported to have had a positive impact in technical approaches, yet core philosophy has not changed.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 VIGNETTE**

“The micropolitical perspective on an organization provides a valuable and potent approach to understanding the woof and warp of day-to-day life in schools. Micropolitics is about power and how people use it to influence others and to protect themselves. It is about conflict and how people compete with one another to get what they want. It is about cooperation and how people build support among themselves to achieve their ends.” (Blasé, 1995, p. 1).

#### **1.1.1 Principal 1: Dr. Miller**

Dr. Miller is a principal of a prominent school that began a downward slide years ago. Although she has been an educator for only eight years, she is driven to success. She was brought in last year to return the school to high academic success, especially in the area of writing. Dr. Miller convenes a meeting with the writing teachers in grades five and six. She has a warm and sincere voice, with a bright smile, offering compliments in the opening conversation. Quickly, though, she points out the achievement targets for the remainder of the year. The

teachers respond that they have no resources, professional development, or more importantly time to deliver on this expectation. They question if it is a wise use of resources.

Dr. Miller does not hesitate to share that she has “been in the trenches” and was highly successful delivering this instructional approach. Anticipating resistance, she opens a folder with a variety of documents and outlines the expectations and details of how instruction should occur. The teachers continue to question how struggling learners can manage the tasks. At each turn, though, there is an articulate response.

Later that afternoon, Mrs. Smith approaches Dr. Miller with a request to change her schedule to accommodate a personal issue. Dr. Miller is happy to comply with the suggestions. However, she leaves the conversation requesting that Mrs. Smith outline her grade four writing plan and share the positive outcomes of her experience teaching writing last year, with hope that an endorsement from a colleague would smooth over some conflict. Both parties recognize the subtle intent, yet are willing to acquiesce to achieve a more meaningful personal goal.

### **1.1.2 Principal 2: Mr. Brown**

Mr. Brown is the principal of a successful suburban school. Each year, although there is room for improvement, student achievement is high. The school has a culture emphasizing data analysis and goal setting, which is often largely developed through the skillfulness of Mr. Brown prior to the start of school.

Mr. Brown has recently approached three third grade teachers with a proposal. The superintendent and board would like a report on how the principal will ensure high quality instruction. Mr. Brown has determined that the goal will be to insist on crisp delivery of guided reading and text coding, however, he needs “buy in” from the staff. He then proposes to the

teachers that if they choose Lesson Study as the approach to their differentiated supervision project, implementing and perfecting these strategies, they can not only highlight their skillfulness, but also work closely with him in developing the master schedule to their favor.

### **1.1.3 Principal 3: Mr. Baker**

Ongoing data indicates that Mrs. Davis is a mildly effective teacher. She has the capacity to create greater impact, but tends to engage in self-protective strategies, which often take the form of dishonesty and behind the scenes posturing. Mr. Baker rarely conducts walkthroughs or interacts with her. Rather, he has dealings only when professionally necessary. Following a rare walkthrough, Mrs. Davis asks what he thought about a creative lesson she planned. He responds simply, “It was OK. Your classroom management needs to be dramatically improved, and it is your responsibility to make that happen quickly. I will be back to see changes.” Mrs. Davis leaves the conversation with distress, confusion, and anger, considering her options for transfer.

These vignettes present varying “micropolitical” approaches to instructional supervision in public elementary schools. Through the experiences in these scenarios, it is highlighted that instructional supervision is not a routine, benign act, but rather a dynamic and political, on-going event. It also highlights that context, situation, external or internal pressures, attitudes, and beliefs drive the approaches of principals and teachers.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

Instructional supervision has been one of the most researched, and debated topics in education in the last several decades. It continues to be a topic of relevance, especially in Pennsylvania, where the 2013-2014 school year began with the introduction of the teacher supervision and evaluation framework, Act 82 of 2012 (PSBA, 2013). The reason for the continued examination of supervisory practices is woven into the very fabric of the purpose of education, as well as the accountability that school stakeholders demand.

Historical foundations and views of supervision support that the overarching importance of effective supervision is enhancing classroom instruction through the growth of teacher performance and skillfulness (Glickman, Gordon, Ross-Gordon, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1982). It has become a more common understanding that “the key to improving student learning rests with what happens in the classroom” (Hoy & Hoy, 2006, p.3) and it is reported that the single most important factor in influencing student achievement is the quality of the teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Whitaker, 2003). Supervision, by definition, is designed to support teacher instructional proficiency, and student achievement.

Also, the “supervisor’s role conflict” is a prominent theme, where the supervisor must evaluate and report competence, but at the same time garner authentic collaboration to help teachers improve their teaching abilities (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005, p. 27). Evaluation is often a term used interchangeably with supervision of instruction. Teacher evaluation can involve elements or quality assurance, summative judgment, professional development, measure of reflection and growth (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Iwanicki, 1998; Nolan & Hoover, 2005). One certainty is that both supervision and evaluation co-exist, and they are never value free (Nolan & Hoover, 2005).

Yet, often left unconsidered in the discussion of supervision is the political nature of the supervision process. Organizational power and politics are important dimensions; formal and informal power interests and ideologies influence most school outcomes (Blasé, 1998). Some of these political forces work to preserve the status quo, while some work to facilitate change and innovation. Collaboration is a central figure around which a vision and understanding of supervision is developed, but the assumed neutral tone tends to neglect the costs of conflict and tension between administrator's influence and the teacher's discretion (Zepeda & Ponticell, 1998). Consideration of the micropolitical perspective of supervision brings to the surface the struggle and collaboration, as well as issues of who governs, how they govern, as well as the organizational design of the school (Blasé, 1991)

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Instructional supervision is a political phenomenon and social construct, and at any time, conceptually and practically, it is a function of internal and external politics, serving as an advantage to some and a disadvantage for others (Blasé & Blasé, 2002). The forms that supervision takes, the frequency, approaches, goals, values or beliefs are reflected by those leading the organization. Participants may be more or less closely aligned with the value system, or may be situated in a circumstance to participate more than others.

The capacity of instructional supervision to produce an outcome, such as improved instruction, is a function of chance due to the conscious and unconscious motivations of those involved (Blasé & Blasé, 2002). Models of supervision, such as clinical supervision, require a high level of collaboration, but may fail to consider elements of power, which implies that

supervision is benign and apolitical rather than socially, morally, and ethically political (Smyth & Garman, 1989). The leadership style and goals of the principal, as well as the strategies employed will determine if authentic professional learning will take place, or if the process will be largely ceremonial.

Although valued, supervisory practices are not supported by all educators and can be a contested topic. There are arguments for and against educational supervision, the values that underpin it, and the procedures used. Duncan Waite (1997) argues that supervision is usually another form of evaluation, which benefits the organization, not the individual, and the evidence to support teacher benefit are thin and anecdotal. Waite (1997) further argues that evaluation done under the guise of supervision is hurtful and counterproductive, and the determining factor of benefit should be found through the consideration of whose knowledge and whose ends are being served.

Starratt (1997) supports the abolition of all supervision. He agrees that when supervision fulfills a bureaucratic function, it is also a means to control teachers through power. This is inappropriate because teachers manage a highly complex, unpredictable, and constantly changing environment, and freedom to make impromptu decisions is necessary to create learning experiences. Further, Starratt (1997) claims the relationship between changing teacher behaviors resulting in improved student outcomes as well as principal monitoring resulting in changed teacher behavior is inconclusive. Clearly, the world of supervision and teaching is profoundly political, and it is within this context that supervision must operate to promote teacher development and student achievement. Decision-making and supervisory behavior cannot be understood without exploring political power strategies (Caruso, 2013).

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study will investigate and address four main questions emerging from the review of literature.

Question 1: How do elementary principals describe their practices of instructional supervision in their schools?

Question 2: What micropolitical influences, especially ideologies, strategies, power relationships and motivations impact elementary principal supervision practices?

Question 3: How do elementary principals describe their micropolitical leadership approach?

Question 4: How do elementary principals describe the influence of Act 82 of 2012 on their supervision practices?

## **1.5 RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The use of a micropolitical lens holds great potential for understanding the critical processes and nuances of the supervisory practices. Micropolitical processes are often the force that drives organizational outcomes. Supervision and evaluation are processes that require interaction and collaboration. Collaboration is a central concept around which a supervision is developed, but it tends to neglect the costs and conflict, risks and tensions between the administrator's influence and teacher's decision-making (Zepeda & Ponticell, 1998).

## 1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in two separate, but related theories. First, the study is supported by Blasé and Anderson's (1995) micropolitical leadership matrix. Blasé and Anderson developed one comprehensive definition of micropolitics. It involves the use of formal and informal power by individuals to achieve goals within their organizations. The definition also involves the perceived differences and motivations to influence and protect their interests, as well as the nature of conflict and cooperation. The manner in which power is wielded, "power over, power through, or power with," reflects the approach to leadership and supervision (Blasé & Anderson, 1995, p. 14).

The Blasé and Anderson (1995) framework attends to leadership style, the means to achieve goals, and the focus of the goals. Leadership style may be characterized as *closed*, where power is wielded in direct ways, resulting in teacher interactions of avoidance and protection. Leadership style can also be characterized as *open*, characterized as diplomatic, with engagement of subtle and ideological use of power. The second part of the framework involves the target of goals; *transactional* approaches desire the preservation of status quo, where as *transformative* approaches affect growth and achievement of goals.

Conceptually, they provide an organized manner for examining the practices of the participants and their insights. The details and characteristics of the frameworks are important to establishing a foundation of this study. Therefore, each quadrant of the theoretical frame is described more fully in chapter 3.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

A search of empirical work on instructional supervision using a micropolitical lens has revealed a very limited number of studies, especially of recent date. Although the political nature of life in schools has been widely researched, little has been done to explore supervision directly.

The purpose of this study of instructional supervision was to investigate current supervisory practices, and the supervisors' sources of power, interests, ideologies, values, conflict and collaboration. The secondary intent was to examine how a single macropolitical event, Act 82 of 2012 in Pennsylvania, has influenced the processes. Act 82 focuses on teacher and principal effectiveness. It is both an evaluative and supervision-oriented approach, requiring multiple sources of evidence and data to analyze the effectiveness of the educator. Finally, this study examined the daily informal, conscious or unconscious strategies that are employed by principals to conduct their supervisory work, protect their interests or selves. The study also examined how these actions may support or inhibit the functioning of the school, and ultimately student achievement as a result.

Supervision viewed through a micropolitical perspective allows for insight in the day to day operations of a school, examination of human behavior, and the competition between individuals to get what they want. Attempting to understand the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of those in the field, that which is not easy to observe, can enlighten administrators to new perspectives in supervisory practices. The literature further supports that micropolitical behaviors intensify in times of change and challenge.

Supervision, as defined, is an important component in facilitating teacher growth and student achievement. It has certainly been a valued concept throughout the literature. A number

of approaches and models of instructional supervision have been practiced for decades. Supervisors also continue to manage the role conflict, the dual purpose of the position concerning both evaluation and attention towards growth. This research study intends to explore the supervisor role conflict, choice of supervision approach, and micropolitical culture, relationships, and power distribution.

## 1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Throughout this study, several terms will be used that may be used in different context, which develop a different conceptual meaning and value. It is necessary to explain how they will be defined in this paper for a consistent perspective.

***Supervision-*** Supervision is an action carried out by a supervisor with the intention of improving instructional effectiveness, bringing about positive change, as well as promoting growth, development, collaboration, problem-solving, and professional growth (Alfonso and Firth, 1990; Goldhammer, Andersen, and Krajewski,1980; Zepeda, 2007). In this study, the reference to supervisor will be an elementary principal.

***Evaluation-*** Evaluation is focused on making judgments about a teacher and their abilities (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, Andersen, & Krajewski, 1980).

***Micropolitics-***Micropolitics refers to the immediate, ongoing, dynamic and interaction between and among individuals and groups (Ball, 1987; Blasé & Bjork, 2009). It is defined by the nature, not by the context, addressing who gets what, when and how (Bacharach & Mundell, 1995; Caruso, 2013).

***Macropolitics***- Macropolitics refers to external relationships, including local, state, and national and the interactions between public and private organizations (Marshall & Scribner, 1991). Some examples may include Pennsylvania Department of Education, National Education Association, or Congress.

***Act 82 of 2012 of Pennsylvania***- HB 1901, also known as the Teacher Effectiveness System of Act 82, is the School Code legislation that provides for the distribution of funds to public schools. Included in the system is a rating instrument that includes multiple sources of data in evaluation of teachers and principals, requiring 50 percent of their evaluation be based on student performance and 50% of the evaluation based on observational evidence, grounded in the Charlotte Danielson framework (Danielson 2007).

***Supervisor/Leader/Principal*** - The terms, supervisor, leader, and principal, each have specific meanings. They can, at times, be used interchangeably. In this research project, these terms will be used interchangeably and maintain a single meaning, with the context that the principal is the leader of the school, performing the act of supervision.

## **2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The purpose of the following review of literature is to more fully consider the two concepts, supervision and micropolitics, that provide the foundation for this study. Volumes have been written about supervision, while micropolitics requires an explanation of the connection of leadership, supervision, and the related use of power. The rationale for the development of the review of literature is to first describe central concepts related to the research. The following headings are central to the study design and discussion.

### **2.1 SUPERVISION**

Supervision is an action carried out by a supervisor with the intention of improving instructional effectiveness, bringing about positive change, as well as promoting growth, development, collaboration, problem-solving, and professional growth (Alfonso & Firth, 1990; Goldhammer, Andersen, & Krajewski, 1980; Zepeda, 2007). Supervision is the general leadership function of overseeing the work of others to be more effective, ideally in schools, to improve the instructional program and the learning experiences of students (Sergiovanni, 1982).

### **2.1.1 Purpose of supervision**

The main purpose of supervision and evaluation is to enhance the educational experience and learning of all students (Nolan & Hoover, 2005). The supervisor has a dual role in assessing and assisting. This is referred to as the role conflict, where they must evaluate and support teachers in improvement (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005).

The purpose of supervision is linked with helping teachers learn about, reflect on, and improve their practice. It is a separate process, which is formative in nature and promotes continual growth (Iwanicki, 1990). Instructional supervision has an emphasis on professional improvement (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993; Wanzare & de Costa, 2000). Through the many definitions of supervision, there are many common purposes, including improving instruction, promoting effective staff development, promoting academic reflection, and enabling the initiation of new techniques (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Wanzare & de Costa, 2000).

### **2.1.2 Professional development as supervision**

The available literature suggests that instructional supervision is related to professional development and continuous improvement in skills, which are essential to success. (Andersen & Snyder, 1998; McQuarrie & Wood, 1991; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Zepeda, 2007). In studies conducted to determine the dimensions of effective supervision, staff development efforts were found to be a top priority (Iwanicki, 1989; Pajak, 1990). Development of teacher knowledge, content, and pedagogy is one of the most effective means to influence student learning (Guskey & Sparks, 2002). The discussion of what professional development is, and

more importantly, the characteristics of effective professional development, is then quite relevant.

Professional development is defined as an intentional, ongoing and systemic process that can take a variety of forms (Guskey, 2000). With each passing school year, additional professional knowledge for the educator is available. School reform and accountability expectations require educators to achieve challenging achievement results. Often, conventional professional development is viewed as faddish, top-down, irrelevant, and meaningless, where a popular approach is adopted as a means to get quick results (Guskey, 2000).

However, educational improvement almost never occurs in the absence of quality professional development (Guskey, 2000). High quality professional development involves the examination of instructional practices that foster student learning (Guskey & Sparks, 2002). Meaningful professional development involves teachers engaging in learning experiences that help them recognize information that can be effective in guiding learning in their classrooms.

Guskey (2003) found that there is a problem in defining effective professional development. Often, the lists of characteristics found in literature are derived from surveys of opinions of both principals and teachers. Of these lists, it is synthesized that “enhancement of teachers pedagogical knowledge” or helping teachers more deeply understand their craft is the most prominent dimension (Guskey, 2003, p. 749). It is suggested from analysis of teacher and principal-responded surveys that promotion of collegiality and collaborative exchange combined with research-based decision-making is the only way effective development can be achieved (Guskey, 2003).

## 2.2 EVALUATION

Teacher supervision and evaluation are often terms that are used interchangeably. Danielson and McGreal (2000) note that many of the evaluation systems used are reflective of what educators believed about teaching in the 1970s. As beliefs about teaching shifts, educators change their views of what constitutes good practice. Teacher evaluation has two purposes, quality assurance and professional learning. These two concepts are difficult to merge and both may go unaddressed through the process depending on the skill and knowledge of the principal or supervisor. Supervision is aimed at improving classroom instruction, where evaluation is focused on making judgments about a teacher and his or her abilities (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, Andersen, & Krajewski, 1980).

Evaluation is often thought of as a subset or a related function of supervision, which is described by several prominent authors. Danielson and McGreal (2000) state that teacher evaluation includes quality assurance and professional development. Nolan and Hoover (2005) describe evaluation as an “organizational function designed to make comprehensive judgments concerning teacher performance for the purpose of personnel decisions” (p. 26). Iwanicki (1998) suggests that evaluation in supervision should be a process of inquiry. If supervision is a process of working through and with people to better achieve goals to foster learning and promote professional growth, then evaluation is established to determine the degree to which this occurs. The most basic purpose of both supervision and evaluation is to enhance the educational experience and learning of all students. Supervision and evaluation are separate but complementary processes that can be coordinated to develop growth and accountability.

Teacher evaluation is an organizational function designed to make comprehensive judgments concerning teacher performance and competence for the purposes of personnel

decisions such as tenure and continuing employment (Nolan & Hoover, 2004). Teacher supervision, however, is an organizational function concerned with promoting teacher growth, which in turn leads to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning. The concept is not focused on making judgments about performance and competence (Nolan & Hoover, 2004). The concepts differ in several areas, including basic purpose, data collection procedures, and perspective (Nolan & Hoover, 2004). For a profession to grow, an emphasis may be placed on defining outstanding practice and accomplished teaching. A quality teacher evaluation system includes a fair and effective evaluation based on performance, and is designed to encourage improvement. (Stronge, 1997).

### **2.3 HISTORY OF SUPERVISION**

Current practices can be more fully understood by examining the roots of instructional supervision. Supervision at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the 1920s begins the phase referred to as “pre-modern.” The historical influence of Fredrick Taylor in industry and commerce has influenced supervision through present times (Smyth, 1984, p. 426). Often characteristic to this period was the use of detailed rating forms in an effort to promote efficiency (Sergiovanni, & Starratt, 1998). This period of time reflected hierarchy and inspection and a lack of freedom. The inspection was “based on intuition rather than technical or scientific knowledge” (Glanz, 2000, p. 72). The “scientific” approach to supervision was largely a response to a lack of clearly defined standards in school for which methods worked, when, how, and for which children (p. 429). It also led to the sorting of effective from ineffective teachers rather than improving instruction, as well as the sorting of students into career paths to fit the

needs of society (Glanz, 1999, p. 18). Bureaucracy, summative evaluation and inspection were the main tools of supervision (Glanz, 1994). Supervisors were autocratic and were regarded as the experts. Their actions were “scientific” and based on efficiency, introducing the scientific phase of supervision (Glanz, 1999).

During the 1930’s there was a shift of emphasis, often referred to as the human relations period or the beginning of the modern period of supervision (Glanz, 2000). Supervisors were selected based on their teaching experience and potential as administrators (Glanz, 1991). The supervisors of instruction were expected to monitor efficiency through assisting the teachers in understanding the mission as well as selecting the strategies to acquire achievement results (p. 429). During this period, there was an outward appearance of concern for the teacher as an individual; however, there were no liberating or developed social relationships. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998) suggest that the human relations perspective focused on the social needs of the teachers in an effort to create a feeling of satisfaction, the end result being greater productivity. While there were outward signs of abandoning the bureaucratic position, there were still dominant agendas beneath. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1979) argue that there was an “emphasis on winning friends to influence people” (p. 4). There often was an effort to exercise social control over teachers in the image of efficiency. Glanz (1995) referred to supervision as “bureaucratic legacy of fault-finding” or “snoopervision” (p. 107).

The 1960’s represent a period of educational innovations, including mastery learning, programmed instruction and individually guided instruction. This was often influenced by a behavioral science approach of research, meaning that social behavior can be analyzed to make predictive statements (Smyth, 1984). At this time, there was a relaxed approach to control and inspection, but an increase in consumerism and teacher-proof materials. There was a reduction

in bureaucratic control, but an increase in control over curriculum and pedagogy. There was a rebirth of the human relations phase, including the development of observation systems and a focus on objectives and outcomes.

When teachers' knowledge is valued, it opens up new angles for supervision. Some can be problematic. When teachers are given a voice, principals are tasked with listening. Beginning in the 1980's through present day, Glanz (2000) describes the postmodern period of supervision. "Post-modernism brings to awareness the recognition that issues, problems, and solutions found within one organization may not even be relevant for the people who inhabit another" (Pajak, 2000, p. 230). Postmodernism is a social perspective, emphasizing context and relationships. Collegiality and conversation is more important than the observations of performance. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998) suggest an environment where teachers can "contribute a full range of talents" (p. 17). There became more of an emphasis on student outcomes, and a concentration on the teacher as a facilitator of thinking and problem-solving. Sullivan and Glanz (2005) refer to the 1980's as "changing concepts" where democratic practices and supervision responsibilities were granted to teachers (p. 10).

## **2.4 MODELS OF SUPERVISION**

Many models and definitions are used to define supervision, the functions and outcomes. Largely the focus is on improving instruction, developing an educator's potential for growth, professional development, curriculum development, encouragement, feedback and reflection (Acheson & Waite, 1998; Garmstron, Lipton & Kaiser, 1998; Iwanicki, 1998). Related to these efforts, Glickman, Gordon, Ross-Gordon (2001) defined five supervisory tasks: direct

assistance, group development, professional development, curriculum development, and action research. These structural components can be realized through several models of supervision and approaches, including clinical, differentiated, peer coaching, action research, and walkthroughs. Although there are other models to be considered, these models are commonly accessed and endorsed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Act 82 of 2012, therefore having prevalence in this study.

#### **2.4.1 Clinical supervision**

During the 1950s, Morris Cogan (1973), a supervisor of pre-service teachers at Harvard, noticed a lack of adequate professional development for pre-service and in-service teachers alike. Education was not viewed as a profession. Cogan developed the concept of clinical supervision with the dual purpose of moving the education field toward professionalism and also prescribing a practice where teachers and supervisors would work together in collaboration every day. The concept is clinical in terms of the data gathering process in the classroom, as well as the role of the supervisor. Clinical supervision was the first attempt to address changing educational expectations and create a climate of more specific interaction and participation between teacher and supervisor.

Through many published models and after a century of published literature, educators are still unsure of the definition of supervision, largely because of the politics, values and philosophies (Goldhammer, 1980). Teachers dislike being the object of supervision, and inherent is hierarchy and threat. Cogan (1973) states that clinical supervision is clinical in that it places an emphasis on analysis of in-class events with a focus on the teacher and student behavior, and is focused on the improvement of teachers' classroom instruction. The primary

data sources are the records of the classroom events, or what teachers and students do in the teaching and learning process.

The rationale for this model of supervision is to create a sense of belonging, break down the isolation of teachers in school, and ultimately to employ new roles and techniques in teaching. Cogan (1973) advocates a nine step cycle of clinical supervision. The cycle is important as it is designed to facilitate a change in behavior and to offer help that is meaningful. As a process, there are several suggested steps or phases to implement. First, phase one involves establishing a teacher-supervisor relationship. Next, phase two involves the co-planning of a lesson with the teacher. This includes accounting for outcomes, processes, anticipated problems, materials and methods of feedback. In phase three, the supervisor plans the objectives, processes, and methods for collection of data. As the teacher becomes more familiar with the process, they begin to take more of a lead role in the planning. During phase four and five, the actual lesson is observed as set in the conference, and the data is analyzed. Typically, the analysis is done separately, but may at times include the teacher. Phase six and seven involve the planning for the conference followed by the actual principal-teacher conference. The supervisor typically designs the strategy of the conference alone. Often, the conference is between the teacher and supervisor, but also may occasionally include other participants. Finally, stage eight includes renewed planning. Here, the supervisor and teacher decide on the kinds of changes to be sought in the classroom behavior, and the continuation of the cyclical process begins.

Goldhammer (1980) presents an approach, which is uniquely different than previous methods. It is goal-oriented for instructional improvement, and it focuses on deliberate intervention into the instructional process. This approach requires a mutual trust in the working

relationship, a systematic method and assumption that the supervisor knows more about instruction and learning than the teacher.

Goldhammer (1980) suggests five stages for the implementation of the clinical model: (1) pre-observation conference; (2) observation; (3) analysis and strategy; (4) supervision conference; (5) post-conference analysis (1980, p. 32). The preconference stage is mainly designed to establish rapport and provide a procedural framework for the sequence to follow. It serves as a rehearsal of the plans, and an opportunity for revision and contract building. Complete and accurate data is then collected through the observation. This data may be determined through the previous stage, or it may be fresh data gained as the lesson unfolds. The third stage is the analysis. Here, clarity and understanding is made of the observational data, and this data drives the plan for the following conference. Goldhammer (1980) states that “all roads must lead to the conference” (p. 41). As such, there are several components or outcomes of the conference. These include establishing planning time for future teaching, redefining the supervisory contract, acknowledging success, outlining the existence of issues, sharing specific expertise, and training the teacher in the skill of self-supervision. The final stage that Goldhammer advocates should be a time of reflection in the ability to engage the supervisory practice.

Noreen Garman (1986) offers a slightly revised perspective of Cogan and Goldhammer’s framework (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer et al., 1980). Garman suggests that in an effort to improve practice, to move to a professional status, teachers need to be developed in the skill of inquiry, need to have a rationale for their practice based in everyday events, and must take personal responsibility for self- understanding. She suggests that a “mature professional develops inquiry as a source of professional action” (p. 16). Inquiry involves reasoning, such as

discovery, verification, interpretation, and evaluation. Garman's reflective approach is procedurally represented by following an established criteria. First, she suggests involvement in the scenario, or the events with a history to be set aside and noted. Next, the teacher should record the scenario, a source of stable data for later analysis. The third step involves the meaning-making of the data determined through introspection, which develop patterns and insights. Next, the event is placed in a framework, context or a meaning, where confirmation, a reflection of the experience, takes place with others to determine if it has a meaning (Garman, 1986). Garman adds to Cogan and Goldhammer's framework by recommending that teachers take responsibility for arranging the data and making sense of it. Further, the skill of inquiry should be taught as part of the framework for clinical supervision.

#### **2.4.2 Differentiated supervision**

In contrast, Glatthorn (1984) suggests that all teachers do not need the same supervision, or clinical supervision. Experienced and competent teachers can have options, and they may be able to choose to have clinical supervision, work with a colleague, direct their own professional growth, or be monitored for growth. "Supervision is a process of facilitating the professional growth of a teacher, primarily by giving the teacher feedback about classroom interactions, and helping that teacher make use if that feedback in order to make teaching more effective" (Glatthorn, 1984, p. 2). Developmental supervision, an approach that serves to diagnose the teacher's developmental level, expertise, commitment, and educational situation and select the best interpersonal approach is characterized by the level of control by supervisor and decision-making responsibilities of teacher (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004). Developmental

supervision is rooted in an approach where students can make their own meanings. It is further characterized by flexibility, webbed instruction, and authentic interaction and inquiry.

Glatthorn (1989) suggests several reasons why differentiated supervision is practical. Most importantly, teachers have different growth needs, and the time-consuming nature of the clinical model is not practical. Related to differentiated supervision, Glatthorn (1984) developed learning-centered supervision, which is concerned with helping teachers learn about their own teaching and its effects so they can be active problem solvers. Clinical supervision is a component, exploring with a wide lens with the intent to identify a problem to solve, observe for “facilitating teacher behaviors and impeding teacher behaviors” (p. 23).

Next, the context of supervision for all teachers is also an important consideration. It often occurs in four domains: direct supervisory practices, staff development, guided assistance to groups of teachers, teacher evaluation, and walkthroughs and informal visits. The differentiated approach applies only to the individual supervision (Glatthorn, 1990). The differentiated system assumes that regardless of experience or competence, all teachers will be involved in related processes for improvement, including evaluation, staff development, and informal observations. It builds upon those required processes and offers a choice from among two or more of those options: intensive development (clinical supervision), cooperative development (small teams working together, observing each other, holding professional dialogues), or self-directed development (working alone toward a goal).

The following sections describe several prominent forms of differentiated supervision commonly found in Pennsylvania.

### **2.4.2.1 Action research in supervision**

Action research has developed as an option to supervision. A more modern definition of action research is provided by Calhoun (2002). She refers to action research as “continual disciplined inquiry to inform our practice as educators” (p.18). Sullivan and Glanz (2005) define action research as continuous practice through a four step process: selecting a focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, and taking action. Supervision based on collaboration, participative decision making, and reflection is the hallmark of a viable school improvement program that is designed to promote teaching and learning. Action research has emerged as an important form of instructional supervision to engage teachers in reflective practice about their teaching and to examine factors that aim to promote student achievement. (Glanz, 2005). Glanz further states that because no one educational strategy works under all circumstances, action research is used by principals and teachers to discover which pedagogical practices are most effective in raising achievement levels for particular classes or students in a given school or grade.

Calhoun (2002) states that “action research asks educators to study the practice and its context, explore the research base for ideas, compare what they find to their current profile, participate in training to needed changes, and study the effects on themselves and their students and colleagues” (p. 99). It can change the social system where continual learning is supported, and replace superficial coverage with deep coverage. When used as an organization-wide process for school or individual improvement, action research provides a way to organize collective work so expertise is extended. Supervision based on collaboration, participative decision making, and reflection is the hallmark of a viable school improvement program that is

designed to promote teaching and learning. Action research has emerged as an important form of instructional supervision to engage teachers in reflective practice about their teaching and to examine factors that aim to promote student achievement (Zepeda, 2003, p. 17).

### **2.4.3 Use of walkthroughs**

Walk-throughs are another form of formative supervision, and a derivative of Management by Walking Around. MBWA was introduced as an educational management theory in 1990 (Frase & Hetzel, 1990) and has been practiced for many years. Through this approach, effective analysis, interactions, and change can occur. The supervisor is pursuing clues about strengths and problems (Downey, 2004). Supervisors who practice MBWA create an environment of collegiality, participation, and involvement in the classroom and school (Frase & Hetzel, 1990). Frase and Hetzel (1990) assert that there are three fundamental values to MBWA applicable to its use in schools: caring, openness, and trust. Caring about people is the hallmark of this leadership approach. Principals and teachers put the organization above individual gain, reach out, and listen to each other (Frase & Hetzel, 1990).

Downey et al. (2004) state in the *Three Minute Walkthrough* that lasting change in instructional behavior requires a certain course of action. It is important to influence the thoughts of the teacher so they have the desire to change their own behavior. The focus is on moving all staff to self-reflection, self-diagnosis, and professional growth, and the nature of the communication should be two-way conversational with few notes with different levels of follow up. Downey suggests a five step process to foster goals, including an examination of curriculum, instructional decisions, evidence of past decisions, and safety concerns.

Downy suggests avoiding judgment about the teaching practices, but rather simply notice the decisions being made. Accumulation of data from multiple brief visits begin to develop a pattern for dialogue to assist staff in engaging in reflective inquiry. A key to success will be found in the nature of the relationships with faculty and staff (Sergiovanni, 1999).

There are several values of walk-throughs as indicated by Keruskin (2006), Rossi (2007), Mandell (2007), and Downy (2009). A few of these include increased teacher satisfaction, motivation, and self-efficacy, improved teacher attitude toward professional development and appraisal, improvement in classroom management, increase in perception of principal effectiveness, and a decrease in student discipline.

To develop the benefits, Graf and Werlinich (2002) founders of the Western Pennsylvania Principal Academy, recommend a 14-step process for implementing the walkthrough observation tool, similar in nature to Downey, including the gathering of baseline data, meeting with the staff, and establishing a focus and “look-fors,” and most importantly, feedback based on data (Werlinich, personal communication, 2012).

This model is significantly different from Downey (2010) in two main ways. First, it emphasizes staff collaboration and definition of effective teaching, which becomes the “look-fors.” Second, the supervision is not wandering around, but rather is on a very focused mission: looking for evidence that can be reported back to the teacher.

Marshall (2005) further supports the theory in stating that “the engine that drives high student achievement is teams working collaboratively toward common curriculum expectations and using interim assessments to continuously improve teaching and attend to students who are not successful” (p. 731). In a suggested advancement of the traditional clinical supervision model, Marshall (2005) suggests the following points: continuous analyzing learning, rather

than evaluating teaching; energizing the work of teacher teams, rather than inspecting individuals; conduct frequent unscheduled visits; continuous suggestions for redirection; candid give-and-take conversations; fostering a climate where teachers are concerned with “is it working” (p.732). Although these points are consistent with a clinical supervision model, they are also aligned with the framework for walk-throughs.

#### **2.4.4 Feedback**

An integral component to any form of supervision is the frequency and quality of feedback. According to Covey (1991) without feedback and regular reports on progress and performance, an individual is less likely to achieve his professional goals. Frase (1992) states that feedback has too often been ineffective. Without quality feedback, a teacher’s creation of goals for professional growth may not happen. Further, shallow and meaningless comments can lead to diminished capacity over time (Frase, 1992). Teacher capacity is enhanced when teachers are given the opportunity to participate in collecting and analyzing data and drawing conclusions that link instruction and student learning.

Quality feedback in Feeney’s (2007) case study conducted on over 20 years of evaluations measured against three criteria: descriptive and observable data; characteristics of effective teaching; reflective inquiry and self-reflectiveness. Feeney (2007) also determined in the case study that identifying characteristics of effective teaching through a rubric helped focus the evaluators, but did not engage teachers in reflective inquiry about their teaching.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996), individuals who excel at what they do can internalize feedback to the point where they can self-monitor and adjust without the help of experts. An evaluation has no meaning if it is not discussed, and reflected on, ultimately leading

to growth and different decision-making. Teachers rarely play an active role in analyzing data. Garmstrom and Costa (2002) note that teachers are more likely to internalize feedback and make changes when a reflective structure is in place.

#### **2.4.5 Perceptions of the supervision process**

Throughout the review of literature, it is the researcher's interpretation that the purpose of supervision continues to be complicated, as the role of supervision and evaluation become blurred. A few studies have been conducted to measure the perceptions of those involved.

Studies have been done to measure the perceptions of teachers and administrators and the supervision process. Cynthia Kramer (2007) studied the perceptions of elementary school teachers participation in instructional supervision. She found in her study that teachers were more effective at improving instruction when they understood the purpose of the process . When there was a comprehensive level of supervision, there was a high level of trust. Behaviors such as visiting classrooms often, providing guidance and advice, and being easily accessible all were reported as factors leading to continuity. Respondents indicated that when supervision was comprehensive, there was also collaboration. Collaboration with colleagues and peer relationships were found to be most helpful. Pre- and post-conferences from a clinical supervision model were also found to be a helpful tool. Feedback was also found to be more important than any other variable, although only moderately correlated to instructional improvement. In summary, instructional improvement, the purpose of supervision, was found to occur when the supervision was comprehensive and a trusting relationship was maintained.

Parallel in nature, John Rizzo (2005) studied teachers' and supervisors' perceptions of current and ideal supervision and evaluation practices which yield several findings. Effective

supervision requires supervisors possessing high quality interpersonal skills, including respect, honesty, fairness, trust. He also suggests that practices be aimed at improving teaching and is supportive in nature with regards to feedback, and that there are clear differences between teacher and supervisor perceptions.

The findings showed that there is considerable disagreement between the current perceptions of supervisory practices between supervisors and teachers. Further, supervisors generally perceive a higher match between current and ideal conditions in comparison to teachers (Rizzo, 2005). The greatest indicated weakness for teachers and supervisors was a lack of walkthroughs or frequent observations

Mandell (2006) found that principals find that supervision can have an impact on teachers' growth and development, and portfolios and differentiated supervision are determined to be viewed positively, however, walk-thoughts are felt to be the most effective model. Keruskin (2006) and Rossi (2007) both determined several findings of the use of walkthroughs at both the elementary and secondary levels: there is a more effective use of data, an increase in test scores; more collaboration and sharing of best practices; an ability to gather data to inform professional development; and more meaningful conversation.

## **2.5 TRENDS IN SUPERVISION**

Trust in the organization is a complex and dynamic element in schools. There exists in schools varying degrees of bureaucratic structure and hierarchy, roles and distributions of power, and relationship and interaction structures between stakeholders (Hoy et al., 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). There is a two-way assumption of trust. Darling-Hammond (1988) notes that

“top-down and increasingly prescriptive approaches are a result of a lack of trust in teachers that they can make responsible and educationally appropriate decisions” (p. 63). However, the degree to which the bureaucratic organizational structures are employed may have an impact on the professional structure, such as the opportunities for reflection, inquiry, and collective decision-making (Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

Trust in supervision becomes a topic for review as a result of the nature of the bureaucratic relationship between supervisor and supervisee. Supervisors demonstrate their trustworthiness through five facets: benevolence, predictability, competence, honesty, and openness (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Hoy et al., 2006). Demonstrating trust involves taking risks, making oneself vulnerable, yet understanding that the other party will act in a predictable manner that is not detrimental.

Supervision has been defined to be focused on the development and growth of professionals. In this context and relationship to trust, the literature suggests organizational and environmental circumstances, noted here as mindfulness and enabling (Hoy, 2002; Hoy et al., 2006, Tschannen-Moran, 2004, 2009). Rigid barriers are not conducive to mindfulness, which is defined as not just being alert, but noticing subtle changes that may cause trouble (Hoy et al., 2006). Individuals need situations where they are not afraid to make mistakes and are free to experiment and take risks. Enabling and mindful schools are characterized by trust, openness, flexibility, cooperation, organizational learning, problem-solving, and anticipation of the unexpected (Hoy, 2002; Hoy et al., 2006, Tschannen-Moran, 2004, 2009). Conversely, in an environment where there is increased control, trust declines, and individuals engage in self-protective measures, and become unwilling to take risks and demonstrate feelings of anxiety and insecurity (Hoy et al, 2006, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1999).

Principal trust studies have indicated a strong relationship between instructional supervision and teacher-principal trust ( Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo & Bliss, 1996; Fulk, Brief, Barr, 1985; Wahnee, 2010). Wahnee (2010) found in her study that principal trust is paramount to leading instructional efforts, and in turn, instructional supervision is an effective procedure to build trust. Further, she found that trust in a principal, or supervisor, was determined by the principal's behavior and their ability to act with respect, personal regard, competence and integrity, as well as being perceived as benevolent, reliable, competent, honest and open. These were seen most prominently when the teachers' ability to improve instruction with assistance from the principal was valued (Wahnee, 2010).

In similar approach, Hoy et al. (1996) and Fulk et al. (1986) both conclude in their studies that relationships are important to task achievement and improvement in teacher development. Common traits of open behavior include involvement of supportive, approachable, and genuinely concerned individuals, as well as strong supervisor knowledge, and the ability to develop action plans.

## **2.6 LEADERSHIP AND SUPERVISION**

Instructional leadership is a construct framed by a number of factors. Teacher supervision and development are situations that instructional leaders must engage with (Duke, 1987; Ginsburg, 1988). Instructional leadership and supervision are terms that are often used interchangeably, yet have different intentions (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995). Instructional supervision is a blend of several tasks, supervision of classroom instruction and

direct assistance as components. Regardless, all principals can claim that they are in some way instructional leaders (Ginsburg, 1988).

Leadership, supervision and politics do have a relationship. Leadership has a role of authority in the interactive process of making meaning, in supervision of what is valued in the teaching experience, where all voices are not equal in the social negotiation of meaning-making. Schools are often where “macro-directions meet micro-realities” (Mahwhinney, 1994, p. 159). Schools are where micropolitics and leadership interact; it is where leadership is seen as progressive, and micropolitics at times is viewed as obstructionist (Flessa, 2009).

Coburn (2006) extends the concept of leadership as related to micropolitics and microprocesses. Leadership needs a purpose and an end goal. Micropolitics is about authority relations, about “problem framing” during implementation, meaning that a leader’s understanding and interpretation of a policy or issue will have a direct impact on the implementation of strategies (p. 347). The nature of micropolitics shifts over time, and there is a give and take of power.

### **2.6.1 Teacher effectiveness in Pennsylvania – Act 82 of 2012**

Under section 1123 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, amended by the act of June 30, 2012 (P.L. 684, No. 82, Act 82), the Department of Education was required to develop a rating system to measure the effectiveness of classroom teachers and principals. (Pennsylvania Bulletin, vol 43, No. 25, 6/22/2013). It became required that the teacher rating tool contain measures based on teacher observation and practice and multiple measures of student performance.

The rating tool functions as a framework for the evaluation and summative process for classroom teachers. The results of the rating provides for the overall determination of “Failing, Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Distinguished” summative ratings. The rating tool also describes the four domains that are used to determine the classroom observation proficiency: Planning and Preparation; Classroom Environment; Instruction; Professional Responsibilities, all of which are derived of the Charlotte Danielson model (Danielson & McGreal, 2007 ).

Finally, the remaining 50% of the evaluation is determined by “Building Level Data”, which is determined by eight reporting categories included in the School Performance Profile. This data represents 15% of the teacher evaluation. The second category is “ Teacher Specific Data,” which also comprises 15% of the evaluation. This data is based on student performance, directly attributed to the teachers’ influence, and determined through student performance on value-added assessments, individual education plans, and PSSA performance data. The final area, “Elective Data,” are assessments determined by the local educational agency, but meeting criteria provided by the Department of Education. This data comprises 20% of the teacher evaluation.

Act 82 was phased in for classroom teacher in the school year 2013-2014, and for principals and non-teaching professionals in school year 2014-2015. It ushered in several changes. It was, and is still, an effort to quantify teacher effectiveness by using multiple measures. Teacher observation, or differentiated supervision models, as well as standardized test scores, and local assessments are used to determine overall evaluation. However, built into the system is the requirement to understand, interact with, and collect evidence of effective instructional practices. These changes are significant as a common language is defined through the Danielson Framework (2007), and a consistent state-wide reporting tool is implemented.

## 2.7 POLITICS

Politics refers to decisions related to the allocation of values for a given society or social organization. It includes concepts such as power, influence, control, conflict and cooperation, strategies, negotiation, values and ideologies ( Blasé & Blasé, 2002; Marshall & Scribner, 1991). Micropolitics refers to the immediate, ongoing, dynamic and interaction between and among individuals and groups (Ball, 1987; Blasé & Bjork, 2009). It is defined by the nature, not by the context, addressing who gets what, when and how (Bacharach & Mundell, 1995; Caruso, 2013). Micropolitics involves the use of power, formal and informal, legitimate and illegitimate, by groups and individuals to achieve their goals, to influence or to protect their interests (Blasé, 1991; Blasé & Blasé, 2002). Considering a political perspective can provide a unique opportunity to focus on the process for producing policy from group or individual conflict (Iannaccone, 1991). Politics deals with the prevention of conflict, creating conflict, or allowing conflict to happen, and it is the process by which an organizations values are translated into policy, or arrangements by which they govern themselves. Politics is a process by which social values are translated into policy (Iannaccone, 1991).

Macropolitics, a closely related concept, refers to external relationships, including local, state, and national and the interactions between public and private organizations (Marshall & Scribner, 1991). Some examples may include the Pennsylvania Department of Education, National Education Association, or Congress. Macropolitics involves policy and accountability. Accountability requirements can have impact on the type of power used by the school and on the micropolitical strategies they deploy. Accountability comes in two forms. One is out of an external mandate, such as Act 82 of 2012 of Pennsylvania. It also comes out of moral notion and professionalism. Accountability is moral, in a sense that the principal is accountable to the staff,

students, ethics and justice. It is professional in that principals, or supervisors, are assumed to be in the best position to make decisions about the clients they serve (Erout & Ehrich, 2000).

## **2.8 MICROPOLITICS**

The micropolitics of education is concerned with the interaction and political ideologies of teachers, administrators and pupils within schools (Iannaccone, 1975). It is also concerned with the internal organizational subsystems and external influential systems. It is micro, because every school has its own life, climate, culture and systems of organizational. Micropolitics is also just as much about cooperation as it is about conflict (Blasé, 1991; Hoyle, 1999; McKeith, 2001). People use politics to influence others and protect themselves. This can result in coalitions, bargains, and informal understandings (McKeith, 2001).

Micropolitics involves considering the nature of power, conflict, coalitions, policy, determining who gets what, when, and how (Marshall & Scribner, 1995). Primary to the concept is the strategic use of power for influence and protection (Blasé, 1999), involving both sanctions and rewards (Ball, 1987; Hoyle, 1986; Iannaccone, 1991). Micropolitics can be observed in processes for producing policy from conflict, relationships and roles, and in positions of hierarchy. Other goals and decisions emerge from negotiating scarce resources among stakeholders (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Lindy & Mahwhinney, 2003), and order is constantly being negotiated. Groups emerge and attempt to influence decision-making (Bacharach & Mundell, 1995; Caruso, 2013). The systems and subsystems, structures that form micropolitics, or unseen everyday affairs is the system (Ball, 1987).

Micropolitics is also concerned with the use or abuse of power, the continuum of conventional to illegitimate, self-interested manipulation (Hoyle, 1999). Politics is concerned with interests, struggles over the ideological content of policy-making, goals, and use of formal and informal power and perceived interests (Ball, 1987; Blasé, 1991; Hoyle, 1986). It reflects day to day life, choices, conflicts, opportunities, wealth, social goods, determination of goals (Winton & Pollock, 2012). The study of how things really work within the school walls (Flessa, 2009). Finally, the role of authority in the interactive process of making meaning in schools is also a key component of the micropolitical context (Coburn, 2006).

## **2.9 CHARACTERISTICS OF MICROPOLITICS**

The study of micropolitics is relevant as it involves processes for producing policy from conflict, where society's social values are translated into policy (Iannaccone, 1991; Marshall & Scribner, 1995). These reflections are commonly seen in three forms, including -teacher conferences and interactions, evaluative structures and processes, and influences on teacher instructional practices. Hoyle (1999) refers to micropolitics as a form of management that is centered on the means in which schools respond to external pressure. It focuses on the strategies that are used to pursue interests such as the establishment of groups that have a life of their own.

These groups, or actors, special interests groups, demonstrate a logic of action, which is term for describing their contextual response. Organizational micropolitics involves the contests that occurs over various possible logics of action and the various manifestations. It should not be assumed that there is one dominant logic of action, rather different logics of actions with different individuals and groups attempting to impose their ideas on the organization (Bacharach

& Mundell, 1993). It can be cooperative and consensual, or conflictive (Bjork & Blasé, 2009). It involves the management of people and their actions, power relationships, governance and functional power, as well as competition over scarce resources.

## **2.10 MICROPOLITICS AND CHANGE**

The field of education is dynamic and often undergoing change. In this change process additional micropolitical characteristics are noticed. Change breeds ambiguity and ambiguity provides opportunity for shifts in power structures, as well as threatening roles and relationships (Hoyle,1999; Lindle, 1999). Educational change is intrinsically political and conflict ridden. Groups organize and contest other groups to express their values and secure their interests (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Change draws attention to, or exposes, the micropolitical strategies and relationships, and interactions tend to intensify (Blasé, 2005), bringing forward new stakeholders with new ideologies and interests. Reform disrupts the status quo. Political actors rush to take advantage (Marshall &Scribner, 1998). Micropolitical structures and processes are fundamental to change and innovation as well as stability and maintenance (Blasé, 2005). Reform tends to politicize schools, threaten roles and power relationships (Smeed, 2010).

## **2.11 MICROPOLITICS AND POWER**

Central to the discussion of micropolitics is the use of power. Politics is about power, who has it, who wants it, and the ways people go about accessing or protecting their resources (Smeed, 2009). It is also about in whose interest people are being governed. Hoyle (1999) characterizes the use as conventional management on one end of a continuum, compared to “illegitimate, self-interested manipulation” (p. 126). Power can be realized in two approaches. Power of authority refers to a legal right, or organizational right, to make decisions. Power of influence is power that affects the actions of others without legal basis, typically derived from personality, expertise, access, resources (Hoyle, 1988).

## **2.12 STRATEGIC MICROPOLITICS**

How principals act politically impacts teaching, learning, change efforts, school governance, relationships, and democracy (Blasé & Anderson, 1995; Blasé & Blasé, 2002; Malen & Cochran, 2008; Ryan, 2010). The principal’s role is inherently political (Ball, 1987; Bjork & Blasé, 2009; Blasé & Anderson, 1995; Malen & Cochran, 2008). Research of the 1980s (Blasé, 1987, 1993; Hoy & Leverette, 1986) indicates that principals can dramatically influence teacher’s interpersonal competencies.

The more successful a principal is in maintaining trust in the staff, assisting them in adjusting to change, protecting them from external demands and empowering them, the more the principal is able to exercise ideas of power-through and power with. The result is a stronger

community of learners and ultimately the better student outcomes (Blasé & Anderson, 1995; Mulford, 2008).

Understanding micropolitics is a matter of survival for administrators (Blasé & Anderson, 1995; Erich & Cranston, 2004; Lindell, 1999). It involves the process for producing policy from conflict, and representing society's social values in the policy. Political calculus is intrinsic to the art of administrative leadership (Gronn, 1983). Political processes can illuminate alternative ways of seeing, interpreting, and explaining what goes on (Iannaccone, 1991).

Schools are inevitably political, possibly because they are the easiest, most accessible part of the government. School leaders must negotiate a balance between micro and macropolitics, between close supervision and supportive mentoring. The balance of relationship in this equation is the essence of micropolitics (Lindle, 1999). Organizations are complex and hard to understand (Bolman & Deal, 2003). A micropolitical perspective challenges the traditional theories of clear and shared values and goals, and formal power relationships.

The way a problem is framed assigns responsibility. The way individuals or groups frame problems legitimizes certain actions and delegitimizes others. Local actors in schools construct their own understandings of policy by interpreting them through their own set of beliefs. How they construct understandings shapes discussions surrounding issues in education. The manner in which school leaders come to understand policy influences teacher sense-making as they focus attention on certain aspects of policy and not others. The literature suggests that evidence it is hard to move forward if leaders and teachers construct conflicting interpretations of appropriate response to policy.

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### **3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework that will be used to situate this research will be the Blasé and Anderson Leadership Matrix (1995). The following sections will describe the content of each matrix, largely focusing on the behaviors and approaches of principals.

#### **3.1 BLASÉ AND ANDERSON LEADERSHIP MATRIX**

The Blasé and Anderson Leadership Matrix is a framework that joins the concepts of leadership approach and leadership style (Blasé & Anderson, 1995). Ball (1987), one of the early authors on the concept of micropolitics in schools, notes four leadership styles on which Blasé and Anderson further expanded: interpersonal, managerial, political adversarial, and political authoritarian. Both authors describe the need to address the dilemma of control and domination, versus commitment and inclusion, which are two dominant features of the matrix and framework (Smeed, 2009).

Burns (1978), an initial author on the topic, distinguished between transactional and transformative leadership. Transformational leadership approaches involve an orientation towards change and end values, challenging the status quo. Transactional leadership is oriented toward supporting and maintaining the status quo, typically involving exchange relationships where trust and loyalty is exchanged for effort and productivity (Burns, 1978). The Blasé and

Anderson (1995) matrix merges these concepts to highlight the political behavior of leaders based on their style and approach (Figure 3.1).

<b>TRANSFORMATIVE</b>	
<b>CLOSED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power over - Power through</li> <li>• Promotes leaders' moral vision</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power with</li> <li>• Promotes democracy and social empowerment</li> </ul>
	<b>OPEN</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power over</li> <li>• Promotes maintenance of status quo</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power through – Power with</li> <li>• Promotes human organizational climate</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSACTIONAL</b>	

**Figure 1: Micropolitical Leadership Matrix informed by Blasé and Anderson (1995).**

Power relationships and use of power is a second dominant feature of the matrix, associated with open and closed styles. An open style of leadership is characterized by a willingness to share power, collaboration, and motivation of the followers. Closed-style principals are unwilling to share power, and goals are achieved through the control of resources, especially through bureaucracy (Ball, 1987; Blasé & Anderson, 1995). It is important to note that principals respond to and create the culture with political and power-based behavior.

Context and situation determine the approach and how power is wielded (Ball, 1987; Blasé & Anderson, 1995).

The following sections will describe the intersection of style and approach of the leadership matrix and the micropolitical influences. The narrative is largely a summary of the framework of Blasé & Anderson (1995) of which will serve as the foundation of this study.

### **3.1.1 Adversarial leadership**

Adversarial leadership represents a closed style of leadership with transformative goals. The primary use of power is over teachers, but occasionally power is exhibited through teachers (Blasé & Anderson, 1995). These leaders tend to be bright, charismatic, highly opinionated, self-confident, and high energy. They love a good argument; however, they need to win the argument and have others realize their ideas. They can galvanize a school culture and tend to be celebrated in the school community.

These leaders can be seen as overpowering and even vindictive at times. They can display a warm and dynamic style where there is a veneer of a team dynamic style, however, they largely do what they want to, grounded in their deep convictions. Their obsession with authority is balanced with warm and friendly interpersonal style. Teachers may have many differences and conflicts with them, but their sincerity wins. They are subversive, reallocating resources to circumnavigate challenges and often do not feel the need to obtain permission. They are highly skillful in persuasion and use of charisma to create wonderful educational programs. Team management systems are used, but can also be dismantled if they become too empowering. Teacher empowerment cannot be achieved, even here. Careerism, using the school system as a stepping stone with innovative projects is common.

### **3.1.2 Authoritarian leadership**

Authoritarian leadership is reflective of a closed style and transactional approach to leadership, and it is generally described as ineffective, resulting in severe negative effects on teacher performance, climate, and involvement (Bass, 1995; Blasé & Anderson, 1995). Principals in these settings ignore, avoid, and disempower teachers, which often results in teachers posturing in a similar way to gain goals. There is a frequent cycle of realignment and confrontation, fear and distrust.

The rules of the organization are clear to all, and interactions between teachers and principals are formal. Negotiation is rare, and tends to be covert. Power is used over, to control the teachers. Blasé and Anderson (1995) indicate that closed styles are powerful in that the teachers' patterns of social interaction directly reflect the style of the principal.

Principals in this category were found to use two main political strategies and tactics. First, tactics are found to be highly proactive, unilateral, predetermined, non-negotiable and coercive. Sanctions and rewards, harassment, dictatorial means are common approaches. They also employed indirect means such as limiting accessibility, controlling content of discussions, as principals assert their role. Opportunities for participation and input can be staged, and there may be a tone that only certain ideas can be tolerated. A secondary strategy surrounding protection is also present (Blasé & Anderson, 1995). Principals have been determined to attempt to reduce their vulnerability to pressure and dangers from external sources, such as superintendents, board members, parents, and faculty group influences. They were found to display acquiescence, and behave with ingratiation or inconsistency. It was found that principals responded to these pressures by controlling teachers.

### **3.1.3 Facilitative leadership**

Facilitative leadership is a merging of transactional and open approaches, which is primarily known for promoting a humane climate and organizational climate. The use of power is power through individuals, but also occasionally power over. This style is at times referred to as cultural leadership, and is the style of choice for site-based management. It often involves a discourse of change and participation while involving a somewhat covert manipulation through bureaucracy to pre-established goals. Power exercised by achieving goals through the motivation of others depends on a hierarchical system that has goals established outside of the school. It is suggested that there is a more diplomatic approach, however, often perceived as indirect and covert and manipulative. Participants are led to believe that they are authentic participants in change, yet the goals are predetermined. There is, still, a greater level of participation and a higher degree of professional relationships.

Leaders characterized with a facilitative style are more open, honest, collegial, informal, and supportive. Reduced status differences are also important. Decision-making and policy development are mysterious and unfocused, confusing where goals are developed elsewhere, and achieved through motivating the people. There is a low degree of shared governance, yet an effective means able to influence teacher behavior (Ball, 1987; Blasé & Anderson, 1995).

Blasé (1993) developed a term, normative instrumental leadership, to capture the essence of the relationship between open principals and teachers. Central to the idea is the exchange process, where principals develop goals and primary strategies of the teachers to accomplish the goals. The relationship is instrumental, where principals seek to positively influence the teachers. The strategies that are used are generally consistent with the expected norms of the teachers, and therefore perceived as positive.

Principals use a control orientation: rewards, communication of expectations, support, formal authority, modeling, suggestions. Blasé and Anderson (1995) indicate other characteristics such as demonstrating trust, developing shared governance, encouraging autonomy, and listening to individual input, giving rewards, and providing support.

#### **3.1.4 Democratic, empowering leadership**

Democratic and empowering leadership is concerned with democracy and social empowerment. Power in this quadrant is used with constituents. It is democratic in the decision-making power, but more prominently with the genuine concern for justice and equality. The micropolitical exchange becomes one where opinions are valued and shared, and a place where anything can be questioned without fear. It is a unique quadrant where leadership is concerned with empowerment. Through collaboration, people empower themselves. Blasé and Anderson (1995) emphasize that democracy is more than just participatory empowerment. Rather, democracy is concerned with justice and equity.

Examples of democratic leadership are rare and are thought to be more theory in discussion rather than reality. A position of democratic leadership is not concerned with teacher morale, improvement of teachers, test scores, or decision-making. It is concerned with eradicating power differentials, the context of professionalization, empowering one constituent while disempowering another.

Many of the characteristics of facilitative leadership are also found in democratic leadership, including trust, support, caring, honesty, and friendliness. The difference lies in the goals. Facilitative leaders look to empower social justice rather than teacher motivation and productivity. The principals look to achieve a supportive environment for emancipatory voice,

examine educational processes that are unjust, and promote dialogue that is aimed at creating equitable conditions for teachers and students. The concept of martyrdom is noted, in that democratic approaches can be in full conflict with the goals of the district, and to pursue them can mean loss of job. Democratic leadership is concerned with true inclusion, rather than contrived inclusion, representativeness, and a non-hierarchical systems. Mutual decision making and public debate, critical self-examination are common features.

## **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The history of teacher supervision has revealed a past of many philosophies, models and approaches. Many of these phases over time have been in response to the shortcomings of a previous approach. In an effort to promote achievement and professionalism, they borrow from previous models and add new thinking and contributions.

The complexity of the supervisors' role conflict, including both supervision and evaluation, can result in a blended model of supervision where characteristics of many models and approaches are utilized. There are nuances and differences that exist within each model and approach, and it may be considered a generally effective leadership strategy to adapt and apply components of a variety of models. Highlighting these details and understanding their impact on decision-making can lead to improved supervision and leadership. The result of this context is wide-ranging practice and philosophy in the practice of instructional supervision. This study, in part, aims to understand how principals authentically approach and practice instructional supervision while navigating the micropolitical landscape and influences of state and local mandates.

Personal experience and an examination of historical models can serve as a reminder that no one single model of supervision is superior, and that the current models' practices are not

completely of one's own creation. However, it is suggested that the approach to supervision is not based in the model, but rather in the leadership style of the supervisor. These leadership styles, including adversarial, authoritarian, facilitative, and democratic, contain related micropolitical underpinnings. Instructional supervision was inherently political, and all stakeholders have potential gains and losses in the process. The use of power, both legitimate and illegitimate, permeate the real experience.

This study involved four related questions. Research question one was concerned with the self-evaluation of elementary principals of their own leadership behavior. These data were used to extrapolate to micropolitical behaviors and influences of leaders' supervision and leadership practices.

Research questions two and three examined and described the nuances, influences, strategies and the micropolitics that characterize the "authentic" experience of instructional supervision. Question three specifically addressed the leadership thinking of Blasé and Anderson's (1995) Micropolitical Leadership Matrix, connecting style and approach with political behavior.

Finally, this study was situated in a timely manner. Pennsylvania Act 82 of 2012, the teacher effectiveness model has required principals and supervisors to follow a mandated approach to supervision (PSBA, 2013). Act 82 requires the implementation of strategies and a personal engagement to both manage the political aspects, but also fulfill the requirements of a mandate. This is an example of a macropolitical event leading to micropolitical influences on leadership and supervisory practice. Research question four explored the manner in which the legislation has changed the selected participants' practices, and the impact on the improvement and growth of teachers.

## **4.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Question 1: How do elementary principals describe their practices of instructional supervision in their schools?

Question 2: What micropolitical influences, especially ideologies, strategies, power relationships and motivations impact elementary principal supervision practices?

Question 3: How do elementary principals describe their micropolitical leadership approach?

Question 4: How do elementary principals describe the influence of Act 82 of 2012 of Pennsylvania on their supervision practices?

## **4.3 STUDY DESCRIPTION**

The study design is outlined in chapter four. Chapters five, six, seven, and eight present findings directly related to each research question. To arrive at the findings, the study involved two separate phases. First, phase one involved the use of a quantitative inventory that was distributed to elementary principals in Intermediate Units 1, 3, 4, and 28 in southwest Pennsylvania, which include and surround the school districts in which the researcher works and interacts. Intermediate Units in Pennsylvania are part of the governance structure of public education and operate in the middle between state education agency and local school districts. The 29 state-wide intermediate units in Pennsylvania provide specialized services to local school districts. Intermediate Unit (IU) 1 includes Fayette, Green and Washington Counties, serving 25 school districts. IU 4 includes Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties, serving 27 school districts. IU 3 includes Allegheny County, serving 42 school districts. Finally, IU 28 includes school

districts in Armstrong and Indiana Counties, serving 13 schools. These four intermediate units work closely with 500 school districts across Pennsylvania, providing an adequate number of potential participants.

The inventory instrument design was driven by characteristics of the approach and style, supported by literature, predominantly Bass (1985), Burns (1978), Blasé & Anderson (1995), and Judge & Piccolo (2004). The inventory was designed, stored, managed and analyzed in the Qualtrics software through the University of Pittsburgh. Elementary principal names and email addresses were determined by manually researching individual school district websites. The respondents were asked to complete the inventory electronically. The data gained indicated a general micropolitical leadership disposition, graphically represented on a matrix. Through the inventory, two main functions were served. The researcher was able to obtain a frequency of self-described leadership behavior, as well as the intensity, or location on the matrix. Additionally, the frequency associated with responses on the survey served as one approach to draw conclusions in conjunction with data gathered from follow up semi-structured interviews.

There were 11 respondents selected who indicated in the inventory their willingness to participate in an interview. At this point, they were contacted with a formal email letter. The semi-structured interviews were conducted over the telephone and face to face in two cases. A prepared interview protocol was utilized, and interviews were recorded, and transcribed.

The interview data were searched for several predetermined themes. The initial themes include the use of power, personal interaction characteristics and scenarios, convictions and values, business operations, communication, relationships, organizational culture, tactics and strategies to accomplish goals, personal and organizational goals, feelings toward change, justice

and equality. The transcription was coded and analyzed for further emergent themes, as well as general findings from the inventory.

A thematic analysis across the interviews was presented in chapters five through eight, outlining findings as related to each research question. In each research question, themes derived of both interview data and survey data were interwoven to arrive at discoveries and findings.

The goal of the analysis is to achieve assertions based on thematic evidence. Although the study did not formally follow the procedure for case or cross case analysis, the procedure for analyzing transcription data applied. To accomplish this task, I followed steps for one technique of a cross-case rating procedure, as outlined by Stake (2006). The overall goal of the procedure was to guide the researcher in identifying prominence, importance, utility, and atypical findings across explorations which was later used to develop assertions.

The summary across cases followed several steps. First, I identified themes and record on Worksheet 1 (Appendix E). These themes were primarily the overarching research questions. Next, I analyzed each of the eleven individual interviews according to the criteria of Worksheet 1. This worksheet guided me in identifying uniqueness, relevance, and findings. Third, I used Worksheet 2 (Appendix F) to estimate the degree of manifestation, or utility, of each exploration in relation to the identified themes. Finally, Worksheet 3 served as the guiding map on which to build assertions. This worksheet outlines the importance, prominence, and utility of the findings, explorations, and themes. Through a coding system that will rank order the concepts, assertions will be developed and supported. These assertions will result in better understanding of the phenomenon, and how it appeared or had relevance in different contexts.

In the final chapter, I will discuss conclusions and implications, share a concluding summary of findings and assertions that can be made with a degree of confidence. The narrative

will explain what can be learned from the exploration, the relationship between the findings of the inventory to the assertions of the interviews and interview descriptions, and how the overall findings can contribute to the profession and the body of literature on supervision and micropolitics. Additionally, suggestions for further research and exploration were developed.

#### **4.3.1 Design Phase I: Inventory**

The researcher-designed inventory was derived of characteristics of leadership style and approach supported in literature (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978, Blasé & Anderson, 1995; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The elementary principal inventory had a central purpose, with additional descriptive data gathered for comparison. The questionnaire provided an opportunity for elementary principals to reflect on their leadership style and approach, and relate the responses to the Blasé and Anderson Leadership Matrix (1995). The inventory allowed for degrees of response via collective items. Therefore, responses resulted in a profile, and a determination of the strength of that profile. It was anticipated that respondents will characterize themselves in a number of locations on the matrix (Blasé & Anderson, 1995). Phase one determined representativeness of each quadrant that exemplify the characteristics of the leadership styles and approaches associated with that quadrant.

Additional information was gained from the initial questions on the inventory, such as general profile of experience and school description, which was used to connect the responses to a context. The instrument was sent to 274 elementary principals. Demographic information as compared to placement on the leadership matrix was of supplemental value in summary information. The research questions of this dissertation explored more deeply the personal and real micropolitical intricacies of instructional supervision through the lens of different principals

with different leadership styles. Determining variability of the profiles by demographic was not the primary focus of the project.

Through this inventory, principal behavior, attitudes and values, measured through a self-reflection on supervisory practices, will be analyzed to represent leadership style by mapping respondents, by emergent profile, in associated quadrants from the work of Blasé and Anderson (1995) theoretical framework.

#### **4.3.2 Design phase II: Interviews**

The second phase of the study involved semi-structured interviews of elementary principals. Respondents from the inventory positioned into one quadrant, with one respondent in a separate quadrant. Context and situational differences did not result in varied mapping. Eleven principals were selected for follow up, semi-structured interviews based on willingness to participate. The initial study design preferred to select a sample of principals for follow up interviews based on their position on the Blasé and Anderson matrix (1995); however, the positioning expectation was not met. I decided to select all available and willing principals for interviews in an effort to access as much data as possible. Structured questions were designed to directly target the theoretical framework. An interview guide also contained prepared follow-up questions. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interview questions are listed in Appendix D.

There were several purposes for the interviews in this study. First, the researcher expanded the line of questioning to confirm general accuracy of the inventory responses, and also gain greater depth and explanation for the rationale for the responses themselves. For example, one response item in the inventory was, “*focus on maintaining the status quo.*” The

researcher was interested in expanding this notion to inquire about what those values and beliefs are, how they are discussed, the context, or in some cases, why they are not discussed.

The interviews were conducted on the telephone due to the number of participants and number of interviews, large geographic area from which participants originate, and narrow windows of time to access the participant's schedules. Two interviews were conducted in person.

Concepts were investigated as directly related to the theoretical framework, and those concepts served as guide pre-coded concepts, yet emergent themes occurred. The interview questions surrounded the following concepts, including use of power; personal interaction characteristics and scenarios, convictions and values, how business gets done, communication, relationships, organizational culture, tactics and strategies to accomplish goals, goals, feelings toward change, and justice and equality.

The researcher was interested in developing a description of the actual supervision practices currently used by principals who self-describe different leadership styles. The research sought to uncover the actual practices and approaches and how they relate to district and state level expectations. Research question four was designed with the assumption that there have been significant changes in not only documentation in the evaluation process as initiated through Act 82 of 2012 of Pennsylvania, but also changes in the supervision process. The line of questioning explored how supervision once occurred, how it is now practiced, benefits and consequences, and how the micropolitics involved as change has emerged.

Through the interview process, I described 11 distinct explorations of elementary principals involved in instructional supervision practices. The basis for the discussion was the micropolitical nature of the context, approach and value system. The perception of teacher-

principal relationships as reported by principals and the actual supervision practices will serve to further describe the instances.

#### **4.4 PARTICIPANTS**

The researcher used purposeful and criterion-based sampling for this study (Weiss, 1994). Both phases of the study included the use a purposeful sampling approach. Purposeful sampling was intended to capture the representativeness of the individual respondents, the heterogeneity of the population, the range of variation, and the illumination of differences between respondents.

The researcher selected elementary principals and assistant principals in Intermediate Units 1, 3, 4, and 28. These Intermediate Units represent diverse school settings of size, socio-economic status and race and ethnicity. There are enough schools to obtain a reasonable return and enough potential respondents to have representation that may fit each quadrant of the conceptual matrix.

Settings, people, and context were selected to provide information that may not be accessible from other sources. Weiss (1994) suggests “panels” of respondents who are uniquely able to be informative because they are expert in the area to be studied or are privileged to witness a particular event (p. 17). Through this sampling, the researcher achieved representativeness, but also deliberately created an opportunity for comparisons of settings and approaches. The selection criteria was limited to principals who were currently employed as a head or assistant elementary principal with supervisory duties. The reason for the selection criteria was that the respondent must be able to comment on current supervisory practices and practices prior to 2012, the onset of the Act 82 of Pennsylvania.

To initiate the study, I electronically mailed an introduction and consent letter to potential participants. The letter included a link to the secure survey, the leadership behavior assessment inventory, which was secure in Qualtrics. Intermediate Units 1,3,4 and 28 include 107 school districts and 274 elementary principals. The names of principals' contact information were obtained manually by researching school district websites. The results of this study, then, has local importance.

The participants were determined in two separate efforts. Initially, 274 introduction letters and invitations were emailed through the Qualtrics system. Two additional follow up reminder notices were sent separated by one week. In the first wave, 120 emails were opened, and 18 surveys completed. It was determined that two factors were the cause for the low participation rate. First, the timing was difficult. The survey was sent to the principals during the first week or preceeding week of a new school year when it is likely the respondents were unavailable to respond. More importantly, the emailer function in Qualtrics is often captured in school district filters, preventing it from ever reaching the participants. Some of the emails were returned, reflecting either an incorrect email or participants accounts were no longer active.

It was determined that a second round using a new set of secure survey links could be sent using a personal email account. The same distribution list was used, however, those who could be identified through their desire to participate in a follow up interview were not included. The results were much improved, with 53 total responses, and 11 participants willing to participate in interviews.

## **4.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework as described in chapter three served as the purposeful foundation on which to situate this investigation. Conceptually, this study investigated the micropolitical nature of supervision through style, open and closed, and approach, transactional and transformative (Blasé & Anderson, 1995).

## **4.6 DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection and analysis consisted of analysis of 53 surveys as well as 11 descriptive semi-structured interviews that more fully capture the essence of the micropolitics of the instructional supervisory practices of principals. Stake (2006) supports the use of at least four cases to provide a minimum amount of interactivity and maximum variation. The explorations highlighted the experiences of 11 principals engaged in the supervision process. They highlighted the context, values, structures, beliefs, attitudes, and how those influence the supervision practices. The researcher was also able to characterize the nature of the interpersonal relationships as well as the structure of supervision practices. All of these characteristics addressed the changes in practices during their tenure, as well as current practices and micropolitical underpinnings under the framework of Act 82 of 2012 of Pennsylvania.

The data in this study were collected and analyzed in two main forms: statistical analysis of the inventory and thematic coding of responses to semi-structured interviews. First, qualitative data were managed through the Qualtrics software available through the University of Pittsburgh. Qualtrics is a web-based service that was used to design the inventory, collect data,

store the data securely, analyze responses, and prepare graphical responses. The Response Suite of Qualtrics software was used (Qualtrics, Provo, 2014). Potential participants were included in a distribution list within the Qualtrics panel library. The Individual Link Emailer Function sent an invitation letter and consent form with a link to the survey to the respondents. This function tracked responses, allowed for thank you and reminder emails, yet maintained anonymous response by blocking the return email identification. Survey protection functions ensure that surveys can be taken only once and are taken by the intended respondent. Each email included a link to the survey with a password. A consent form was embedded into the inventory. The exchange of questionnaires and data to all participants, as well as analysis was conducted and securely housed through the Qualtrics system at the University of Pittsburgh. The survey was partially anonymous. The survey was designed to block all identifying information, however, the final question allowed the respondent to include their contact information, making the survey no longer anonymous.

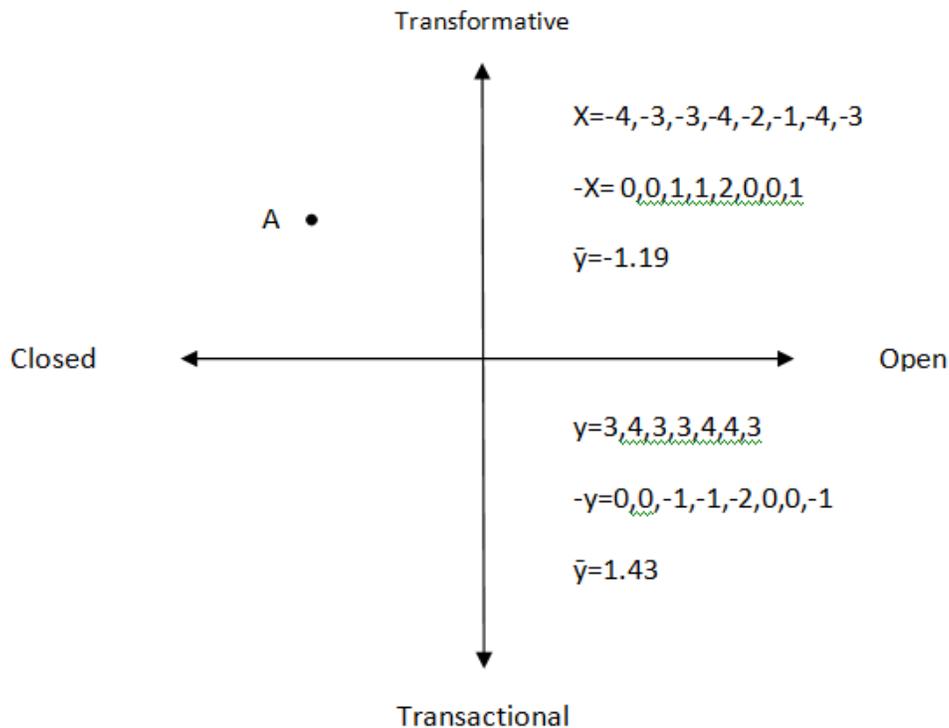
#### **4.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND DATA MAPPING**

The first task in the analysis of the data was to generate an analysis of the leadership inventory. Based on the responses of the principals, the researcher was able to determine which of the four leadership styles the participants most closely represented.

The leadership inventory allowed the researcher to gather data for placement within a quadrant. It also provided data for frequency counts, mean, median, and mode. Responses of the Likert scale provide the means for descriptive statistical analysis and comparative analysis of the principals.

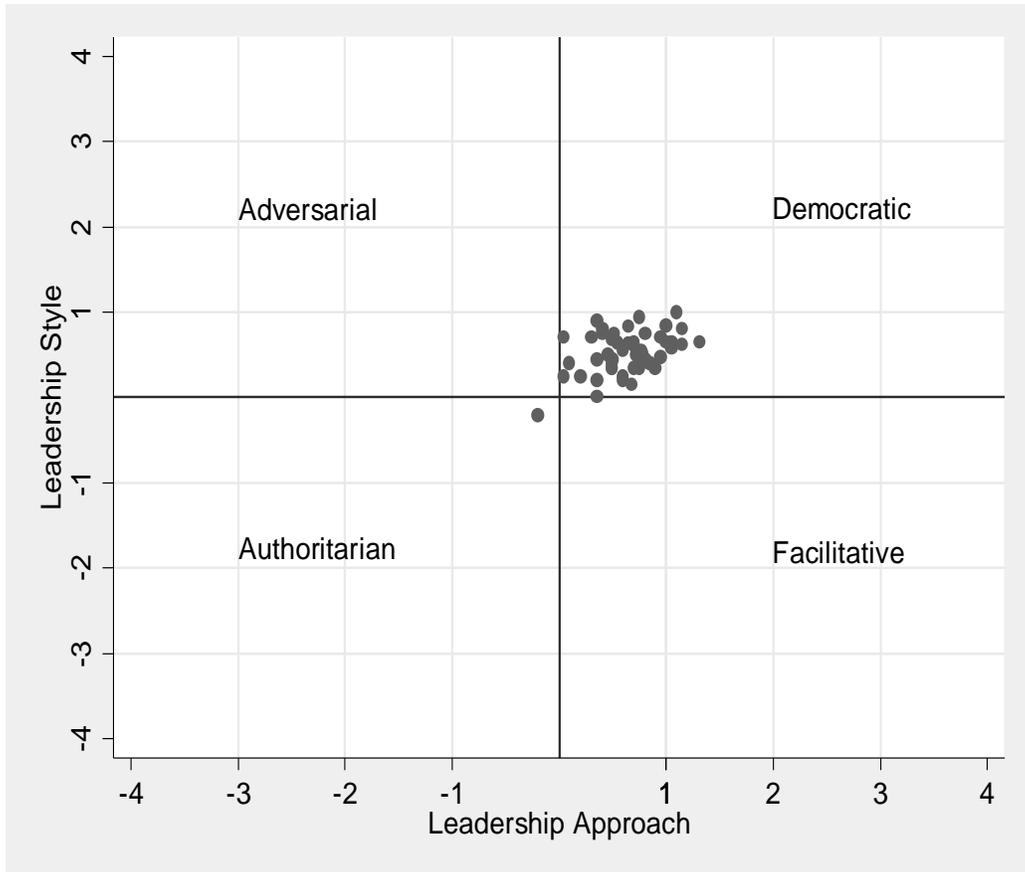
The researcher was interested in developing findings regarding demographics and principal profiles. Therefore, the inventory involved response items such as gender, years of experience, achievement level of school, and socio-economic status of the school. General descriptive statistics of the principal leadership style as related to context.

Participants responded to each statement in the inventory by selecting a numerical representation, 0 to 4. Each question will be assigned to one axis, positive and negative x, and positive and negative y. (Appendix I). The average of responses for each axis will be computed, resulting in an ordered pair. (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Data Mapping as Related to Blasé and Anderson (1995)**

The resulting ordered pair demonstrated in general the self-description of the leadership approach and styles of the participants, mapping them to a quadrant. Figure 4.2 represents a scatter plot of the 53 participants.



**Figure 3: Distribution Map of Respondents**

The scatter plot was used to make general statements regarding the collected data, such as the frequency and profile of the elementary principal self-description. I was initially interested in determining participants that most centrally positioned themselves with the prediction that those individuals would most fully represent the characteristics of the domains. The data, and

positioning, did not result in the option to proceed with representation from each category. It was determined that all participants should be included to collect as much data as possible.

I was also interested in achieving theoretical saturation, meaning that interviews were conducted until repetition in information gained or data was thoroughly confirmed. During the interview process, there were significant differences in the rich responses that prompted continuation, and therefore, all interviews were conducted and transcribed entirely.

The interviews will be recorded and fully transcribed. Immediately following all interviews and observations, the researcher wrote a general summary and analytical memo. These memos contained references to concepts, themes or summary statements, accounts of events or occurrences, as well as relations to the research questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The researcher analyzed the interview transcripts with the in-vivo approach, which is an approach where language and words respondents use are so remarkable that they become a code. The data will be coded through the NVIVO 11 software. The software provided the researcher with an analysis of subtleties that otherwise may not be visible, such as frequency of words and phrases, managed codes, and perform deeper language analysis. In-vivo coding, also called verbatim coding, is appropriate to nearly all forms of qualitative research (Saldana, 2009). NVIVO 11 allowed for easier coding of voice and language characteristics of the participants, which helped to deepen understanding and grasp what is important, but also preserve the participants' meaning and views. NVIVO 11 provides the tools for the researcher to manage both initial structural codes and second cycle focused codes.

Focused coding served as the second cycle analytic process to develop major categories or themes from the data without attention to properties and dimensions (Saldana, 2009). Focused coding will also allow the researcher to compare the newly constructed codes across the

participant interviews to determine the degree of comparability and transferability (Saldana, 2009).

#### **4.8 PILOT STUDY**

Prior to initiating the research associated with the outlined exploration, a pilot study was conducted to increase validity (Stake, 2006). The inventory was issued to members of the researcher's Administrative and Policy Studies study group. These participants simulated the inventory with a paper copy, and provided feedback on the questions and structure of the instrument. The researcher also conducted two interviews with current elementary principals in order to assess the timing, richness of response, and clarity of questions. One interview was in person, and one through telephone. The interviews were recorded and reviewed for characteristics that were useful or prohibitive to the experience. Feedback from the study group members as well as the interview participants were used to revise and purify both the inventory questions and interview protocol (Cresswell, 2007)

#### **4.9 METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

It was assumed that all participants in the study have provided honest responses on both the inventory and in the semi-structured interviews. It was assumed that based on the assurance of confidentiality, that the responses reflected and uncovered the beliefs, values, practices and approaches of the practice of instructional supervision. The participants were selected based on

their positions as elementary principals, and are therefore, able to report with current experience and experiences over the spans of their careers. I developed contextual understandings and described the experiences of school principals across themes that are predetermined and emergent. Comparing themes cross context will be the foundation of the research project (Stake, 2006).

#### **4.10 LIMITATIONS**

In the analysis of qualitative research, there is a series of deliberate, critical choices that are made about the value of the data that is collected (Briggs & Coleman, 2007). The research is an interactive process that is shaped by the researcher, his history, values, social class, race, gender, as well as those participating in the study. There is no value-free qualitative research (Briggs & Coleman, 2007).

A consideration in the study was the lack of full triangulation. Stake (2006) states that triangulation is a form of assurance in qualitative research. It is especially necessary to have assurances when making assertions, or highlighting unusual occurrence. The design of this study did not allow for observation, relevant document review, or third party review. However, the nature of this study is to describe, rather than to draw conclusions.

It was anticipated that context would determine the response and characterization of the principal self-reflection. It was anticipated that no principal would fit into the same quadrant all of the time, and that context would vary responses. At the conclusion of the study, it is believed that this did occur. It was not anticipated that all respondents, through the designed map procedure, would be located in the same quadrant, or the Democratic and Empowering quadrant

at all. Blasé and Anderson (1995) share that this quadrant is more theoretical than practical in nature. It is assumed that perhaps this is the ideal state that the principals believe in, one they wish to strive for, and not necessarily where their practice is situated each day. The inconsistency in survey response, or variability, indicate that practices are represented in all quadrants at some time.

#### **4.11 ETHICAL ASSURANCES**

The researcher achieved authentic, in-depth data from the participants. The participants responded electronically through surveys, and in person through semi-structured interviews. All of the responses reflected the participants' attitudes, beliefs, values, and active involvement surrounding the act of instructional supervision in their place of employment. It was important that the participants responded freely, fully, and without hesitation that their positions or relationships with their school stakeholders may be negatively influenced. Each participant was provided with a consent form which will be read aloud to the participant prior to the beginning of the interview. The same consent form was embedded in the Qualtrics inventory instrument to be read independently.

Throughout the research process, all recordings, transcripts, passwords, email addresses and electronic information, was securely handled, and locked in the researcher's safe. Identifying information was stored securely within the Qualtrics software, as it was necessary to identify respondents for follow up interviews. Additionally, the names of the selected interview participants, along with identifying information of their school district, was not stored with the transcripts. Actual names were not be used for participants, school districts, or individuals who

they may have made reference to during the interviews. Following the completion of the findings and defense of the research project, all identifiers will be destroyed.

## **5.0 FINDINGS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1**

Chapter five, and the following three chapters will capture the prominent themes in answering the four research questions in this exploration. Inventory data was designed with the primary focus to investigate the respondents micropolitical approach. That data will be interwoven, but will be largely discussed in chapter seven. Some inferential connections to individual responses will be included in chapters five and six.

Research Question 1: *How do elementary principals describe their practices of instructional supervision in their schools?*

### **5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FINDINGS**

Before the findings of the exploration are discussed, it is important to describe the participants in the study. The initial sample included 274 elementary principals, of whom 53 responded. All 11 volunteers were selected for a follow up interview. The demographics of the sample are intended to describe the sample in a variety of ways. At this time, there is no known literature that connects demographic characteristics to leadership style or approach. It is descriptive in nature only.

The first question in the inventory requested the number of years of principal experience. The inventory data demonstrates that 21 of the respondents have been active principals have

under 0 to 5 years, while 18 have 6-10 years of experience. Fifty of the 53 respondents have 0-15 years of experience. The vast majority (75%) have 10 or fewer years of experience. In addition, 17% have an earned a doctoral degree, while 83% have a master's degree, or credits beyond the masters degree, indicating that they are highly educated.

**Table 1: Years of principal experience**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	0-5 years	21	40%
2	6-10 years	18	34%
3	11-15 years	11	21%
4	16-20 years	2	4%
5	Greater than 20 years	1	2%
	Total	53	100%

**Table 2: Completion of graduate degree**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Masters degree	11	21%
2	Masters plus graduate credit	33	62%
3	Earned doctorate	9	17%
	Total	53	100%

Several questions in the inventory were designed to examine the context of the schools that they serve. One measure that the Pennsylvania Department of Education uses to measure the overall student achievement and growth is the School Performance Profile. The respondents were asked to indicate their 2012, or most SPP score. Two respondents either chose not to answer the question, or were unable to connect the content to their practice. A score below 60

indicates a school in need of “improvement”, while a score in excess of 90 is considered “exceptional”. None of the respondents reported a score below 60%, however, 8 schools reported scores of 90 or greater. The largest concentration of principals, 22, or 43%, had a SPP between 80-90, suggesting that all of the schools in which the respondents work are successful or highly successful.

**Table 3: Reported School Performance Profile scores**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Less than 60	0	0%
2	60 to 70	9	18%
3	70-80	12	24%
4	80-90	22	43%
5	Greater than 90	8	16%
	Total	51	100%

The population density, ranging from urban to rural was also used to describe the context. The largest reporting categories were rural schools, 32%, and suburban schools, 47%, which in total represent 79% of the respondents. Urban and semiurban were the smallest categories with a total of 8%.

The inventory also provided for a description of the poverty rate as indicated by free or reduced lunch participation. Sixteen schools have a poverty rate below 15%, and 17 were in excess of 45%, which does reveal a significant range. More than half of the respondents lead schools with a poverty rate of 30% or greater.

Finally, the data indicates that many of the schools are large in terms of both staff and students. No principal supervises fewer than 15 teachers. Most principals, 40%, supervise between 26 to 35 teachers, and 86% of the respondents supervise more than 26 teachers. Forty -

two percent of the principals share that they serve between 200 to 400 students, however, 47% indicate that they serve more than 500 students.

**Table 4: Number of teachers supervised**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Less than 15	0	0%
2	16 to 25	8	15%
3	26 to 35	21	40%
4	36 to 45	13	25%
5	Greater than 45	11	21%
	Total	53	100%

**Table 5: Reported number of students in respondent's schools**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Less than 200	2	4%
2	200 to 300	10	19%
3	300 to 400	12	23%
4	400 to 500	4	8%
5	Greater than 500	25	47%
	Total	53	100%

Overall, this shows that a majority of the principals in the sample are rather early in their careers in charge of managing a large number of students and staff. They tend to be highly educated, and the schools in which they work are generally rural or suburban, performing well, and have some degree of poverty.

## **5.2 CURRENT INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS**

The literature preceding this chapter defined instructional supervision as an action carried out by a supervisor with the intention of improving instructional effectiveness, bringing about positive change, as well as promoting growth, development, collaboration, problem-solving, and professional growth (Alfonso & Firth, 1990; Goldhammer, Andersen, & Krajewski, 1980; Zepeda, 2007).

The roles of supervision and evaluation are essential functions, but they differ in basic purpose, rationale, relationship, and procedures employed. To perform true instructional supervision, it is necessary that the practice of supervision and evaluation be clearly viewed as separate functions, otherwise the principal will be seen as an evaluator only (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). The principals in this study have a dual role in assessing and assisting, yet the purpose of supervision is linked with helping teachers learn about, reflect on, and improve their practice. Through the many definitions of supervision, there are many common purposes, including improving instruction, promoting effective staff development, promoting academic reflection, and enabling the initiation of new techniques, which is revealed through the participant interviews (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Wanzare & de Costa, 2000).

The interviews began with a discussion of how the principals grow and develop teachers with the intent of learning about supervision models, approaches, and focus areas. The prominent themes are represented and arranged in the following headings.

### **5.2.1 Models of supervision practiced**

A common discussion in all interviews were the terms supervision and evaluation and how they were used interchangeably. It was found that in most cases, there was little actual supervision and more emphasis on evaluation. More likely, it seems that the synonymous use of terms is accentuated by policy and technology platforms. Teacher evaluation often is broad in scope, examining all areas of contribution, including contractual obligations, interaction with colleagues and parents. This interchanging of terms issue was noted in the first line of the first interview, and was common throughout the other interviews. An example is when Principal 1 stated when asked how he grows and develops responded:

“Well, a lot of that is guided by the new evaluation system, you know, with respect to how teachers are evaluated to begin with.”

The literature explored for this study indicated that there have been many supervision models developed over the years. These include clinical, differentiated, developmental, walkthroughs, action research, and portfolios to name several. The principals in this sample discussed how they grow and develop teachers in a variety of indirect ways, but all principals discussed the clinical supervision model.

It was shared that there was a purposeful, meaningful, and collaborative preconference and postconference, and during those meetings, there is a great deal of dialogue and reflection. There was collaboration, shared ownership, and agreement on next steps. Several principals used the term “coaching”, and emphasized that the process was far more than simply reporting how one did.

Further, the supervisory process encourages an open and evidence-based discussion. Principal 3 shared his perspective:

“It's not subjective. It's all based on facts and evidence. I think the majority of the staff appreciates the fact that they play a role in their own evaluations. It's a conversation. I do part and they do apart, and we discuss it. We agree, sometimes we agree to disagree.”

### **5.2.2 PA-ETEP and Electronic Systems**

One commonality in the supervision process was the logistical approach. Several of the principals indicated the use of the Pennsylvania Electronic Teacher Evaluation Portal (PA-ETEP). PA-ETEP is a web-based software that facilitates the teacher evaluation process as structured by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The system is currently used by 325 school districts, and it will manage formal observations, differentiated supervision projects, walk-throughs, and anecdotal notes, among other data points, as well as scheduling, questionnaires, and collaborative self-assessments (<https://paetep.net>).

There is a connection between the model of clinical supervision practiced and the electronic model. Procedurally, the principals in the sample indicate the use of electronic interactive systems, such as PA-ETEP that heavily guided the process of supervision, scheduling, and interactions.

Principal 5 shared how he interacted with the teachers and the system, which was quite representative of the overall experience:

“The process for us at this time is we initiate the formal observation at which time the teacher gets an email... At that point, they are launched into a series of questions for domain one, which is the preparation phase. And this is a pretty serious [sequence of events] in PAETEP to go through. We have a preobservation conference where we talk about the lesson. In the meantime I have provided for them feedback on the questionnaire. We talk about the feedback that I provided based on [their initial response]. They change some of the answers to their initial questions on the questionnaire. The actual formal observation happens during which time I am looking at domains two and three. I'm scripting notes based on those two domains. The teacher receives those notes and then they have to go into another questionnaire, which is basically about the reflection. We have one more meeting and they also go through the Danielson rubric and grade themselves basically on that rubric. But I do exactly the same thing. We have one more

meeting where we talk about areas strengths and areas of growth and we'll wrap up the formal end of the observation.”

From this description, two observations can be made. First, the “formality” of the observation was apparent. It was a lengthy and time consuming process. The event requires three to four scheduled meetings and significant reflection and writing. It was through the intensive process and conversations that the principals believe growth occurred, in the merging of supervision and evaluation concepts and through their professional discussions.

Next, the description from Principal 5 was very representative of all respondents, and was consistent with the literature-based models explored (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1980). An additional consideration, although not a focus of this research, was exploring the degree to which the electronic platforms are heavily relied upon are whether the platforms are derived of the expectations of full compliance with criteria of clinical supervision, or if the reciprocal is true; practices are done blindly in an effort to follow the platform. The principals appear to be more concerned with completing the electronic forms within the system, rather than focusing on the details and criteria of authentic clinical supervision.

A finding is that the Danielson rubric is the driving force behind the merging of supervision and evaluation practices. Several principals note that they use it as a growth tool as well as an evaluation tool. Principal 6 shared how he interacted with the system, but more importantly, was concerned with “agreeing” and “settling” on a rating based on what was observed:

“When I go into evaluate teachers I am looking for one or two things I may be able to help with. A way to tweak or assist in improving their practice. I don't go in looking to assign a rating. Obviously, through discussion and our post observation conferences we come to settle on a rater agreement with our teachers.”

The common perspective and digital platform provides the opportunity to comprehensively review and reflect on the lessons taught, which allowed for the interactive agreement on growth, next steps, and summative evaluation.

### **5.2.3 Walkthroughs**

A second primary supervision approach was the use of the walk-through. A classroom walk-through is a derivative of management by walking around. Widely practiced, there are many models, including but not limited to the Downey Three Minute Walk-through, the Western Pennsylvania Principal Academy 14 step process (Werlinich & Graff, 2002).

All of the principals interviewed discussed the use of classroom walk-throughs. Several shared that they are used as a method to be visible and collect data on what is happening in classrooms. Others, as principal 6 shared, want to monitor the teachers' understanding of the curriculum, practices, and knowledge of resources, as well as how they interact with children.

Principal 8 shares his process and the thinking behind conducting a classroom walkthrough that was the most descriptive in method:

My goal every month ... is, I am in every teacher's classroom at least one time a month doing a walk-through observation. [Teachers] that I feel need to grow little more, I'm getting there again in that month... I let him know that I will be coming in... I provide myself with a calendar with each day and each grade level and who I have slotted in. I do this...to reach the goal I want to reach each day.”

There was a common belief that teachers understand what good teaching is and looks like, and that they understand the Danielson (2007) rubric. Principal 4 states:

“With these new evaluations teachers are more focused on what it is that they need to do, they understand what it is that we're looking for. Our walk-through observation almost mirrors the rubric that is used on the state form. We use [domain two and three, environment and instructional delivery]. Preparation is obvious by looking at the lesson plans.”

Principal 4 demonstrates that the rubric used defines and guides practice, and it is also reflective that walkthroughs in this case are reduced to a checklist.

#### **5.2.4 Feedback and Conversations**

Feedback is a noted component to supervision in general, both classroom walk-throughs and clinical supervision. In no case were any interactions described as unilateral or one-way.

During walkthroughs, it was further discussed that feedback can be formal. The PAETEP platform manages walkthroughs in real-time, so that observations can be entered with an electronic device and presented immediately to the teacher. Principal 4 indicated that his district has a paper form that mirrors the Danielson (2007) rubric, and that is completed by hand and shared. More important to most are the informal conversations around instruction. Principal 5 shares a representative experience:

“More important than that is catching a teacher in the hallway or something after a formal walk-through...Yesterday I did a walk-through and ...It just happened to be that when I walked in she ...had some pretty interesting strategies to teach them. I called her in the hallway afterwards and asked her if she would mind sharing those this morning. So those informal interactions, those “that-a-boy’s” go farther than formal interaction.”

The principals indicated that the role has become that of a coach, as opposed to an evaluator, sharing formatively areas that teachers can improve upon. More time is spent on validating good practice than catching teachers doing something counterproductive. All of the principals noted that they try to make that process collaborative through discussion, engaging in conversations around what is seen in the classroom, and using the Danielson rubric as a guide.

### 5.2.5 Focus

Another theme that emerged was the focus of supervision. The participants discussed how they conduct walk-throughs and clinical supervision. A focus on the individual emerged.

Tenure or years of service was a common theme. It appears that with years of service comes a common understanding of excellent teaching. Principal 1 notes:

“If there has been a teacher who has been teaching for 30 years and she is just killing it based on scores or what the data are reflecting. Or her just overall eagerness and willingness to try new things ...I'm not going to spend a lot of time in her room... But someone who is in year two and based on feedback from colleagues or feedback from parents were based on some things that I've seen in the classroom that might be someone who I spend a lot more time with time with coaching.”

Principal 6 discusses how he places teachers in categories, or buckets, based on experience and performance. He discussed a green, yellow and red bucket. Teachers in the yellow and red buckets are typically new, new to the grade or district, or have proven weaknesses in test scores. Green bucket teachers are “warriors”. As he states “I know ...they know what they are doing. They know the culture of the district ... and understand the resources. They have a great handle on the student population of what their kids need. Those teachers throughout the course of the year I may get in there three times to do an observation and daily or weekly conversations with them. I am not really concerned with what they're doing in their classrooms on a daily basis.”

Other principals infer a developmental supervision model, where younger, or less experienced teachers may need more intensive support or intervention. But, in addition, there was effort to develop the instructional capabilities of the more veteran teachers rather than focusing only on instruction. Parent surveys and teacher inventories were also indicated as a means to collect perspective where participants and meeting agenda items, and actionable items are connected.

Finally, a popular response on what to focus on during the process of supervision was “doing what is best for kids.” Often the responses were unspecific in terms of what that looks like. Data was also referred to, however, what that data translates into was not stated specifically. Two examples from Principals 3 and 7:

“Yes I mean I guess the big picture for me and this is something that I share with teachers all the time we always have to focus on what's best for kids,”

Principal 7:

“Our school districts mission is to provide the best possible education for each and every student. So that encompasses kids with exceptionalities and the general education students.”

### **5.2.6 Data driven supervision**

Another prominent theme from nearly all principals emphasized data, its prominence, and function. Data-informed instructional supervision seemed to frame the concept most completely. Several principals indicated that everything they do is based on data. They described the multiple tools used for both summative and formative data collection and analysis.

The principals all indicated that significant time is spent in teams, but also individually examining grade distributions, growth and achievement. They make sense of the data, and turn that data around to the teachers for use in instruction. The principals look for trends in performance, both in student achievement and teaching pedagogy.

Principal 2 indicated:

“You have a building level score and you're responsible for your own data...They are spending more time now looking at ways they can help the students move forward in a more efficient and quicker pace ...There's more urgency on a student level to get the students where they need to be.”

Principal 10 offered a deeper response. During consolidation efforts, it became clear that data was not used in prior schools. In fact, lesson plans were not collected, and culturally, many teachers were led to believe that their performance was excellent. As he took over the leadership of the building, data began to share a different story, resulting in some teacher change, but also resistance and reluctance. He states:

“When you make that PVAAS connection and are willing to look at the data and make changes and make adjustments and recognize that there's room for growth. Those teachers demonstrate success ...we really need to find a way to work with staff that are reluctant to acknowledge that type of data...that's been difficult for a lot of staff. “

Next, another concept that surfaced was the role of the principal in recognizing the culture of a building environment, and before making changes in teacher behavior or development, data should be considered from a variety of sources. It was discussed by several principals that attempts to engage in supervision can be seen as a challenge or negative engagement by the teachers. Principal 3 shared:

“My process of growing and supporting teachers ... varies on the environment...Each one was slightly different.. . So taking a hard look at PSSA data, taking a hard look and assessing where the culture is,... look at remedies for areas that you feel there is need, and ways to accentuate areas that you think you are being successful...The greater the knowledge you will have [the more successful you will be].

### **5.2.7 Professional Development**

Professional development is an element of supervision and an emergent theme concerned with the growth and development of teachers. In the analysis of the transcripts, each principal mentioned in some way the importance of professional development. However, it was not supported as an area that was discussed first. Largely, professional development was viewed as a formative and real-time event. As a result of frequent walk-throughs, or through engaging in the clinical observation process, individual teachers receive individual feedback and recommendations. The principals believe they possess sufficient knowledge of instructional processes, and are able to observe or engage in conversation and direct the teachers. It was suggested that those teachers who need support were engaged in peer observations. Principal 4 stated:

“I tried to encourage peer observations and try to encourage folks to pursue professional development outside of the school districts, ... but also I will differentiate ... professional development opportunities based on the needs I see within my building.”

Principals 2 and 7 also support peer observation. However, the concept was addressed informally and without a clear explanation on how it would occur structurally. Peer observation is a significant professional development tool, however, it appears that it is not widely used, or is utilized without direction. Principal 7 illustrated this in his statement:

“[I ask them,] have you talked to so-and-so about what they're doing with the new reading series. I really like the way they are addressing tier two vocabulary. Can you get over there and have a conversation with them about it. Maybe you can pick up on a few ideas. You may be able to pick up a few ideas that way.”

Professional development specifics were not mentioned. Large group, thematic presentation, or workshops appear to be a past practice. All districts were stated to have professional development days, however, learning largely is surrounding new initiatives, curriculum adoption, district-wide content, and not on individual work.

Principals 9 and 10, discussed how they attempt to differentiate for the needs of teachers within a larger district-wide framework. Principal 10 shared:

“We do inventories of the teachers so we can get that feedback. We stagger that throughout the in-service day so they are not sitting in a three-hour presentation that is not something that they either want or need. Our constant communication with the staff... they provide us feedback regularly... providing them everything we need for them to be successful.”

## **5.2.8 Teams and Collaboration**

Finally, collaboration is a key feature to current instructional supervision practice. Historically, instructional supervision was top-down, more of a judgmental sense of “snoopervising”. In the review of literature, the notion of changing times, a sense that practices change as a result of current needs, and shortcomings of previous models. In this research

exploration, the notion that growth comes from working together was very prominent. Principals indicated that time was scheduled for co-planning, writing goals and examining data, was important in the approaching the craft of instruction. Principal 1 stated that he works with groups and often prompts the teachers by asking:

“Tell me what this [performance data and observational data] means to you.”

Others have created a culture of collaboration where teacher leadership capacity is developed and they grow one another. Principal 4 described the collaborative model in her school:

“We are very collaborative ... *I feel like teachers grow when they are talking to each other, learning from each other* (emphasis added), ...That is pretty much the culture of my building.”

Other principals work directly with and lead teams and collaborative groups that aggressively address needs of students, teachers and the building in general. At times, many of the teams may be developed around non-instructional issues, however, it is the overall growth of the learning and school experience that is addressed. Principal 7 shared her involvement in the building:

“I participate in a lot of cross grade level meetings...[including] the data team, instructional cabinet, operations committee which handles some of our upcoming stem initiatives, literacy committee, and an Olweus anti bully committee. They are made up of all different grade levels so they can have the cross grade level connection.”

### **5.2.9 A comprehensive description**

The interview of principal 4 was unique, and somewhat of an outlier. In the review of literature that preceded this chapter, there are several headings and supporting description that support the concepts of supervision. All of the principals interviewed shared valuable

perspective, values, and approaches. Principal 4, however, shared a very comprehensive outline of supervision in terms of how she focuses in the growth and development of teachers in a formative and summative manner, as well as professional development means. In this view, it is valuable to share her perspective in its entirety:

“We use the Danielson model of supervision which is of course the state model and then we had that rubric in place prior to the state changing their model and we have a differentiated supervision model. We have teachers in four different tracks and they can opt if they have had to six successful performance ratings in track two they can go into track three which is an action research project. I would meet with them periodically to reflect on the goals of their action research and then they would do a final project. That should take anywhere from 1 to 2 years to complete. The folks that are in track one obviously require more intensive observation. At least two formal per year and additional walk-throughs. The track two were those who've already achieved tenure. They have to have one formal observation. But obviously I try to do multiple more walk-throughs throughout the year. I try to provide professional development at the building level based on specific needs around data analysis or whatever curricular projects we have ongoing.”

#### **5.2.10 Summary of findings of research question 1**

The following table represents a synthesis of the findings of question 1, derived of interview data.

**Table 6: Summary of Findings of Research Question 1**

Finding	Explanation
Supervision and evaluation are terms and concepts used synonymously	Nolan and Hoover (2012) note that inability to distinguish the two concepts results in evaluative practices. Respondents clearly state that they grow teachers through the evaluation process.
Walkthroughs are prominent supervision technique, although somewhat undefined.	All principals discussed the use of walkthroughs, however, none articulated congruence with literature-based models.
Electronic platforms are the driving force behind supervision procedures.	PA-ESEP was discussed by most principals as a tool used to compile supervision and evaluation data. The system is designed to record the steps of clinical supervision and walkthroughs.
The respondents report that they believe their role has become more of a coach.	Respondents state that they provide feedback through walkthroughs, clinical observation conferences, and focus area leadership teams that allow them to become a coach.
The respondents report that the use of student performance data and teams are a prominent method of professional development.	All principals indicate that teams, including data teams, cabinet, leadership, and focus teams are a critical components to supervision and accomplishing tasks. Performance data is frequently utilized.
Principals report the use of “focus buckets”	Teachers are placed in buckets of priority of time spent and activity based on seniority, or experience in grade or content area. Experienced teachers have little interaction.

## 6.0 FINDINGS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Chapter six explores and presents themes that emerged across all 11 interviews and 53 inventory responses as an overall exploration of micropolitics and supervision practices. To shape this question, it is first necessary to discuss what is meant by micropolitics.

Micropolitics involves considering the nature of power, conflict, coalitions, policy, determining who gets what, when, and how (Marshall & Scribner, 1995). Primary to the concept is the strategic use of power for influence and protection (Blasé, 1999), involving both sanctions and rewards (Ball, 1987; Hoyle, 1986; Iannacone, 1991). Politics is concerned with interests, struggles over the ideological content of policy-making, goals, and use of formal and informal power, and perceived interests (Ball, 1987; Blasé, 1991; Hoyle, 1986). It reflects day to day life, choices, conflicts, opportunities, wealth, social goods, and determination of goals (Winton & Pollock, 2012). The study of micropolitics surfaces how things really work within the school walls (Flessa, 2009), and how values are translated into policy and interaction.

Research question 2: *What micropolitical influences, especially ideologies, strategies, power relationships, and motivations impact elementary principal supervision practices?*

## 6.1 VALUES

One criteria revealed in the concept of micropolitics are behaviors of the organization, policies and practices, and how these are reflective of the shared values, in this case related to supervision of teacher and student growth (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Lindy & Mahwhinney, 2003). The principals interviewed in this study reported a common value, including student growth, growth mindset, trust and culture, and teamwork.

Principal 6 described the importance of relationships. He was quite candid in describing how during the previous year that he “dropped the ball several times.” He shared:

“If I can build a relationship and grow that relationship, built on trust, then they will believe in the things we do as a district. Without those relationships, understanding, beliefs, you will struggle as an administrator.”

Later in the conversation he described how he followed a principal who “ruled with an iron fist.” His discussion was an attempt to distance himself from that approach, recognizing that it was unfair and unproductive. He values an open door, involving stakeholders, and developing rapport, especially with those he was unable to connect with previously.

Principal 2 shared confidently that his focus is growth. He states, “I think, obviously, my main core value is student growth.” Interesting here is the manner that he states that it is “obvious”, that perhaps all administrators are thinking alike. Student growth may be associated with an effort to challenge the status quo, which is a transformative approach (Blasé & Anderson, 1995). Nearly all principals interviewed indicated a similar response, three of which seemed to frequently use the term, “obviously”, suggesting that this is a universally shared value.

Principal 8 had a slightly different response where teacher and student growth was conceptualized together. He shares that, “teacher growth comes from answering this question: Am I doing what is best for kids in each and every situation?” He continued to explain his

thinking by making a connection to a discussion at a Response to Intervention meeting. He explains, “For example, the teacher asked if she can, from an RTII model, can I try this intervention? Can I try that intervention?” It was interesting here that his perception of teacher growth was equated with doing what is best for kids. An unanswered challenge illustrated in this study and elsewhere is the effort to define or defend what is best for kids. Further, attempting interventions through instruction is his general approach to teacher growth. It should also be noted that this principal as well as others often share that they encourage independence, risk-taking, and collaboration.

Trust was also a concept that was shared as a prominent value by several respondents. Principal 3 indicated that upon taking a new position, he was met with a hostile environment. He shared:

“I came into a culture that at least here at the elementary level, was fairly hostile to administration because there had been periods of, I guess a build-up of mistrust. So in any case, you would take time to assess what the culture of the building is before you take time trying to figure out how to move it.”

The notion of developing trust was a common theme. It is also noted that these principals are exercising a political acumen in assessing and strategizing. The literature supports that behaviors of untrustworthiness in the principal are often reflected in posturing and similar behavior in the teachers (Blasé, 1989; Blasé & Anderson, 1995; Bjork & Blasé, 2009).

Next, a growth mindset and an emphasis on continuous improvement was reported as a value and uncompromising focus. Principal 4 was very forward in her description:

“Well, I think the growth mindset with the teachers and school in general. That is something I am not willing to compromise on. I mean, the teachers have complained, there is always something more, or I am not giving enough credit for the things we do well, or there is something else we do better. But in six years people have accepted that that is how I am always going to be. ... That’s what I am not willing to compromise on. That continuous improvement on ourselves as teachers which ultimately impacts the learning in our classrooms.”

This is a candid expression where growth is most definitely valued by the principal, but not necessarily valued by the teachers. In terms of micropolitics, the essence of turning values into practice can be seen here. It should be noted that it took six years to embrace the approach, and there continues to be push-back and complaining. The principal's high degree of confidence and forward-pushing approach indicates a transformational, and adversarial approach, perhaps one not as open as perceived.

Finally, values can be deduced indirectly through conversation. It was noted that several principals struggled to identify directly what they do value, as if the inquiry surprised them. Principal 7 was one respondent who appeared to weave together multiple concepts in an uncertain response. He emphasized teamwork as prominent value in the building. He indicates that "someone . . . may have an idea" and he "encourages teachers to pop into other colleagues rooms" so that they can possibly "use something down the line." Student learning and growth is valued and addressed by avoiding giving up on kids and relentless parent communication. It is here that it appears that the respondents are unable or unwilling to reflect on values, but are rather attempting to highlight themselves by using terms such as "obviously" and stating widely shared concepts and values. Perhaps this is reflective of principals who are a bit more facilitative and display a lesser degree of conviction, struggling to challenge the status quo.

## **6.2 POLITICAL STRATEGIES**

Micropolitics involves the direct use of strategy to protect oneself or gain advantages. Through the interview process, none of the principals directly stated what they would want to

gain or protect. It would appear from the stated values, as well as the perceived nature of the position, that student growth and achievement is expected.

Principal 7 shares two distinct strategic approaches. She states that expectations are made clear, and she makes an effort to stay informed, and pilot initiatives before they are required. She states that offering first hand testimony is important. Second, she noted that it was important to “[pay] attention to the culture and the nature of the teachers feelings.”

Her statement is illustrative of several concepts. First, piloting efforts require a culture of cooperation, which is reflective of an open, perhaps facilitative approach. The communication of expectations is somewhat closed, and reflective of an adversarial approach. Here, the shifting of approaches, or blending, is noted. Second, a sincere concern for the feeling of others is more open and facilitative, and democratic. Cooperation and communication of expectations are both considered a control strategy (Blasé & Anderson, 1995).

Reward strategies were also prominently described, especially the issuance of a professional courtesy. The rewards and allowances vary in scope, size, and frequency, however, they are quite common. Principal 1 notes:

“So I try to circumvent [conflict] by having conversations that are with our building reps and union liaisons in saying this is all about kids I'm not changing my approach. I'm going to extend a professional courtesy to the teacher if they say I need to leave at 3 o'clock today, or can I go see my child in the third grade play. I'm not going to tax him on a personal day or vacation day if we can make the cover coverage work. I'll extend a professional courtesy.

This is a firm example of a quid-pro-quo situation, which was quite common among nearly all of the principals. The expectation is cooperation, understanding, and minimal push-back in exchange for flexibility in the enforcement of contractual work schedules. The suggestion is also that those courtesies will be revoked if conflict arise.

Principal 9 shares a very vibrant description of political interaction. He noted how he

directly stays in close contact with the union president through frequent lunch meetings:

“My grade 6 math teacher is the union president. He has reps in his circle, and is always hearing things. We take him out to lunch or breakfast each month. We don’t have union issues. He also wants to keep his members accountable as well. A lot of times, for example, when I am scheduling a two hour delay, I will call him and say, what do you think about this? And sometimes I will use his idea. I don’t have all of the answers. So, we listen, I guess.”

This account demonstrates a number of concepts. First, Principal 9 understands that the union president is the de facto power broker. He understands the connectedness of how information travels. He also extends considerable power to him through the meetings and consultations. Conflict is minimized or eliminated, and agreements and understandings are formed. For the principal, union issues are eliminated. The teachers gain influence over their potential grievances or concerns.

### **6.3 MICROPOLITICAL INFLUENCE**

Throughout the interview process, all of the principals were able to indicate that there are individuals who have influence within their buildings. Not only were these individuals influential, it was also observed that negotiation as a political strategy was exercised, which is a micropolitical strategy identified by Hoyle (1986).

Principals 1,3,5, and 6 indicated how they interacted within the political landscape with those of influence. They all similarly stated that the power players are veteran teachers. Principal 1 stated before he moved forward in “exploring an initiative,” his attempt is to get veteran teacher “buy in” so that they can help to “sell it to their colleagues.” He also indicates that he keeps the union representatives “abreast of information first and foremost and that way

they can let me know if they see anything that is contract related that could be an issue.” He makes a point to “pick their brains first.”

It is notable that he states that these individuals have informal authority over their colleagues, but not him as principal. It may not be recognized by the principal that a great amount of power has been granted to these individuals by the level of inclusion. There is a mutual benefit. The teachers have much to gain through direct influence and informal authority, and the principal avoids conflict and potential failure in leadership initiatives. Principal 1 shares his experience:

“I can think of a veteran teacher in every grade level that has some influence over their colleagues but they are someone who I know I can go to... I will try to get their buy in it and I hope that they can help me sell it to their colleagues...So I try to look at what people's roles are whether they are a facilitator or union rep or if they have years of service or if they have some weight with their colleagues.”

Principal 5 continues the similar thinking with seniority and influence seemingly important, as well as the concept of buy-in. Hoyle (1986) indicates that one apparent micropolitical strategy is coopting, or keeping adversaries close. This is reflective of that strategy, but also a quid pro quo arrangement, where both parties have something to gain. He states:

“I am lucky to have two very strong teachers who are the patriarch and matriarch of the building. And, from my end as the building principal at one point if I can get them on board, and if I can get buy in from those two, I am golden. I get anything done around here if I have them in my pocket.”

Principal 8 was quite forward with the concept of negotiating. He refers to them as “the unofficial authorities” in the building. He indicates that they may not be union leaders, or heads of departments, but the people either through their veteran status, or their own personality have the “ear and motivation of the rest of the building”. He emphasizes directly developing relationships, both informal and formal, with the building personnel. This principal was unique

in that he was open about his strategic approach, where others were more hesitant to comment.

In some cases the senior teachers are described as an adversary. Principal 6 describes how the micropolitical landscape changes before him, and how he uses it to his advantage, at times dividing and ruling (Hoyle, 1986):

“I have a guidance counselor and two teachers within my building who try to control the overall tone and attitude within the staff. ...And quite frankly they are up and age and seniority ...they try to undermine the tone of the building at the same time they try to keep themselves in a good light...They will try to work through different groups..[but] there's a group of young teachers who are frustrated with that .....and they are starting to push back.”

Another principal indicates how a few teachers influenced the building by participating and dominating committee meetings. As this principal was hired as the leader of the building, he became frustrated with their negative influence, and replaced members altogether. Hoyle (1986) and Blasé and Anderson (1995) indicate that this strategy is reflective of controlling meetings and displacing, another direct micropolitical strategy. Principal 2 indicates how at first, gaining the blessing of teacher-leaders was important; however, it became too cumbersome to deal with, too challenging. He was unique in that he recognized their power and influence grew over the years, and found it impossible to move the building forward by consulting with them often. He shares:

“I have two core teachers who were grade level facilitators in the past, but it was really the community-based teachers who are friendly in the building, but are also socially together a lot. And they influence a lot of what is happening...[I] try to get their blessing before you move anything through. But, you obviously couldn't allow them to run the building. So I made a couple of moves.... When you have the same people, nothing will really change.”

Another strategy that was noted was simply breaking up and moving teachers. In an instance where opposition within the building became intolerable for the principal and teachers as well, the local bargaining agreement allowed for the movement of staff. That option was

exercised, and staff were moved. Principal 8 shared his intolerance for managing the tension of micropolitical power struggles:

“Well those groups got broken up pretty quick. Because I had seen it was a bad combination for teachers but also for the students....we broke it up. I will say since that happened, [the adversarial tension] stopped. And it's more of a team interaction.”

Other indications show that the “union” is referred to as a significant political entity. Often, they are not identified as a single person, but rather as a collective group seemingly holding the same set of values. Several principals indicated that when decisions that are unpopular are made, they can expect the union to visit them. In some cases, negotiations behind the scenes occurs. Other times, neither party achieves their desired result, and a challenge is posed. Principal 3 shared a discussion where he was required to directly challenge an improper past practice. He noted:

“When I first confronted it, and to a line, said that is to never happen again, I was visited by the representative from the union, saying that that has been a past practice. And that I needed to be sensitive to that. And, I said no I don't, there is nothing to support that. And, if you really want to make a union issue out of something like that, I am happy to have that argument.”

Another area of politics that was shared among several principals was the nature of the school board as a political entity and the manner in which the superintendent enables or controls, ultimately shielding the principals and allowing them the feel as though they can perform their work more proficiently. Principal 7 shared his experience:

“I feel like the upper administration handles a lot of the political stuff. I don't feel like I get caught up in that. Especially with school board stuff....We don't have to have a lot of interactions, with our board because our superintendent protects us from that so that we are not getting directives directly from the board.”

Principal 2 reports experiencing a great deal of school board intervention, largely because of the frequent turn over of staff. One factor that increases the prominence of micropolitical grappling is change. Although this is change at a district level, Principal 2 felt significant

pressure at the school level. He shares:

“The major power player that we have is the board president...But I think there is a big difference between the tenure of the superintendent on how much power you have as a school board..., but when you have a new superintendent coming in, if they are not grabbing a hold of the reigns, the board will run with it.”

Several principals indicate no political intervention or pressure. Principal 8 represents several respondents in presenting his thoughts:

“As far as local politics coming in as far as a board member it doesn't happen. To be honest with you they don't come in here...As far as anyone trying to throw their weight around or anyone trying to question and agenda ...it doesn't happen.”

It is notable that when several principals are engaged in a conversation about micropolitics and use of power, their immediate response is attached to school board members. It seems that school boards and superintendents are most closely perceived as influential political entities, and for the most part, the micro level and the power and influence that internal organizational members hold is not identified or seen as political.

In similar fashion, Principal 7 extends the concept and explains that micropolitics does not exist. In this case, she is defining politics as an outside entity, rather than the happenings at a day to day building level. Yet, as the literature indicates, micropolitics is by default present in schools. Additionally, although there may not be conflict, or recognized bargaining or coopting, the presence of committees and collaboration is reflective of a shared social value, micropolitical in nature. Principal 4 shares her views on the shared and collaborative processes:

“I really think that our administrative team at the elementary level really is very collaborative...I feel like we all have a voice and I feel like it is a collaborative effort and I like to take that kind of approach within my own building. I try to avoid or involve all of the teachers and all the stakeholders in the decision-making ...I feel that my style of leadership tends to be collaborative. I really believe in empowering teacher leaders and encouraging that and really find areas of strength that they can then capitalize on.”

Finally, in a school where there was a major consolidation, one of the struggles was merging staff and programs. The principals indicate that there were many programs unique to individual school, designed to serve a need in that context. However, the context has changed, and they are not needed. The staff, in some cases who created them are still together, which created tension. The staff was looking for less collaboration and significantly more directives, as reported. When asked that if the time of change has introduced micropolitical struggles, principal 9 and 10 shared:

“Endlessly...Each of them come with their own incentives, involvement, and non-involvement. We have had that pressure with the design of the building. There's a lot of pressure in terms of the fact that we were looking to with groups of students and how we're going to move in that direction. It sets one demographic up for success but maybe doesn't meet the needs of others.”

Others share that they exercise a reward strategy of professional courtesies, with expectations of bargains in return, referring to the experience transparency. Principal 11 shares his frustration with failure of staff to hold up bargains:

“We are very lenient with [their need] to leave early... One thing I don't like is, we are very transparent. We share everything administratively with the staff. But it is like they almost can't handle the information. When information gets back to us, it is not anywhere near what we stated.”

Principal 3 discussed how openness and honesty is critical, but being aware of stakeholder motivations. He appears to be also engaging in an exchange of information, but also realizes the challenges involved. He shares:

“You have to identify what the motivations are for your staff members, and honestly, you are doing this with board members and you are doing this with administration... And there also has to be... a level of trust, that if I talk to someone and I am open and honest, I have an expectation that they are being open and honest.”

Principal 5 discussed strategic planning, being aware of consequences and controlling information flow for an intended outcome:

“When I started the principalship, what I was bad at was thinking ahead 12 minutes from now. The action I take now what's going to happen 12 moves from now politically, because of that action. I was only seeing two or three moves ahead and consequently had my butt handed to me a couple of times.... I think a strong leader again always does what's best for kids but that might involve giving up short-term gains in order to have a long-term win for your strategy... there are times that I have ...had to let the cat out of the bag about something is coming down the pipe because I wanted it out there... So that the feedback we get to the right people in time before the decision was actually made so that so that the ultimate goal that I wanted to have happen would happen.”

Finally, a few principals made an effort to describe themselves or their strategic micropolitical leadership as Democratic and Empowering (Blasé & Anderson, 1995). Their position is somewhat of a paradox in that the perspective is aligned with concern for equity, as well as diminishing the position.

Principal 7 provided an example of what could be a Democratic and Empowering micropolitical profile. She discusses an emphasis on culture, a safe and nurturing positive environment. Her approach is certainly open, as it is fully inclusive, and the suggestion and encouragement of risk-taking indicates a transformative value. However, there is not wholly a concern with emancipatory voice. In her words, she explains:

“Well I think I think my goals for the school are to establish and maintain a culture that places a priority on academic excellence, but also nurtures the whole child. I think the school culture is really critical...I try to create those kinds of opportunities among staff that have teachers feel to always feel supported that it's not a gotcha kind of environment. My goal is for teachers to welcome me. To be comfortable when I come in and out of the classrooms all the time.”

Principal 3 extends the concept of the importance of culture and relationships. In his description, there was evidence of movement between micropolitical approaches. He indicates that, “there were some things that I was willing to give and take on . . . , [but it is also] a balance between trying to create a culture where everyone feels they have a voice in what’s going to be

done ,” which is open and facilitative in style. He also indicates that he has to lead more forcefully, and “voices sometimes have to give way to what’s being mandated”. This is both adversarial in nature, where his mandates are most important, but also facilitative where predetermined ends are in place (Blasé & Anderson, 1995).

It is worth noting in his description that he believe it takes several months to understand the culture of the building from year to year, and that in four years in the position, “this year is the first year that they have trusted that I am not out to get everyone.” This is significant in that this principal, among others, self-report that they are Democratic and Empowering, yet he shares that it has taken four years to gain the trust of the teachers, indicating that he, and others, may not be as democratic as they believe they are.

## 6.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following table presents a summary of the interview data and findings of research question 2, organized around prominent themes.

**Table 7: Summary of findings of Research Question 2**

Finding	Example and Explanation
Values	<p>Trust between principal and teacher is required and may take years to achieve.</p> <p>Student growth is the center of al focus. Performance data and walkthroughs are centered on growth, and it is the stated focus of efforts.</p> <p>Teacher growth and growth mindset are mentioned as the second focus area of supervision and evaluation.</p>
Strategies	<p>Control strategies are directly stated to have no value. However, these strategies are frequently practiced, perhaps unknown.</p> <p>Survey results indicate that principals find it important to reward teachers, however there are no examples.</p> <p>Quid Pro Quo strategies are very prominent, including membership on teams, acquiring buy in, and professional courtesies.</p> <p>Principals indicate that understanding the landscape before making decisions is important. Understanding history influences buy in.</p>
Power	<p>Power is most frequently granted indirectly to senior teachers who “have the ear of the staff”.</p> <p>Some teachers are aggressive, and find a seat on teams, influencing the direction of the building.</p> <p>Union members are often mentioned as a power broker.</p>

## **7.0 FINDINGS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

Chapter seven will explore and present data surrounding research question 3. The inventory, in which 53 principals responded, was designed specifically to explore and present research surrounding question 3. The presentation was divided into four separate sections, each dedicated to the quadrants of the theoretical framework. The data will be discussed as related to each quadrant. Finally, a section is dedicated to mapping the responses of the inventory to the Blasé and Anderson (1995) micropolitical leadership matrix.

Research Question 3: *How do elementary principals describe their micropolitical leadership approach?*

### **7.1 TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH**

The following four sections will describe the inventory responses by the principals. The inventory included 40 questions total, with 10 questions from each of the four Blasé and Anderson (1995) domains. The theoretical framework is divided into four domains in a matrix as a result of the intersection of leadership style (transactional or transformative) and leadership style (open and closed). This section will address specifically the transactional leadership approach. There were 53 responses. As table 1 demonstrates, respondents could respond in a

range from “not at all” to “always”. The data in table1, as well as following figures will be presented in frequency percent.

Each domain represents behaviors, values, or attributes specific to that domain. The questions were designed to measure the degree to which each respondent views their own leadership style and approach.

Transactional leadership is oriented towards supporting and maintaining the status quo, often involving exchange relationships where trust and loyalty is exchanged for effort and productivity (Blasé & Anderson, 1994; Burns, 1978).

The overall orientation of the 53 respondents lean more toward transformative behaviors. Responses on the inventory were designed to have a value of 1 to 5, 1 indicating “never” to 5, indicating “always”. The mean of the responses range from 1.9 to 3.8, most frequently near 2.3. This indicates, in general, the respondents demonstrate transactional leadership approach “once in a while”.

Question number 2, which asked the principals if “they view the principalship as a neutral public service”, had uneven responses. Eight respondents, or 15%, indicate that they “were not sure of the relationship” to their leadership, or simply do not understand the question. This response was designed in the inventory to allow for responses that the respondents felt that they did not understand or did not apply. There was a generally equal number of responses that indicated “always” and “not at all”, with 62% responding “once in a while” to “frequently”. This question was designed to frame leadership as an effort to protect the status quo, or detour from change.

Unique to the transactional domain were 14 responses that principals indicated they were “not sure the relationship”. There were no instances of this response in the open and

transformative domains. The rationale could be in the question design, or possibly that the respondents were asked to respond to a behavior that is not related to them, creating difficulty in response.

Areas that principals stated “not at all” are “use of bargaining power to motivate behavior” (28.3%), “implement a quid pro quo approach” (37.7%), “behave in a generally passive manner” (33.96%).

The two highest areas that principals responded that the “always” do, which demonstrates conviction in response, is “monitor teachers for compliance and deviations” (18.87%), and “focus on clarifying expectations (20.75%).

Most popular response was “once in a while” for “focusing on maintaining the status quo” (54.72%), “quid pro quo approach” and “intervene only when standards not met” (47%). Principals indicated that they “focus on clarify expectations” often or very frequently 73% of their responses. They also engage in reward strategies for strong work “often or very frequently” 60% of the responses.

When examining the highest percentage, several points are revealed. Strategies that are used often or very frequently are “focusing in clarifying expectations” (73.6%), “engage in reward strategies for strong work” (60.4%), and “monitor teachers for compliance” (58.5%).

The strategy used least often was “emphasize language of contract and conditions of work” (58.5%), and also rarely implemented was “focus on maintaining the status quo” (54.7%). Equally reported as a rare strategy (47.2%), “implements a quid pro quo approach”, and intervene only when standards not met.” Additionally, “use of bargaining power to motivate behavior”, and behaving in a passive manner” were reported to be part of six strategies that nearly three-quarters of more of the responses of “not at all” or “once in a while”. This indicates

that the respondents rarely engage in transactional leadership approached and related micropolitical strategies.

**Table 8: Transactional Micropolitical Leadership Approach Survey Data Table**

#	Question	Not at all	Once in a while	Often	Very frequently	Always	"I am not sure of the relationship in my leadership."	Total Responses	Mean
2	View the principalship as neutral public service..	15.1%	17.0%	28.3%	17.0%	7.6%	15.1%	53	3.3
6	Focus on maintaining the status quo.	18.9%	54.7%	11.3%	9.4%	3.8%	1.9%	53	2.3
10	Use bargaining power to motivate behavior.	28.3%	43.4%	11.3%	11.3%	3.8%	1.9%	53	2.3
14	Emphasize language of contracts and conditions of work.	17.0%	58.5%	15.1%	5.7%	3.8%	0.0%	53	2.2
18	Engage in reward strategies for strong work.	3.8%	24.5%	28.3%	32.1%	9.4%	1.9%	53	3.3
22	Monitor teachers for compliance and deviations.	1.9%	20.8%	28.3%	30.2%	18.9%	0.0%	53	3.4
26	Focus on clarifying expectations.	0.0%	5.7%	20.8%	52.8%	20.8%	0.0%	53	3.9
30	Implement a "quid pro quo" - something for something approach to interactions.	37.8%	47.2%	7.6%	3.8%	0.00%	3.8%	53	1.9
34	Intervene only when standards not met.	11.3%	47.2%	18.9%	18.9%	1.9%	1.9%	53	2.6
38	Behave in a generally passive manner.	34.0%	41.5%	24.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	53	1.9

## 7.2 TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Transformative leadership approaches involve a focus on change and end values, often challenging the status quo.

Overall orientation of the 53 respondents lean much more towards transformative leadership style. The following are the characteristics that appear to be occurring.

The responses have a value of 1 to 5. The mean of the responses range from 3.5 to 4.4, with half of the mean calculations above 4, indicating that the responses to the questions were mostly centered on “very frequently”. Unique to the transactional domain, no responses indicated “not sure of the relationship”. Only two total responses were indicated for “not at all”. This would appear to indicate that the questions in this domain relate to the respondents, and that they find that leading in a transformative manner is at least minimally part of their behavior. The highest areas that principals responded that they “always” do, which demonstrates conviction in response, are “focusing on inspiring others”, (41.5%), “value establishing a vision” (43.4 %) and listen to follower concerns (60.4%). In all questions, three-quarters of the responses are concentrated from “often” to “always”, indicating that the vast majority of strategies are transformative in nature.

The three responses with the highest percentage are “listen to follower concerns” (60.4%), “encourage others to think of problems in new ways” (52.9%), and “behave in a proactive manner” (52.9%).

Conversely, seven respondents (13.2%) indicated “once in a while” or the greatest concentration of strategies used least, “challenge an unacceptable status quo, display conviction and take a stand, focus on intellectually stimulating teachers, and provide individual attention or coach teachers.”

Overall, there were only 1 to 3 individual responses indicating “not at all”, or “once in a while”, demonstrating that there is a strong lean towards transformative leadership behavior. Further, when combining the categories “often” and “very frequently”, the responses range from 52% to 74%, demonstrating more transformative positions.

In contrast, questions 28 and 32, “take a stand”, and “intellectually stimulate teachers” seemed to have more balance throughout the responses, with 62% and 68% indicate the they engage in these behaviors “often” or “frequently” . However, 13% state “once in a while” and 24% and 16% respectively respond “always”. There appears less agreement and conviction in these areas.

**Table 9: Transformative Micropolitical Leadership Approach Survey Data Table**

#	Question	Not at all	Once in a while	Often	Very frequently	Always	"I am not sure of the relationship in my leadership."	Total Responses	Mean
4	Focus on inspiring others.	0.0%	5.7%	15.1%	37.7%	41.5%	0.0%	53	4.2
8	Behave in a proactive manner.	0.0%	1.9%	21.2%	51.9%	25.0%	0.0%	52	4.0
12	Encourage others to think of old problems in new ways.	0.0%	7.8%	21.6%	52.9%	17.7%	0.0%	51	3.8
16	Challenge an unacceptable status quo.	1.9%	13.2%	39.6%	20.8%	24.5%	0.0%	53	3.5
20	Promote leadership within the group.	0.0%	1.9%	26.4%	39.6%	32.1%	0.0%	53	4.0
24	Value establishing a vision beyond the short term.	0.0%	1.9%	20.8%	34.0%	43.4%	0.0%	53	4.2
28	Display conviction and take a stand.	0.0%	13.2%	30.2%	32.1%	24.5%	0.0%	53	3.7
32	Listen to follower concerns.	0.0%	3.8%	11.3%	24.5%	60.4%	0.0%	53	4.4
36	Focus on intellectually stimulating teachers.	1.9%	13.2%	34.0%	34.0%	17.0%	0.0%	53	3.5
40	Provide individual attention or coach teachers.	0.0%	13.2%	26.4%	32.1%	28.3%	0.0%	53	3.8

### 7.3 CLOSED LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership style involves power relationships and use of power. Closed-style principals are unwilling to share power, and goals are achieved through the control of resources, especially through bureaucracy, referred to a power-over approach (Ball, 1987; Blasé & Anderson, 1995).

The concentration of the responses indicate a weak closed-style profile. First, 64.2% always value fairness, which is not a concern of a closed style. Additionally, 61.5% find it necessary to control teachers once in a while, or 92% once in a while or never. Controlling resources, people and use of power over people is a closed habit not demonstrated here.

Forty-seven percent indicate they never act in a secretive or concealed manner. This is significant as full participation of a staff require openness and trust. In this case, 77.3% of the participants indicate that they always or very frequently promote the image of full staff participation. Closed principals are unwilling to share power and value bureaucracy. This response is contradictory to a closed style. This response is however, parallel to 79.7% who once in a while or never facilitate dependency on the principal, or bureaucracy.

Although there is a significant leaning away from a closed style, or a more open response, the principals did indicate at least some closed tendencies. Seventy-three percent manipulate resources once in a while or often. Sixty-six percent act in a unilateral manner often or once in a while. One possible way to explain this is that although the participants in the sample have a certain personal approach, in order to manage daily context may dictate the style needed.

The mean of the responses can be used as a general method of interpreting dispersion. The overall synthesis indicates participants have little closed leadership style positions. For example, “act in a secret way” has a mean of 1.62, and “necessary to control teachers” has a mean of 1.75. The other means of the responses for each question range from 2.06 to 2.86, indicating that principals engage in closed habit, or use of power over teachers “once in a while or often”.

**Table 10: Closed Micropolitical Style Survey Data Table**

#	Question	Not at all	Once in a while	Often	Very frequently	Always	"I am not sure of the relationship in my leadership."	Total Responses	Mean
3	Act in a way that is secretive or concealed.	47.2%	45.3%	5.7%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	53	1.6
7	Manipulate resources or opportunities to change teacher behavior.	13.2%	39.6%	34.0%	11.3%	1.9%	0.0%	53	2.5
11	Act in a way that is unilateral.	9.4%	45.3%	21.0%	15.1%	3.8%	5.7%	53	2.8
15	Promote image of full staff participation.	0.0%	3.8%	19.0%	37.7%	39.6%	0.0%	53	4.1
19	Engage in public performance to persuade.	9.4%	41.5%	22.6%	15.1%	1.9%	9.4%	53	2.9
23	Use formal discourse.	1.9%	38.5%	36.5%	17.3%	5.8%	0.0%	52	2.9
27	Facilitate dependency on the position of the principal.	32.7%	38.5%	21.2%	5.8%	1.9%	0.0%	52	2.1
31	Value fairness and equity.	0.0%	0.0%	7.5%	28.3%	64.2%	0.0%	53	4.6
35	Find it necessary to control teachers for results.	30.8%	61.5%	5.8%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	52	1.8
39	Value bureaucratic structure.	20.8%	37.7%	30.2%	9.4%	1.9%	0.0%	53	2.3

#### **7.4 OPEN LEADERSHIP STYLE**

Open-style principals demonstrate a willingness to share power, collaborate, and motivate the followers. They assert power through others (Ball, 1987; Blasé & Anderson, 1995). There is

a sense of a more open, honest, collegial, and supportive environment as well as a reduced hierarchy, and effort to positively influence others.

In general, the responses of the principals were more open. The most popular response was “always” “addressing staff in a sincere and straight-forward manner” (71.7%). Principals responded that visibility to staff and students is always practiced (56.6%) or always or frequently practiced (88.7%). Additionally, 51% always, or 90.2% always or very frequently offer praise and recognition to teachers. All of these responses are indicative of an open style as principals work to positively influence the staff through visible interactions and sincere and straight forward praise and feedback.

However, not all responses were heavily open-oriented. “Delegating authority” was a descriptor demonstrated only “once in a while or often” (73.6%). The principal response, “acting in a relaxed manner, less concerned with rules” was found to be a style not at all (15%) or once in a while or often (71%). Two questions, numbers 29 and 33, “minimizing the status of the principal and feeling obligated to explain decision-making” had a dispersion of responses in each category, most centered in the mean at 3.5, between “often” and “very frequently”.

Only one participant, one response, indicated that they felt that they were unsure of how the responses applied, further indicating that the responses seem to relate to their behavior and style.

Over all, the responses indicate that when responding to the survey questions, principals were more open-oriented. The statistical means of the responses were in excess of 4.0, which correlates with “very frequently” that they feel or engage in open-style behaviors.

**Table 11: Open Micropolitical Leadership Style Survey Data Table**

#	Question	Not at all	Once in a while	Often	Very frequently	Always	"I am not sure of the relationship in my leadership."	Total Responses	Mean
1	Delegate authority.	1.9%	35.9%	37.7%	22.6%	1.9%	0.0%	53	2.9
5	Address staff in a sincere and straight-forward manner.	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	26.4%	71.7%	0.0%	53	4.7
9	Make yourself visible and accessible to the staff and students.	0.0%	1.9%	9.4%	32.1%	56.6%	0.0%	53	4.4
13	Act in a way that is relaxed and less concerned with the rules.	15.1%	49.1%	22.6%	11.3%	1.9%	0.0%	53	2.4
17	Emphasize rigorous standards.	0.0%	1.9%	18.8%	35.9%	43.4%	0.0%	53	4.2
21	Offer praise and recognition.	0.0%	0.0%	9.8%	39.2%	51.0%	0.0%	51	4.4
25	Engage in collaborative problem-solving.	0.0%	1.9%	9.4%	50.9%	37.7%	0.0%	53	4.3
29	Work to minimize the status of the principal to promote collaboration.	7.6%	7.6%	30.2%	37.7%	15.1%	1.9%	53	3.5
33	Feel obligated to explain decision-making rationale.	1.9%	13.2%	37.7%	30.2%	17.0%	0.0%	53	3.5
37	Seek to understand the needs of teachers.	0.0%	0.0%	7.6%	50.9%	41.5%	0.0%	53	4.34

#### **7.4.1 Position Mapping - Description of scatter plot leadership-style maps**

The following section graphically represents the mapping of the intersection of leadership style and leadership approach data. Each participant in the survey completed 10 questions specific to open and closed style, and transformative and transactional approach. Open and transformative responses were considered to be positive numerical values, while closed and transactional responses were considered to be negative numerical values. For example, two responses to open questions may be 2 and 3, while responses to closed questions may be 1 and 2 (represented as -1, and -2). The averages of the responses to leadership style in this case is 0.5 on the x axis. This process was followed for all 10 responses from each category, and the position was represented as an ordered pair on a scatter plot. The procedure examined the degree to which elementary principals exhibit the qualities of the Blasé and Anderson Leadership matrix (1995).

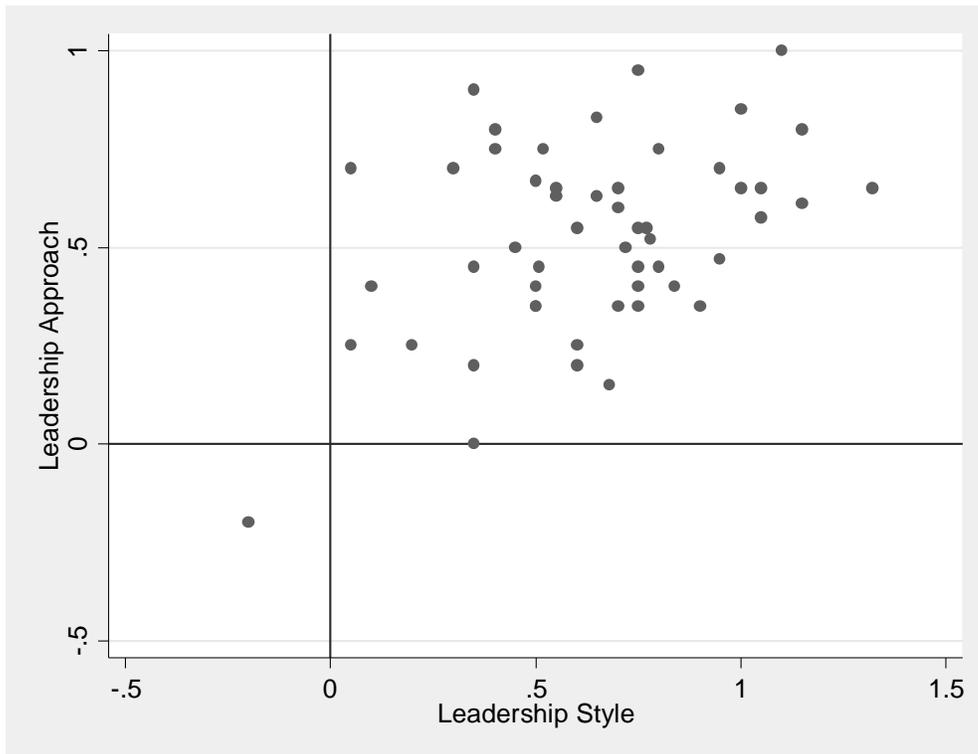


Figure 3: Position Mapping of Total Respondents of Micropolitical Leadership Profile

Figure 3 is a model of the 53 total respondents. The numerical values of the x and y axis are consistent with the survey: (0, not at all; 1, once in a while; 2, often; 3, very frequently; 4, always). The graph shows that, with the exception of one response, all other are situated in the positive x and positive y category. The leadership approach was largely transformative, with a degree between “not at all and once and a while”. The leadership style was open, with a degree between “not at all and often”.

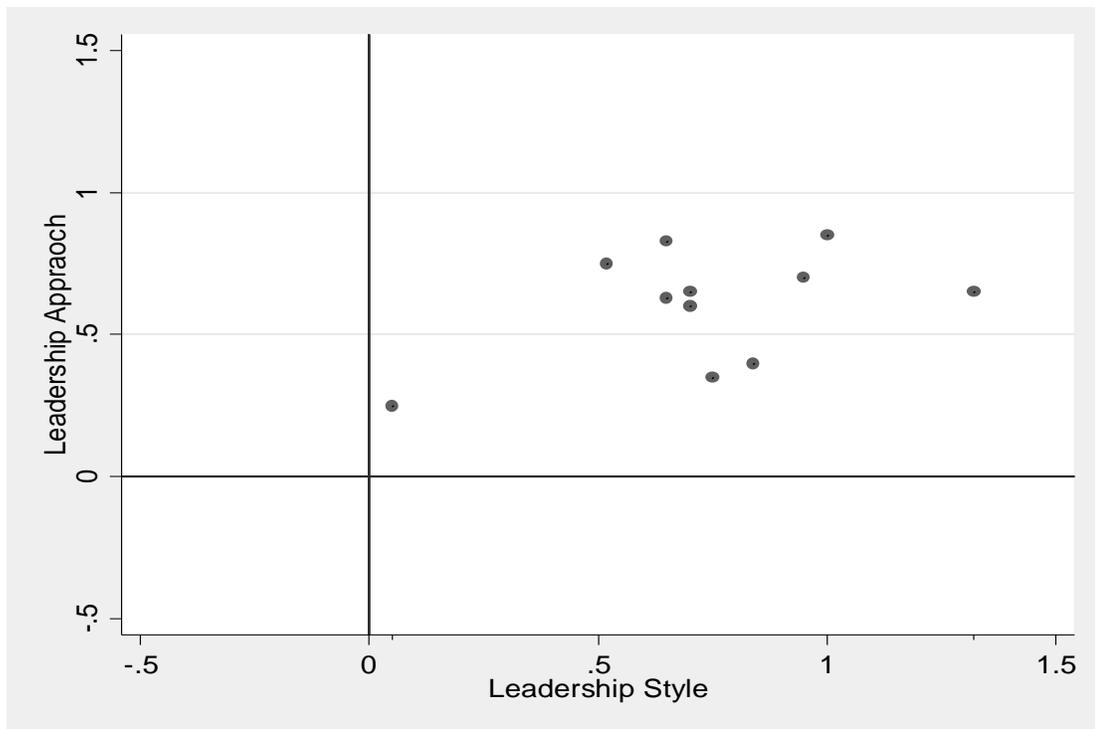
A few summary statements can be made from the plot. First, there is general consistency among the respondents. With the exception of one respondent, all others were found to be situated within the democratic, empowering leadership quadrant of the matrix.

According to the framework of the Blasé and Anderson (1995) framework, open style and transformational approach reflects a use of power with people. It is democratic in decision-making, but most importantly is concerned with promotion of justice and equality. A position of democratic leadership is not concerned with test scores, teacher morale, improvement of teachers or decision-making (Blasé & Anderson, 1995). Characteristics such as trust, support, and friendliness are present; however, the focus the goals are to promote an emancipatory voice and equality.

It appeared from the survey data that the large portion of the sample was at least concerned with these values “once in a while”, which is aligned with a “1” on the survey. In general, the response was clustered quite similarly around the ordered pair (1,1), however, it is not what would be considered a strong response to that domain. Though, it is true and consistent that the qualities of trust, friendliness and concern of staff and students and support. Inconsistent, however, is the great concern for student achievement, performance data, teacher decision-making, and most importantly, teacher improvement.

One way to explain this difference is that the Blasé and Anderson (1995) matrix was not necessarily designed to be used to label or quantify responses or people, but rather represent a concept. Related to this explanation is a recent statement by Charlotte Danielson in a current article where she states, “I am deeply troubled by the transformation of teaching from a complex profession requiring nuanced judgement to the performance of certain behaviors that can be ticked off on a checklist” (Danielson, 2016). It is the opinion of the researcher that a similar sentiment applies to principals. As they indicate responses to the survey questions, they respond more open and more transformative. This was corroborated within the interview data. It would make sense in that most individuals want to answer honestly, but also cast themselves in the

most positive light, either sharing reality or the reality that they know they would like to see present. Additionally, just as teaching is situational and should not have the nuances reduced to a checklist, so is the nature of the principalship. When discussing staff or teachers, or situations, there are many as indicated in the demographic section. It is likely that a principal may behave in a particular way most of the time, but a certain disposition may be necessary at other times.



**Figure 4: Position Mapping of Interview Respondents**

It is important in analyzing the interview data that the responses are self-reported. They are the unverified perspectives of the participants. It is assumed that they respond honestly, but also assumed that they will respond with ideas and perspectives that present themselves in the best image or what they believe is the ideal image or state. For example, it is unlikely that they

will respond that they believe they are dishonest and work subversively to achieve selfish goals.

The following figure 5 represents highlights of the theoretical framework used to describe the micropolitical leadership style of the participants.

**TRANSFORMATIVE**

<b>CLOSED</b>	<p><b>ADVERSARIAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed-Transformative</li> <li>• Power over – power through</li> <li>• Promote leaders moral vision</li> <li>• Leaders are bright, charismatic, self-confident, and highly opinionated.</li> <li>• Love a good argument, and need to win</li> <li>• Galvanize school culture and celebrated in school community</li> <li>• Can be vindictive.</li> <li>• Display a warm and dynamic style, but do largely what they want due to deep convictions</li> <li>• Reallocate resources to avert conflict, and do not consult others</li> <li>• Team management systems used, but will be dismantled if too much power garnered.</li> </ul>	<p><b>DEMOCRATIC– EMPOWERING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open-Transformative</li> <li>• Power with</li> <li>• Promote democracy and social empowerment</li> <li>• Concerned with justice and equality</li> <li>• All opinions are valued and shared.</li> <li>• Emancipatory voice a focus</li> <li>• Not concerned with morale, teacher growth, test scores, or decision-making.</li> <li>• Qualities of trust, honesty, friendliness and support exist.</li> <li>• Empower social justice rather than productivity.</li> </ul>	<b>OPEN</b>
	<p><b>AUTHORITARIAN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed – Transactional</li> <li>• Power over</li> <li>• Promote status quo</li> <li>• Generally deemed ineffective model</li> <li>• Principals ignore, avoid, and disempower teachers.</li> <li>• Teachers respond with equal negativity creating a spiral</li> <li>• Rules are clear</li> <li>• Teachers are quite controlled</li> <li>• Unilateral decisions</li> </ul>	<p><b>FACILITATIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open-Transactional</li> <li>• Power through – Power with</li> <li>• Promote a human organizational climate</li> <li>• Referred to as cultural leadership</li> <li>• Discourse of change and participation, but manipulation through bureaucracy and predetermined goals</li> <li>• Normative instrumental leadership</li> <li>• Control strategies</li> <li>• Low shared governance, but effective influence</li> </ul>	

**TRANSACTIONAL**

**Figure 5 Summary and Concluding Statements in Relation to Mapping**

First, the judgement can be made that no single participant behaves in the same manner all of the time. The respondents do have leanings, or perhaps have a view of the ideal condition that they wish to communicate. Context of situation, or a belief in the ideal condition likely drive their responses. This judgement is based on the survey data that shows representation of both styles and both approaches at least some of the time. The principals are mapped to a location, but based on circumstance, may move from place to place on the matrix. The map shows that all but one outlier was closely clustered in a single quadrant. I found that all responses do not fully place them there, however, in using the average of responses, they were located in a similar quadrant. There were also a few discrepancies between what was indicated in the survey and what was stated in the interviews, which will be discussed in a later section.

#### **7.4.1.1 Transactional Micropolitical Approach**

The mean of transactional responses, 2.7 (n=53), can be used to obtain a general view of dispersion. The value of the mean correlates with the responses on the survey “once in a while”, to “often”. The most frequent responses were focusing on maintaining the status quo (54.7), emphasizing language of contracts (58.5). Implementing a “quid-pro-quo” approach was indicated as an approach “not at all” or “once in a while”. The with the largest spread of responses was “monitoring teachers for compliance”, with a generally even response between “once and a while” and “very frequently”. This data illustrates two perspectives. One, the respondents indicate a stronger transformative leaning, as transactional responses are opposite. This also indicates that they still have transactional approaches, and it is far from an “all or nothing” result.

#### **7.4.1.2 Transformative Micropolitical Approach**

The transformative questions within the survey indicate consistency, with four responses of “very frequently” or “always”, all 70% or greater. These in order of frequency were “listening to followers”, “value establishing a vision beyond the short term”, “behave in a proactive manner”, “and promote teacher leadership”. All of these are transformative qualities and respondents indicate strongly that they are practiced and valued. However, there is a fairly even spread in responses in related categories of “challenging status quo” and “displaying conviction and taking a stand.” This is supported in the interviews as respondents very clearly steered away from defining values where they were most invested. Largely, they spoke in general and distant terms.

#### **7.4.1.3 Closed Micropolitical Style**

In the questions related to the closed style, the case can also be made that there is variation in response and that context likely influences response. First, 92% of the principals indicate that they “never or once in a while act in a concealed or secretive manner” or “control teachers.” Where they did not indicate instances where they acted secretive, they did indicate that they do control teachers. Hoyle (1986) indicates that six different control strategies, including controlling information, meeting agendas, and dividing and ruling that are used both overtly and covertly.

Next, principals indicate nearly similar responses, uneven responses, but 66% indicating “act in a unilateral way” and “engaging in public performance” once in a while or often. This

was quite contradictory to the interviews where collaboration, transparency, and teamwork were reported themes.

Further, there was a spread in responses to responding to “acting in a unilateral way” and “facilitating dependency” on the principal. This is best interpreted that context drives the behavior, and that it is likely that they do in fact display both collaborative and unilateral behavior.

Finally, 64.2% of the respondents value fairness and equity, “always”, but this also means that at least some of the time, 36% do not value fairness as a high priority. It was somewhat surprising that fairness is a generally accepted and widely valued approach, yet there is a significant number who do not agree. Additionally, this component is an important characteristic of the Democratic and Empowering quadrant of Blasé and Anderson framework (1995), where fairness, equity, and emancipatory themes are emphasized. All principals were mapped to this quadrant, although it is noted that 36% minimally fit.

#### **7.4.1.4 Open Micropolitical Style**

The open style is unique in two particular ways. First, the strongest response to any axis was the open questions and responses. The highest concentration of responses reflected a “very frequently or always” response. This is also revealed in the mean of responses above 4, also aligning with that response. Second, there were few inconsistencies among the responses or in alignment with interview data. This seems to indicate that it was easy for the respondents to identify with an open approach. In this section, it is important to note again that context, situation, and other variations lead to spread in responses. That is quite true in the responses to delegating authority, minimizing the status of the principal to promote collaboration, and feeling

obligated to explaining decision-making rationale. The spread in these areas are generally even between “often” and “very frequently.”

#### **7.4.1.5 Deviations and Inconsistencies**

When comparing the categories among themselves, inconsistencies at times can be noticed. There were a few instances where interview responses did not match the survey response.

First, the interpretation of the concept of “quid pro quo” was prominent. In the survey, 80% of the respondents indicate that they never or only once in a while use the political strategy of “quid pro quo.” Forty-three percent indicate that they never use bargaining power. These strategies are important to note as Hoyle (1999) indicates in his studies as frequent and intentional strategies used. This is inconsistent with the common response during interviews where the issuance of professional courtesy is frequent commonly discussed, and the tremendous power that is extended to union representatives and senior staff in an effort to achieve buy-in. The relationship between the two may be interpreted as disconnected, perhaps indicating that this strategic approach is not something they wish to do, or even recognize that they actually do, but must proceed with.

A second example is revealed in the use of reward strategies in which more than 50% stated they engage in often and frequently; however, there was no mention at all in any of the interviews about rewarding the teachers. This may be an example where it is acknowledged that reward strategies are ideal practices, one the principals wish to engage in, but can only sparingly complete. It would seem that if the strategy was valued as heavily as indicated in the survey, there would be frequent discussion in the interviews.

Next, the interview data indicated that conversations between the principals and teachers are one of the most valued experiences and functions for instructional improvement. Second to this were the practice of walk-throughs, where the principals stated that through observing lessons and supporting conversations on growth. Where this may be consistent for a several participants, 58% respond that “often and frequently” they are monitoring for compliance and deviations, which is a transactional function, completely separate from concern with growth of teaching skill. The synthesis of the data indicate that half of the participants are in classrooms for reasons other than the stated growth.

Another example within the open category, the idea of “delegating authority” had a range in responses that is important to note; “never” (1.9%), “once in a while” (35.9%), “often” (37.7%), and “very frequently” (22.6%), and “always” (1.9%). This is the only response category with the noted range, as well as having both a response as “never and always.” The responses more heavily concentrated in the middle may be viewed in a manner indicating authority is either partially delegated, or partially not delegated. Throughout the interviews, delegation of authority was not mentioned or evidenced as a valued concept. The idea did have somewhat of a place in the numerous committees that were mentioned, however, most of the principals were the leaders of authority, controlling the teams. Most often, leadership positions noted were not delegated, such as union or department heads. They possess power, but it was not delegated. This is mostly consistent with a closed leadership style, “acting in a unilateral manner”.

Another notable area of discrepancy that surfaced involved control of teachers. The survey data indicate 30.8% never find it necessary to control teachers, and 61.5% find it necessary only once in a while. This question and response is interesting in terms of what is

understood to be controlling. Hoyle (1986) outlines six distinct control strategies, including quid pro quo exchanges, dividing and ruling, coopting, displacing, controlling information, and controlling meetings. Although it is difficult to determine and verify the frequency of the use of the strategies, and the full or actual engagement in the strategies, it is more apparent than the respondents realize. For example, “quid pro quo” strategy was frequently practiced. Professional courtesies to dismiss early or excused from certain duties was popular. Other exchanges in the form of achieving buy in was very frequent. Often, building needs and individual needs were at stake. Cilo (1994) indicated that 63% of respondents in a similar micropolitical study engaged in exchanges. A generally similar result is consistent here. Principals also controlled information. Principal 5 in one example clearly states that he withholds or releases certain information strategically, “letting the cat out of the bag”, to cause purposeful conflict. Dividing and ruling, and coopting is another frequent strategy. Faculty meetings appear to be of minimal importance, but rather small committees, teams and cabinets are very prevalent. Frequently, special meetings with union representatives and lead or respected teachers are held. Exchange of information, deals, and understandings are managed there. These individuals hold power that can be viewed as competition, and it is inferred that failure to acquire agreements and common ground will result in serious challenges. This awareness, and direct effort to respect their power, and purposefully engage them in the system is interpreted as a form of coopting.

Finally, an area that appears inconsistent involves providing individual attention or coaching. The survey results indicate that principals coach “once in a while” (13.2%), “often” (26.4%) and “frequently or always” (59%). The spread across the categories was notable as viewed through the lens of clinical supervision and walkthroughs, supervision strategies that all

principals indicated. The 39% that indicated a less than frequent engagement is not consistent. One explanation may be the high level of attention in the observation conferences, however, there was little conversation noted surrounding the walkthrough process that was also commonly noted. Further consideration may be in the definition of coaching and providing individual attention, and to whom, whether it is a comment extended or a formal event.

### **7.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

The following table represents a summary of the findings in the narrative presentation of data for research question three.

**Table 12: Summary of Findings of Research Question 3**

Style or Approach	Findings
Open	Highest reported areas of prominence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visibility</li> <li>• Praise</li> <li>• sincere and straight-forward approach,</li> <li>• praise and recognition.</li> </ul>
Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant leaning away from closed behaviors.</li> <li>• Many promote the image of full staff participation.</li> <li>• Many manipulate resources or act unilaterally.</li> </ul>
Transformative	Highest reported areas of prominence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to follower concerns</li> <li>• Think of problems in new ways</li> <li>• Behave proactively</li> <li>• Take a stand</li> <li>• Intellectually stimulate teachers</li> </ul>
Transactional	Highest reported areas of prominence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on clarifying expectations</li> <li>• Engage in reward strategies</li> <li>• Monitor for compliance</li> </ul>

**Table 13: Findings of Interview and Survey Data**

Merging of Interview and Survey Data	Findings
Coaching	Coaching is viewed as a new role, and respected role. Actual time spent on coaching is minimal, likely including one clinical observation and a monthly walkthrough.
Walkthroughs	Walkthroughs were noted as a significant supervision approach. Respondents were quite vague or unable to articulate the focus or structure. Very much a “snoopervision” approach.
Control strategies	<p>Respondents responded that they do not value controlling teacher, however, the behavior is prominent.</p> <p>Principals control meetings, attendance, and topics.</p> <p>Quid pro quo and bargaining are of low prominence in survey, but discussed often in interviews.</p>

## **8.0 FINDINGS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH QUESTION 4**

The following section explores the themes that emerged across all 11 interviews. Inventory data was not used to develop the responses. The presentation here is designed to examine the common practices prior to the introduction of Act 82 of 2012, and most specifically, the influences of that legislation on current practices today.

Research Question 4: *How do elementary principals describe the influence of Act 82 of 2012 on their supervision practices?*

### **8.1 PAST PRACTICES**

Data from demographic findings indicate that most of the principals have been principals for 0 to 15 years. They have been active, practicing principals for a sufficient time to become knowledgeable of the expectations of a school district supervision plan, but also see and experience changes and influences from a macropolitical event.

### **8.1.1 Short-coming in past systems**

One of the common themes that emerged indicates that practices prior to 2012 were “loose”. They lacked structure, focus, purpose, and very much a sense of seriousness. Principal 10 noted the following:

“It was very loose. You didn't really get a lot of constructive feedback. I feel like the process that we're involved in now is a lot more specific... it's a lot more vast in what you can focus in on.”

Others suggested that it was a joke and completely an informal procedural experience. Reporting or narrative was even made up at times. Principal 9 shared how the past practices in the district were for teachers to write their own, check off the appropriate boxes and initial.

During the interviews, another theme that emerged was a lack of relevant feedback, and a top-down approach. Principal 3 reported the following:

“The process was always one-sided. It was administrative directive. This is what you are doing during the lesson and I'm going to give you my opinion on it.”

It was the belief that the administrator's opinion was the only one that mattered, and they were the expert. Other principals reported a similar position. There was very little constructive feedback, and even worse, often the timing was poor. When the feedback or evaluation did occur, there was no time to circle back and execute change. There was little concern with coaching and improving. The process was largely evaluative, and resulted in a letter on a paper.

In some cases there were positive aspects to the previous system, largely to the shortened, or less demanding nature of the paperwork. It appeared that the level of seriousness, and the desire to execute the process was up to the principal. Because the expectations in terms of documentation were minimal, two principals indicated that they were able to conduct observations and quickly provide next steps and monitor the implementation of those steps.

### **8.1.2 Little or no change**

In contrast, several of the principals indicated that there was not a great deal of change. Supervision practices have changed, at least somewhat. However, there are parts that have not changed, including the nature of framework or data gathering processes. Principal 3 explained:

“We always did walk-throughs. That's always been incorporated part in the whole observation. We used the 426- 428 form. It was just the observation part. We'd just check things off as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. It was very vague and so by doing the walk-throughs you added more it was more specific on each domain that was to be identified and we incorporated that into their final evaluations.”

Further, principal 4 shared that preparation and foresight, knowing that there were emergent understandings in the field of education led to consistent improvements in instruction over time. Therefore there was minimal influence. She shares that:

“We have had strong coaching and shifts in instructional practices prior to that ...It wasn't like implementing the Danielson framework rocked everyone's world. This is what we have been taught and prepared for ... It was not as big as it could have been. The more open to the coaching, the less challenging the transition to the Danielson model was. The more resistive to the coaching we already had, the more challenging it was to move forward with the Danielson framework.”

The principals indicated that prior paperwork and processes were still related to the Charlotte Danielson domains. There were variations on the degree to which they were emphasized, however, information was packaged in that manner. Principal 11 was quite animated and indicated that, although there are some required reporting changes, he and his team were quite comfortable with the way things were and see no reason to change. Changes are superficial only, and he refuses to engage in a process that he finds redundant and a waste of time. He states:

“We are stuck with it. We use PAETep. We are small. We do pretty damn well. We want to try and take what they are already doing and find a way to attach it to the domains. We tie it into their SLO. We try to tie it in. We don’t have time to make all this stuff up ...But we are not making all sorts of new things up. And we have a superintendent that supports that, to be a little more on the casual end of things.”

The issue of time was concerning, and the ability to maintain a schedule. It was common that the events in the supervision process were scheduled, but were then cancelled because of major, or perceived major issues. The requirements of the steps were reported to be heavy, so heavy that in some cases, other administrative team members and a superintendent needed to assist.

Other principals supported this idea that the changes were minimal. Principal 8 noted:

“I came from my experience where we always had the 426’s and the 427’s. It was still Charlotte Danielson domains. We still had to have all those things and it was a real condensed version. More than it is right now. I mean truthfully because we use the Danielson model the kinds of things that we look for in our clinical supervision haven’t really changed. I mean the same were using the same four domains have the same expectations.”

### **8.1.3 Logistics**

One influence of Act 82 of 2012 that was common was the logistical approach. Several of the principals indicated the use of the PA-EETEP program. PA-EETEP (Pennsylvania Electronic Teacher Evaluation Portal) is a web-based software that facilitates the teacher evaluation process as structured by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The system is currently used by 325 school districts, and it will manage formal observations, differentiated supervision projects, walk-throughs, and anecdotal notes, among other data points, as well as scheduling, questionnaires, and collaborative self-assessments (<https://paetep.net>).

Several principals indicated logistics and defined expectations as a result of technology. The technology component, in collecting and packaging data and feedback did not exist prior. Principal 3 indicated that technology made the process easier:

“What maybe has changed a little bit is more in terms of the logistical piece. We have recently adopted the PA ETEP program to use for our supervision and it's really an easier model. We used to have multiple forms that we used related to the Danielson model ... it was just a very cumbersome process. It was the same supervision model in terms of what you're looking for. It was just how we implemented it.”

There is ease logistically and in application. The current practices require recording of walkthroughs and immediate feedback. This is possible with electronic devices and platforms. The process has become interactive and reflective. All principals report a back and forth process that focuses on teacher improvement. The processes merge formative and summative feedback.

Structure and procedure emerged as other characteristics of current practices. Principal 7 noted charismatically that made her a better principal:

“I think it has drastically changed the approach. In the necessity to get it all done, I have become more organized and scheduled. It is not one of those things that you leave to the end of the year and try and try and get through all of these observations. They are more meaningful. The conversations are better. *Just the nature of implementing the Danielson framework has helped me to be a better principal* (emphasis added). And it had helped me to have more valuable conversations with the teachers.”

Principal 6 extends the concept of meaningful supervision conversation within a schedule:

“I love being able to sit down and talk with staff. And it forces you to do that within the schedule. . . We're so schedule driven with everything that we do because we have to we have to know that we have to get the stuff done.

#### **8.1.4 Teacher behavior and principal role**

Principals 9, 10, and 2 indicated that the process has changed teacher behavior significantly. Many teachers were interested in achieving the highest ratings, including many who were weak performers; however, they did not know what was required. They then extended themselves to perform and acquire the documentation.

The principals in the sample report that the role has become more centered on instructional leadership. Principal one indicates that:

“teachers have even commented ... that your role has changed so much in the last couple years ...I spend a lot more time in classrooms talking about instruction ... I really find myself being in classes and talking about instruction a lot more and using that to guide my professional development.”

Several principals indicate that they believe Danielson didn't mean for the rubric to be an evaluation tool. The true meaning of using Danielson is to inform practice, to guide teacher instruction and how to improve. The evaluation of practice, often viewed as a side piece to what is happening with the larger experience. The process was reported to be centered on facilitating incremental change.

### **8.1.5 Conversations**

A common theme reported by the principals in the sample was the introduction of conversations. The Danielson framework was reported to be somewhat of a minor factor, or treated as common knowledge. Conversations with teachers, rather than to teachers was the greatest beneficial change.

Principal 8 shares how he has changed as a result of the conversations:

“The biggest change for me is having these ... deep conversations and *we both learn from each other* (emphasis added), and we're able to specifically pinpoint areas that we might want to address moving forward... For me, it opens up the dialogue and there's a reason for us to be meeting.”

Additionally, many of the principals report a change or emphasis on instructional leadership. There is a common rubric, and a common language, and the conversations are rich

with validation of effective practice. There are conversations on next steps to improvement, and it is reported to be rich with reflection and two-way discussion.

Principal 3 reports that it is more objective, and in a humorous way, discusses how conversation regarding instruction can be fun.

“The conversation part, and the other part is more, it is a step closer to being objective. Because we are really talking about what was observed, what practices were ongoing, and what was the intention... I don’t care what you were trying to do. What did you do? And that is a conversation I can have with a chuckle with some of my teachers now.”

In conclusion, the eleven principals interviewed indicated that changes have occurred recently. It is somewhat uncertain if those changes were specifically as a result of change to legislation, or there was a subtle change in approach or paradigm. Several principals indicated that the current procedure, although now situated under the heading of Act 82 expectations, were in place for some time. Others emphasize that it has brought forward organization, scheduled approaches, deep conversations and a meaningful effort. Ten of the principals indicate with enthusiasm that the clinical observation, conferences and reflections and feedback have led to professional improvement. One of the principals concurred, but indicated that the process was in place for her district for some time.

## **9.0 CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

As an experienced principal and practitioner in the field of supervision and evaluation of teachers, it became an early interest of mine to explore the nature of instructional supervision. I had many personal experiences as a teacher in the feedback I received, as well as serving as an assistant and lead administrator in several districts where I supervised others. In all of these cases, in my practice as well as the observed practice of my colleagues, there were dramatic differences. There were differences in procedure, protocol, values, what was allowed, and what was forbidden. It also becomes quite clear that all principals need to accomplish tasks and meet goals, and it requires the interaction and interplay of many stakeholders. These personal experiences led me to explore areas such as supervision, best or valued approaches, influences during the interactions, and current practices as related to state mandated plans.

The following sections will present conclusions from this exploration as it is related to practice, policy at the district level, and recommendations for future research.

### **9.1 CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO PRACTICE**

Several conclusions can be determined from the combination of the survey data and the interview data. In terms of policy and practice, Charlotte Danielson, an accomplished scholar and author on teaching, supervision and evaluation, concludes four considerations for effective

supervision practices and professional learning that parallel the thinking and organization of this exploration (Danielson, 2016). The data in this exploration can be organized around her four points.

First, professional learning and supervision requires active engagement, reflection, and professional conversation (Danielson, 2016). Often discussed in the interviews were the concept of walkthroughs as a popular supervision exercise and pathway for providing feedback. Many principals discussed how they allocated more time to different individuals based on seniority and past performance. However, it was unclear what principals were looking for in the walkthroughs, or how follow up feedback would occur specifically. Authors of walk-through framework and theory, Werlinich and Graf (2002), Downey, et al. (2010), all suggest a specific framework with specific tasks and focus. Interview data suggest that walkthroughs are important, widely known term, and consistently practiced in a particular manner. In this exploration, it was unclear if walkthroughs were in fact practiced with fidelity, or were mentioned as a popular and idealistic concept. To address the time spent and improper use, it is then suggested that training be implemented for principals to establish look-fors and technique.

Second, Danielson (2016) suggests that learning must take place in an atmosphere of trust that encourages risk-taking. There was a very heavy emphasis on understanding and emphasizing culture of a school building. Nearly every principal in the sample discussed the initial importance of understanding the culture of the school and the past history that may have existed. They emphasized creating a culture of collaboration and teamwork, often visible through many teams and efforts to acquire “buy-in” and secure feedback.

Next, a culture of professional inquiry requires challenge as well as support. In the study, principal 4 stated a common theme among all principals that illustrated an atmosphere of trust, challenge, and support:

“I have told teachers repeatedly. I am not worried that if I come in and your lesson is a complete disaster. I am only worried if you don’t know it is. Because, we can always work from what you recognize didn’t go well, but we can’t work from “I thought that was great,” and I [recognize] a lot of concern here. “

Next, as Danielson (2016) discusses, teachers overwhelmingly report that they learn most from colleagues, working together to solve problems of practice. This concept was revealed in the interviews as well. There was a heavy emphasis on collaboration and teams in the sample. Many examples of principal cabinets, professional learning communities, and committees with various functions were outlined. Further, principals responded in a similar manner in terms of “growing teachers” and “getting things done”. Although in this exploration it is unclear of the real function of the teams, at least the opportunity is there to collaborate. Peer observation was suggested and encouraged by several principals, however, there was no stated practice on how it would be arranged or implemented.

Finally, a significant finding is that there are recognizable modern micropolitical supervision paradigm in place. There continues to be confusion between the concepts of supervision and evaluation, and this has been historically a conceptual and practical issue (Nolan & Hoover, 2012). In this exploration there were mixed abilities to distinguish between the two concepts. The principals spoke clearly on the criteria of the required Pennsylvania Department of Education and district level supervision and evaluation tools, including Student Learning Outcomes, Danielson rubrics, and differentiated supervision criteria. More importantly, they spoke of conducting walkthroughs, providing feedback, professional learning communities, using data to guide supervision practices, and collaborative team and committee building as

major components to daily business. The responses were interwoven, and clearly and practically, the firm position is that teacher development is managed through the evaluation process.

Through the exploration, there were several conceptual approaches that reinforce the idea that teacher growth is developed through evaluation. Clinical supervision is the dominant evaluation and growth tool. It is practiced with attention to the formal models outlined by Cogan (1973), Goldhammer (1980), and Garmin (1986). It is interesting that after several decades, the models continue to be practiced. A major point of emphasis was the nature of deep, rich, academic conversations that evolve from the clinical process. All principals state that this feature was previously absent. Although the clinical model is widely practiced, there was little reference to a differentiated model (Glatthorn, 1984), action research or any other hybrid of multiple models.

There was reference to developmental supervision (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004) where age and tenure drove the amount of time spent with each professional. However, all teachers were treated the same in terms of expectations, evaluation and supervision.

The old concept of inspectorial supervision still exists. In the history of supervision, there have been many conceptual approaches practiced, including inspection and oversight, and judgement. At times it has been called “snoopervision”, and a “bureaucratic act of fault finding.” Walkthroughs are widely practiced, but yet there is not agreed upon procedure. The modern checklist of inspection is the Charlotte Danielson rubric. Most principals stated that they visit the classrooms of inexperienced teachers more frequently to check on areas of competence related to criteria of the rubric, or provide suggestions on areas they can “tweak”, or areas that directly relate to their values, such as making sure children are “not stagnant.”

Next, dedicated, engaged time and feedback is also part of the modern practice. The clinical model involves several formal steps and significant discussion. Typically, though, observations were performed one or two times a year, with a monthly walkthrough, often recorded in a digital notebook. The overall time observing a classroom is less than 2% of the total teaching time for a school year. This represents the primary professional development approach. The inability to directly partner with teachers reinforces the notion of an evaluative process, rather than supervisory process.

Finally, all principals indicated that they use a digital platform, of which two models appear to be popular. These platforms are the driving forces behind the processes. In an effort to complete the necessary tasks and prompts within the system, supervision and evaluation tasks are interwoven. It is suggested that the programs are easy to use and effective in packaging data, observations and reflections.

A parallel area of exploration in this study was micropolitics. It was revealed that more investment in the recognition of micropolitics within their buildings, and how it may relate to the supervision process is needed. Most of the participants were unable to indicate the nature of micropolitics within their buildings, and often deferred to “the union” or “the board” as the political power players. Where those individuals may indeed be a source of concern, the principals seem to be reluctant to indicate the nature of the “street level bureaucracy” (Iannoconne, 1992). The fact that there is a hierarchy in the system, an authority and subordinates, indicates that there most definitely are politics at work, and although they may not be able to recognize the political behavior, the social values, such as a leadership team or student achievement and teacher growth, are reflected in their practices and policy. Political strategies such as giving praise are common, and collaboration, team building and professional

conversations are quite common. Cooperation, rather than conflict was a prominent feature, and quite reflective of the reported micropolitical environment.

Another important area that the principals did not recognize is that there is a great deal of power allocated to a certain few to achieve “buy-in”, which is repeatedly stated as important. A few considerations still remain, including who the principal attempts to achieve buy-in from, the legitimacy of their power, and whether or not all voices within a school are heard and included. Micropolitics seeks to empower few and disempower others in order to achieve perceived positive outcomes. This is very illustrative of micropolitics. In an effort to be collaborative, which is either their true nature or the way they wish to be viewed, the principals are most definitely asserting power-over and power-through efforts without realizing it. In terms of micropolitics as an authority, it is concluded that it is important to be cognizant of who has, who wants, and who uses power and how that may affect outcomes and representation of all stakeholders in the school.

Several principals made comments that securing “buy-in” would result in them being “golden”. This is inferred to mean safe, successful, free of conflict, and orderly. It is recommended to further study what occurs when that buy-in does not occur.

Teams serve as a primary source of professional development. Certainly this is a productive way to learn from other professionals. It was unclear if the activity was a method to grow individually, or accomplish management tasks, such as curriculum review. It appeared, in the case of most teams such as a principal’s cabinet, that a few are making decisions for many, and a great deal of power is given to those in leadership roles of the groups.

Charlotte Danielson further states that it is most important that site administrators be able to establish a culture that is conducive to professional learning to promote a learning

organization (Danielson, 2016). This is directly related to the nature of micropolitics and leadership style and approach in which this study is rooted, where the effort should be to perhaps be more open and more transformational (Blasé & Anderson, 1995).

## **9.2 CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO POLICY**

The exploration of instructional supervision practices and micropolitical influences has provided a current lens in which to consider policy at the school district level. As noted in application to practice, there needs to be a separation of the functions of evaluation and supervision. Differentiated models need to be practiced as most models are designed to improve a marginal teacher (Nolan & Hoover, 2012). The only two methods of teacher growth indicated were walkthroughs and clinical evaluation models, and to some degree, teams, professional learning communities, and cabinets. The written policy at the district level, as well as the use of technology merge the concepts of supervision and evaluation, drive the work and approach of the principals, and ultimately result in the process evolving into an evaluative effort.

The Danielson rubric is the required tool and the driving force behind nearly all supervision. The rubric establishes a common language and structure to the process, as well as a definition of what good teaching entails, it is an effort to quantify teaching and instruction. It appears to be understood that students showed the greatest growth in test scores in classrooms where teachers received the highest ratings on the Danielson Framework, and the reciprocal is also true (UEI, 2012). However, there is also little consensus within the educational community on what exactly good teaching looks like and how those scores are arrived at (Danielson, 2016). Educators' performance is frequently evaluated by scores, numbers and checklists. It is

recommended that principals have extensive training and skill in differentiating excellent teaching from simply good or poor. There is a necessity for the development of inter-rater reliability, and development of skill in coaching teachers and rerouting behaviors. Principals in this exploration note that the evaluation and supervision of teachers occurs during walkthroughs and the formal steps of clinical supervision. It is recommended that the feedback and focus on observational data have a more universal approach.

Throughout this exploration, principals largely spoke in general terms, noting, for example, that they look for “what is best for kids”, and they look “for a few things to tweak in the classroom”. They made mention of conducting frequent walkthroughs, operating in collaboration with grade level teams and engaging the clinical supervision model. It was not investigated in the exploration the way in which they go about interacting with teachers or the specific pedagogy and techniques used within teams to develop teachers and advance skills. Because there appeared to be a significant inability to discuss specifically the nature of effective instruction, an increased emphasis and preparation of principals and teachers on instructional pedagogy and recognizing effective instruction is recommended.

Next, PSSA and PVAAS (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System) scores are currently used to indicate student achievement and student growth in Pennsylvania. PVAAS provides a model and indicates how a student has grown, connecting what is believed to be good instruction to increased scores. It is recommended that, in the spirit of supervision as defined as growing and developing teachers, that there is also a quantifiable way to show teacher growth, and perhaps that of principals. For example, a teacher is rated as “proficient” in domain 3 one year, and the same the next. It is unclear if they are more or less proficient, if they have grown or remained the same.

Finally, the exploration of supervision through the micropolitical lens of Blasé & Anderson (1995) led to one significant inconsistency within the matrix, which can also lead to a policy consideration. All of the principals in the inventory were mapped on the positive x axis (open style) and positive y axis (transformative approach). This placed them as discussed in the Democratic and Empowering leadership quadrant. Indeed, the survey and interviews both support that the principals are open and transformative. At no time, however, did they discuss any considerations of the quadrant of the matrix. This quadrant is concerned with justice and equality, eradicating power differentials and hierarchy, reducing the context of professionalization, and quite the nature of micropolitics, empowering one at the cost of another. Teacher motivation, professional development, and tests scores are of no concern here. There is somewhat of an incongruence with the matrix and reality in that the matrix maps all of the respondents, except one, to the Democratic and Empowering quadrant, however, the interview data, and nature of the schools do not match. The focus on leadership, test scores and supervision are a few examples that do not fit.

The policy implication is quite powerful, however. Nowhere in the Danielson Framework, in any of the scoring rubrics or digital platforms, or discussions with individuals, was the topic of justice, equality, or empowerment. These topics are implied, but not focus areas. It was stated by Blasé & Anderson (1995) that examples of democratic leadership and micropolitics is rare and thought to be more of a theory and discussion. That is perhaps true as all of the tools, rubrics, and expectations do not address those areas of concern directly. It is recommended that an additional component to the supervision system be concerned with democratic and empowering values, authentic inclusion, and social justice. Further, it is

recommended that it be measured at the same level of emphasis as other areas of the focus are measured.

### **9.3 SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FUTURE RESERCH**

The findings in this exploration have uniquely captured the essence of instructional supervision through a micropolitical lens. However, as I reflect upon the study, there are a number of additional considerations and factors that could guide future inquiry.

- The survey instrument used resulted in difficulty in quantifying all behaviors. The gradients ranging from “never” (0), to “always” (4) were intended to provide opportunities for the respondents to reflect and have a response that most appropriately aligned with their behavior or approach. It was found while conducting the analysis, particularly the data mapping, that it was difficult to quantify behaviors. It requires assigning a value to those behaviors and the aligned strength, depth, or perceived context of a question. Certain statements or prompts may well align within a category, such as “adversarial”, however, the degree to which respondents feel strongly or more apathetic about the statements is very much in the question design. It is recommended to continue this study with an adjusted survey that places the questions and prompts in a context, as well as a strength rating to maintain balance.
- The sample size was adequate, however, could be approached differently. It may be productive to find ways to extend the survey distribution list to more participants beyond the four local intermediate units.

- Additional findings may be discovered by connecting demographic data to the survey and follow up interviews. For example, cross-tabulating a qualifier such as gender, building size, or school performance may lead to different findings. This project was intended to be anonymous to protect the participants. However, in losing the context in which they work minimizes the connection to the why and how, perhaps verify statements or other valuable insights that may come from developing the participants more fully.
- This study was designed as an exploration with elementary principals. It is suggested that further study should consider secondary principals. Life and structure of elementary schools and secondary schools are dramatically different. It would be purposeful to examine the supervision processes and micropolitical approaches of a different environment.
- This study was designed as an exploration rather than a case study. The researcher intended to explore rather than arrive at conclusions. It is recommended that exploring a single case, or a few cases more fully could glean deeper realities of the micropolitical landscape.
- During the analysis, I noticed in the voice of the principals that they seemed compelled to indicate certain concepts and ideas, as if they believed they are commonly valued leadership practices, or they were perceived to be the correct answers based on their training. These same concepts are often left unverified. There is no way to know if these concepts are practiced as reported. It is suggested that teachers supervised, as well as the related principal be involved in the study to verify the statements and responses. There are several studies, predominantly performed by Blasé and Anderson that examine leadership style and approach, and micropolitics from a teachers' perspective. This

exploration presented only the behavior through the self-reflection of the principals. Teacher political orientation varies in relation to principal political orientation (Blasé 2002). It is sensible then to include both sides to seek confirmation of political orientation.

- The findings do present some insight into the nature of the individuals selected to the position of principal. This exploration found that the principals were quite similar in their thinking, approach, and style. In particular, they all were most interested in generating cooperation and avoiding conflict. I also found that in many ways, the practices of instructional supervision were quite similar. This finding calls to question the nature of, temperament, and approach of current and aspiring principals, and whether they are compliant or capable of leadership challenges. There is a valuable policy implication in hiring practices and development of principals, and whether they are willing and able to move flexibly among various styles and approaches to confront leadership challenges.
- It is difficult to discuss micropolitical underpinnings without acknowledging the presence of macropolitical influences. This study focused only on the “street level bureaucracy” where social values are translated into policy (Iannacone, 1991). There are, however, macropolitical laws, such as Act 82 or 2012, and local level or district level politics that have an impact. In many ways, larger law can have significant influence on interpersonal interactions at the building level. Some of the external forces that create pressure may include changes of top leadership and school boards, economic changes and funding, state level core standards, state mandated testing and performance profiles, teacher and principal evaluation systems, and expectations for college and career readiness. It is

important to note that these, among other factors, do exist and likely influence individual micropolitical interactions, however, the exploration of these ideas was beyond the scope of the study.

- Finally, the initial design of the study was not achieved. The intent of the survey was to reveal data and map respondents to quadrants. It secondarily was intended to find representation of varying micropolitical alignment. The survey resulted in all participants aligning in one quadrant. Where this did present a reality and a finding in itself, there were not sharply divergent approaches, values and ideas to report. It is recommended to further investigate and explore the ideas in this exploration by locating via survey those with divergent micropolitical leadership approaches.

#### **9.4 VIGNETTE**

In closing, the following vignette is a parallel to the opening vignettes, and representative of the characteristics of the sample. In this narrative, the reader will notice the open personal interactions, shared decision-making, and an interest in school and student improvement.

Micropolitics is about power and how people use it to influence others and to protect themselves. It is about conflict and how people compete with one another to get what they want. It is also about cooperation and how people build support among themselves to achieve their ends (Blasé, 1995). The research exploration here established that there is a distinct effort to exercise cooperation and collaboration to grow as an organization, to serve students well, and achieve goals.

#### **9.4.1 Vignette**

Dr. Jones has been the principal of Oak Hill School for 6 years. Overall, the school has been high performing, and has experienced little change in staff, curriculum or operations. It is the beginning of a school year, a Friday morning, and several early meetings are scheduled.

The first meeting is with Mrs. Rock, who is a senior member of the staff, and the ELA Department chairperson. A careful analysis of data has shown that written composition is an area of weakness across the building. As the principal, and as a former writing instructor, Dr. Jones has developed a curriculum map and plan for addressing the issue during every teachers' flex class. This is likely to meet with direct resistance, however, due to a relationship built on trust and sincerity, and the fact Mrs. Rock "has the ear of the staff", it is likely to be gradually accepted in a positive manner from the staff.

The second meeting is with Mr. Bell. He is a teacher who has struggled in the past, and is also part of the union leadership. At times, he has been difficult to work with, reminding that the union may have an issue with decisions or approaches. But, today is different. After a series of walk throughs, a review meeting to reflect on what was observed is scheduled. Mr. Bell and Dr. Jones initiate the meeting in a relaxed and jovial manner. Mr. Bell begins a reflection of his own practice, citing specific evidence of successes, and also identifies target areas to work on. He was reluctant to share, and his hesitation was noticed by Dr. Jones.

Dr. Jones reassures him, stating, "I am not concerned that something in your lesson didn't go well. I am only concerned if you didn't know it didn't go well."

The meeting concludes with a handshake and a plan to move forward, and a teacher improved and confident.

The morning is very busy, but it is not yet done. Although he is a few minutes late, the Leadership Cabinet and STEM teams are meetings concurrently in adjacent conference rooms. Both of these teams have agendas and teacher leaders that comfortably begin the meetings in his absence.

Although it has been a rapid-paced morning, Dr. Jones stands with pride in the hallway, recognizing that he has directly addressed several issues and facilitated two planning sessions, all involving a majority of the staff. Due to the nature of collaboration, all have been successful, and all efforts will lead to great educational experiences for students.

**APPENDIX A**

**INVENTORY**

**Default Question Block**

The purpose of this survey is to gather information regarding elementary principal leadership style. This survey is available through a computer or a mobile device. The follow up research project will connect leadership style to the micropolitics of instructional supervision as reported by elementary principals. Please answer as honestly as possible. It is not required to complete the survey in one setting, however, it is estimated that it may take 10 to 15 minutes.

You will incur minimal risk in participating. The primary risk involves securing confidentiality. All information on this survey, or during a possible follow-up interview will be kept secure by the researcher and viewed only by the research team.

As part of the study, I would like to conduct several follow-up interviews. To participate in the interview portion of the study, you will need to provide your contact information at the end of the survey. In doing so, your survey will no longer be anonymous. However, your participation will be kept confidential and all records / data will be stored in a locked file or on a password-protected computer accessible only to the research team. At the conclusion of the study, all identifiers will be destroyed.

There are no costs to you to participate in this study. You will not receive compensation for participating. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. Although there are no direct benefits for your participation, the intent is to promote reflection and greater understandings of current supervision practices. This study is being conducted by Charles Kreinbucher, who may be reached at 724-996-1988 with any questions.

- I have read the description of the study and I understand the conditions of my participation. By clicking here, I voluntarily agree to participate in the research.

How many years have you been a principal?

0-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

Greater than 20 years

What is your level of graduate work?

Masters degree

Masters plus graduate credit

Earned doctorate

What was the 2014 Pennsylvania Department of Education School Performance Profile score of the school you supervise?

Less than 60      60 to 70      70-80      80-90      Greater than 90

How would you best characterize your school?

Rural      Semi-rural      Urban      Suburban      Semi-urban

Which grade levels do you serve?

Pre-K  
K    ▲  
1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7    ▼  
8

What is the rate of poverty of your school as determined by free and reduced lunch rate?

0 to 15%      15% to 30%      30% to 45%      Greater than 45%

How many teachers do you supervise?

Less than 15      16 to 25      26 to 35      36 to 45      Greater than 45

How many students are in your school?

Less than 200      200 to 300      300 to 400      400 to 500      Greater than 500

How many students are in your district?

Less than 1000      1000 to 2500      2500-5000      Greater than 5000

As an elementary principal, one of the many duties are supervising teachers. Please

answer the follow questions from your perspective and your experience, with " How often do you . . ."

	Not at all	Once in a while	Often	Very frequently	Always	"I am not sure of the relationship in my leadership."
Delegate authority.	<input type="radio"/>					
View the principalship as neutral public service..	<input type="radio"/>					
Act in a way that is secretive or concealed.	<input type="radio"/>					
Focus on inspiring others.	<input type="radio"/>					
Address staff in a sincere and straight-forward manner.	<input type="radio"/>					
Focus on maintaining the status quo.	<input type="radio"/>					
Manipulate resources or opportunities to change teacher behavior.	<input type="radio"/>					
Behave in a proactive manner.	<input type="radio"/>					
Make yourself visible and accessible to the staff and students.	<input type="radio"/>					
Use bargaining power to motivate behavior.	<input type="radio"/>					
Act in a way that is unilateral.	<input type="radio"/>					
Encourage others to think of old problems in new ways.	<input type="radio"/>					
Act in a way that is relaxed and less concerned with the rules.	<input type="radio"/>					
Emphasize language of contracts and conditions of work.	<input type="radio"/>					
Promote image of full staff participation.	<input type="radio"/>					
Challenge an unacceptable status quo.	<input type="radio"/>					
Emphasize rigorous standards.	<input type="radio"/>					
Engage in reward strategies for strong work.	<input type="radio"/>					
Engage in public performance to persuade.	<input type="radio"/>					
Promote leadership within the group.	<input type="radio"/>					
Offer praise and recognition.	<input type="radio"/>					
Monitor teachers for compliance and deviations.	<input type="radio"/>					
Use formal discourse.	<input type="radio"/>					
Value establishing a vision beyond the short term.	<input type="radio"/>					
Engage in collaborative problem-solving.	<input type="radio"/>					

Focus on clarifying expectations.	<input type="radio"/>					
Facilitate dependency on the position of the principal.	<input type="radio"/>					
Display conviction and take a stand.	<input type="radio"/>					
Work to minimize the status of the principal to promote collaboration.	<input type="radio"/>					
Implement a "quid pro quo" - something for something approach to interactions.	<input type="radio"/>					
Value fairness and equity.	<input type="radio"/>					
Listen to follower concerns.	<input type="radio"/>					
Feel obligated to explain decision-making rationale.	<input type="radio"/>					
Intervene only when standards not met.	<input type="radio"/>					
Find it necessary to control teachers for results.	<input type="radio"/>					
Focus on intellectually stimulating teachers.	<input type="radio"/>					
Seek to understand the needs of teachers.	<input type="radio"/>					
Behave in a generally passive manner.	<input type="radio"/>					
Value bureaucratic structure.	<input type="radio"/>					
Provide individual attention or coach teachers.	<input type="radio"/>					

I appreciate your participation in this research study. To more fully understand the nature of the micropolitics of instructional supervision, I am interested in conducting a follow up interview. Please indicate your willingness to participate.

- Yes, I would be willing to participate.
- No, thanks.
- Possibly, but I need to know more.

The intended interview is designed as a follow up to the responses in this survey. It is my hope to discuss supervision style, the micropolitical nature of the supervision process, and changes to supervision that have occurred as a result of Act 82 of 2012. Please indicate your name, email and phone contact so that I may reach you. Please understand that by revealing your information, the survey content is not confidential, however, all responses, survey and interview data, are held in strict confidence with the researcher only.

Figure 6: Qualtrics Survey

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

1. Describe the process of improving and developing teachers?
2. The art of supervising teachers is wide-ranging. Classrooms and schools are dynamic and involved. How do you determine where to focus your attention?
3. What do you value most about teacher growth?
4. Who would you consider to be the political power players? How do they gain or use that power?
5. Often leaders have distinct core values – the internal compass or driving force that guides future efforts. What are your core values surrounding teaching and teacher growth?
6. When we talk about micropolitics, we are focusing on power, who gets what, values and goals, coalitions, and strategies to protect or influence others. Who would you consider to be the local political power players?
  - How may they try to influence you or others?
  - What may they be trying to protect?
7. What pressures do you feel during the process of growing and supporting teachers?
  - What strategies do you use to navigate the political landscape in relation to your approach to supervision?

8. Describe the nature of your relationships, or how you interact..
9. How do you “get things done” , especially working within the micropolitical landscape?

What strategies do you use to avoid or manage conflict?

- Describe how you may:
- Reward or sanction teachers
- Use formal authority
- Communicate expectations
- Suppress or allow deviation

10. How are teachers used or involved in the decision-making within the school?

11. When engaging in the supervision process with teachers, there are times, possibly because of prior experiences and interactions, observations of some issues that are in contrast to core values are ignored or avoided. In what circumstances are you willing to “look the other way?”

- What issues are you unwilling to tolerate?
- How do you interact with an excellent teacher? In other words, do they earn privileges or a pass on certain expectations?
- How do you interact with a poor teacher?

12. Describe the top 2 key components to the practiced supervision in your district since onset of Act 82 of 2012.

- Have you noticed changes in teacher performance as a result?
- Can you share an advantage and disadvantage to the current framework?
- Do you feel that the current framework improves or diminishes the supervision experience, the ability to influence instruction?

13. Do you feel that the context or the situation of a school drives the style and approach of the principal, or, does the principal's disposition characterize the school?

## APPENDIX C

**Table 14: Research Question Matrix**

Research Question	Research Tool	Related Literature
Question 1: How do elementary principals describe their practices of instructional supervision in their schools?	Interview Questions: 2,3,10,12	Bacharach & Mundell, 1993 Blasé & Anderson, 1995 Blasé & Blasé, 2000 Blasé, 1991 Coburn, 2006 Danielson, 2007 Glatthorn, 1984 Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1985 Graf & Werlinich, (n.d.) Okeafor & Poole, 1992 Pajak, 2000 Rizzo, 2004 Tyack & Cuban, 1995 Winston & Pollock, 2012
Question 2: What micropolitical influences, especially ideologies, strategies, power relationships and motivations impact elementary principal supervision practices?	Interview Questions: 3,4,5,6,7,8	Bacharach & Mundell, 1993 Blasé & Anderson, 1995 Blasé, 1998 Blasé, 2005 Coburn, 2006 Hoyle, 1999 Iannacone, 1991 Lindle, 1999 Marshall & Scribner, 1999 Okeafor & Poole, 1992

Table #14 (continued)

Question 3: How do elementary principals describe their micropolitical leadership approach?	Inventory Items Transformational: 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40	Bass, 1985 Blasé & Anderson, 1995 Burns, 1978 Judge & Piccolo, 2004
	Inventory Items Transactional: 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26, 30, 34, 38,	Bass, 1985 Blasé & Anderson, 1995 Burns, 1978 Judge & Piccolo, 2004
	Inventory Items Closed: 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31, 35, 39	Blasé & Anderson, 1995
	Inventory Items Open: 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, 33, 37	Blasé & Anderson, 1995
	Interview Questions: 7,8,9,10,11,12	Ball, 1987 Bjork & Blasé, 2009 Blasé & Anderson, 1995 Blasé, 1999 Hoyle, 1986 Hoyle, 1999 Iannacone, 1991 Okeafor & Poole, 1992
Question 4: How do elementary principals describe the influence of Act 82 of 2012 on their supervision practices?	Interview Questions: 13,14	Act 82 of 2012. Pub. L. 684, No. 82, 2012 Healey, 2015 Murray, 2014 Scherrer, 2015

## APPENDIX D

**Table 15: Inventory Matrix**

Question	Domain	Inventory Item
1	Open	Delegates authority, and ask for action.
2	Transactional	View principalship as neutral public servant.
3	Closed	Acts in a way that is concealed or secretive.
4	Transformational	Focus on inspiring others.
5	Open	Addresses staff in a sincere straight-forward manner
6	Transactional	Focus on maintaining the status quo.
7	Closed	Manipulate resources or opportunities change teacher behavior.
8	Transformational	Behave in a proactive manner.
9	Open	Make yourself visible and accessible to the staff and students.
10	Transactional	Use bargaining power to motivate behavior.
11	Closed	Act in a way that is unilateral.
12	Transformational	Encourage others to think of old problems in new ways.
13	Open	Act in a way that is relaxed and less concerned with the rules.

Table #15 Continued

14	Transactional	Emphasize language of contracts and conditions of work.
15	Closed	Creates the image of full staff participation.
16	Transformational	Challenge unacceptable status quo.
17	Open	Rigorous and reasonable standards are emphasized.
18	Transactional	Engage in reward strategies for strong work.
19	Closed	Engage in public performance to persuade
20	Transformational	Promote leadership in the group.
21	Open	Offer praise and recognition
22	Transactional	Monitor teachers for compliance and deviations.
23	Closed	Use formals discourse and threats
24	Transformational	Value purpose extending beyond the short term.
25	Open	Engage in collaborative problem-solving
26	Transactional	Focus on clarifying expectations.
27	Closed	Facilitate dependency on position of principal.
28	Transformational	Display conviction and take a stand.
29	Open	Work to minimize the status of the principal to promote collaboration
30	Transactional	Implement a “quid pro quo” – something for something approach to interactions.
31	Closed	Value fairness and equity.
32	Transformational	Listen to follower concerns.
33	Open	Feel obligated to explain decision-making rationale.
34	Transactional	Intervene only when standards not met.
35	Closed	Find it necessary to control teachers for results.

Table #15 Continued

	Transformational	Focus on intellectually stimulating teachers.
37	Open	Seeks to understand the needs of teachers
38	Transactional	Behave in a generally passive manner.
39	Closed	Value bureaucratic structure and respect for hierarchy
40	Transformational	Provide individual attention or coach teachers.

## APPENDIX E

### WORKSHEET 2. ANALYST'S NOTES WHILE READING AND INTERPRETING INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION FOR THEMATIC ANALYSIS

**Table 16: Worksheet 2: Analyst's Notes (Stake, 2006)**

Synopsis of interview:	Findings: I.  II.  III.  IV.
Uniqueness of interview situation for theme analysis:	

Table #16 continued

Relevance of interview for cross-theme analysis: Theme 1 _____ Theme 2 _____ Theme 3 _____ Theme 4 _____ Theme 5 _____	Possible excerpts for cross - theme report:
Factors (optional):	
Commentary:	

**APPENDIX F**

**WORKSHEET 3. A MAP ON WHICH TO MAKE ASSERTIONS FOR THE FINAL  
REPORT (THEME-BASED ASSERTIONS FROM INTERVIEW FINDINGS RATED  
IMPORTANT)**

**Table 17 Worksheet 3: Map of Assertions (Stake, 2006)**

	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6	Theme 7	Theme 8
Interview 1								
Finding I								
Finding II								
Finding III								
Finding IV								
Interview 2								
Finding 1								
Finding II								
Finding III								
Interview 3								
Finding I								

**APPENDIX G**

**WORKSHEET 4. THEMATIC ASSERTIONS FOR THE FINAL REPORT**

**Table 18: Worksheet 4: Thematic Assertions (Stake, 2006)**

Assertion	Evidence in Interviews

## **APPENDIX H**

### **INVITATION AND CONSENT LETTER**

July 15, 2015

Dear Principal,

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Administrative and Policy Studies in the University of Pittsburgh, and I am requesting your assistance with my dissertation study. My research study is focused on supervision practices and the micropolitics of schools from the perspective of elementary principals. There has been extensive research and published writing on instructional supervision and organizational politics for many years. However, there has been little writing that connects these concepts. It is my hope to explore the driving forces behind current supervision practices.

I have attached a link to an inventory that seeks your perspective of leadership style and approach as related to your practice. The inventory should take about 15 minutes to complete, and it can be completed on a computer or mobile device. Based on the responses, each participant will be mapped to a matrix of leadership style. It is my intent to request follow up interviews from several respondents to capture the essence of the supervisory practices from different leadership approaches and styles. Although there are no direct benefits for your participation, your participation will hopefully lead to reflections and greater understanding about current supervision practices of elementary principals and inform future practice and approach.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the choice to skip questions, or exit the study at any time. There is no cost to participate, and there is no compensation for completing the inventory. The inventory is anonymous, and responses will not be connected to participants. As noted, survey data for those participants who choose to participate are no longer anonymous. The inventory data will be secured in the Qualtrics system

within the University of Pittsburgh. Individuals who choose to participate in a follow up interviews will not be mentioned by name or have descriptions that will identify them or their school district. Transcripts and notes will remain confidential and secured, resulting minimal risk to you in this study. Upon request, a copy of the findings can be provided. Please feel free to contact me at 724-996-1988 with any questions or concerns regarding the inventory. I thank you for your participation, and wish you well as you prepare for the school year.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Kreinbucher  
Principal, West Hills Intermediate  
Armstrong School District

## APPENDIX I

### IRB EXEMPT APPROVAL LETTER



## University of Pittsburgh *Institutional Review Board*

3500 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
(412) 383-1480  
(412) 383-1508 (fax)  
<http://www.irb.pitt.edu>

### Memorandum

To: Charles Kreinbucher

From: IRB Office

Date: 8/7/2015

IRB#: PRO15070348

Subject: An Exploration of the Micropolitics of Instructional Supervision

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The above-referenced project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board. Based on the information provided, this project meets all the necessary criteria for an exemption, and is hereby designated as "exempt" under section

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)

Please note the following information:

- Investigators should consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might alter the exempt status. Use the "**Send Comments to IRB Staff**" link displayed on study workspace to request a review to ensure it continues to meet the exempt category.
- It is important to close your study when finished by using the "**Study Completed**" link displayed on the study workspace.
- Exempt studies will be archived after 3 years unless you choose to extend the study. If your study is archived, you can continue conducting research activities as the IRB has made the determination that your project met one of the required exempt categories. The only caveat is that no changes can be made to the application. If a change is needed, you will need to submit a NEW Exempt application.

**Please be advised that your research study may be audited periodically by the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office.**

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