



Gebczynski, M., & Kutsyuruba, B. (2022). Veteran teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership influence on school culture. *International Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 22(1), 265-304. <https://doi.org/10.29173/ijll13>

## **Veteran Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Leadership Influence on School Culture**

*Maciej Gebczynski & Benjamin Kutsyuruba*

### **Abstract**

School leadership and organizational culture both play an influential role in student success and academic achievement. Because school cultures consist of levels that are explicit (easily observable manifestations) and implicit (taken-for-granted, underlying assumptions), veteran teachers usually have deeper understandings of school cultures. This paper describes a qualitative study that examined veteran teachers' perceptions of school principals' leadership influence on school culture within the secondary school setting in Ontario. Upon reviewing the relevant literature and methodological underpinnings, we detail key themes from the study: a) effective leadership's impact on school culture, which aligned with authentic and transformational leadership models; b) ineffective leadership's impact on school culture, consistent with models of irresponsible leadership; and c) external factors mitigating the influence of school leadership on school culture. The paper concludes with implications for practice and further research.

*Keywords:* school culture, leadership impact, veteran teacher, positive leadership, principalship

### **Introduction**

School leadership and organizational culture both play an influential role in student success and academic achievement (Heck & Hallinger, 1999; Kythreotis et al., 2010; Sun & Leithwood, 2012). Indeed, while teaching is the foremost impact factor in student achievement, pivotal influences are also attributed to the role of school culture (directly) and the leadership impact of the principal's practice (indirectly) (Quin et al., 2015). For decades, the focus of educational research and reform has been on exerting an external influence on schools through curriculum and policy, neglectful of the potential and impact that school culture can have on students from within (Deal & Peterson, 2016). School cultures are sustaining patterns built over time through rituals, traditions, and accomplishments that enforce the actions, feelings, and thought patterns of members. A culture includes the environment, the administrative organization, and the experiences

of those within the schools (Glover & Coleman, 2005), and therefore is the foundation of the organization and has the potential to create sustaining improvements (Picard & Kutsyuruba, 2017).

Similarly, the nature of leadership shapes the culture of a school, touching the lives of not only students and teachers within their school, but of all stakeholders (Kythreotis et al., 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Lindahl, 2011; Quin et al., 2015). Various leadership styles of school administrators have been found to exert varying effects on the cultures within their schools (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Depending on the leader's actions, a school community can forge strong and lasting bonds and stand united to face any challenges that come its way, or fracture and leave its members exposed and unprepared for the wider world. When leaders strive to build up their school culture, they demonstrate that they truly care for the well-being of their followers, and students' confidence, achievement, and potential flourish (Nettles & Herrington, 2007; Cherkowski et al., 2020). Leaders who model, encourage, and foster positive human capacities in organizations, especially in challenging times, build organizational cultures in which others tend to further model and foster positive qualities (Quinn, 2015; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013).

Because school cultures consist of explicit and implicit levels, those who have spent a longer time in an organization usually have deeper understandings of school cultures. Veteran teachers—defined as teachers whose careers have spanned over 20 years—often have the most teaching experience and practical knowledge within a school (Carrillo & Flores, 2018; Day & Gu, 2009; Hargreaves, 2005). As keen observers and analysts of organizational cultures, seasoned teachers are also considered agents, heroes, and heroines who help carry, maintain, and sustain shared cultural values and norms. Many studies have demonstrated how the socialization of students is greatly influenced by the impact their teachers have on them as role models and

authority figures (Lumpkin, 2008; Shein & Chiou, 2011). As a result of their long careers, veteran teachers are also established members of the school community. They have undergone the most changes in leadership and experienced the impact of various leadership policies and practices. This experience results in well-rounded perspectives on principals' practices and behaviours, and long-term analyses of the effects of such actions on school culture (Day & Gu, 2009). Overall, veteran teachers have been 'at the heart' of education for a considerable amount of time and can yield significant insight with respect to the explicit and implicit impact of leadership on school culture.

Our qualitative research study examined how veteran teachers experienced and perceived their school principals' leadership influence on school culture within the secondary school setting in Ontario. In this paper, we describe veteran teachers' (N=8) perceptions regarding the impact of their principals' explicit and implicit leadership practices, behaviours, policies, styles, and strategies on school culture. Upon reviewing the extant literature with respect to veteran teachers, school culture, and principal leadership, we describe our research methodology and share the qualitative analysis of the two rounds of open-ended, individual interviews conducted with retired teachers. We conclude by discussing research results and implications for practice and further research in this area within the field of education.

### **Review of the Literature**

The three foci areas for the literature review—teachers, leaders, and school culture—are interconnected in their role in shaping and developing students within the educational system. In this section, we review relevant literature with respect to the experiences of veteran teachers, the value and influence of principal leadership with an emphasis on authentic and transformational leadership models, and the nature and levels of organizational culture in schools.

## **Veteran Teachers**

There is little consensus on a definition of veteran teachers within the literature. Although there is an agreement that a veteran teacher is one who has been teaching in the school for a long period of time, there are no clearly established criteria in the length of service for a teacher to qualify as a ‘veteran’, perhaps as a result of the use of similar terms such as experienced or long-service in an indistinctive way (Carrillo & Flores, 2018). Many scholars use the term colloquially, referring broadly to experienced teachers who have practiced long enough to not be considered ‘new’ or ‘novice’ teachers (Nichols & Zhang, 2011; Veldman et al., 2013). Others set a minimum to the years served in the profession, with that number ranging anywhere from five (Rumschlag, 2017), to over twenty years (Hughes, 2012). For the purposes of our study, the term “veteran teacher” is defined as a teacher with a minimum 20 years of teaching experience, who has not held a leadership position such as principal or vice-principal, and has retired from the profession (Carrillo & Flores, 2018; Meister & Ahrens, 2011; Orlando, 2014).

Differing views also exist on the benefits of learning from the experiences of veteran teachers in the literature. Many studies highlighted veteran teachers’ level of expertise in having spent many years developing their understandings of subject matter, pedagogical and didactic knowledge (Beijaard et al., 1999; Eilam, 2009), as well as their ability to reflect on their experience and deal with the complexity of teaching (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2009). Some scholars suggested that veteran teachers possess more confidence in their classroom management skills, and are more effective at meeting curricular goals, thereby freeing up more time for them to focus on matters outside of their own classroom, such as social and personal relationships (Rich & Almozlino, 1999; Thorburn, 2011). Studies demonstrated that in the late phases of teaching, a significant number of teachers continue to show a high level of motivation and commitment

towards the work they do despite the hurdles associated with excessive paperwork and heavy workload (Day & Gu, 2009; Day et al., 2006).

In this regard, veteran teachers are different from early career teachers who, despite the high levels of initial motivation, enthusiasm, and dedication, are still more concerned with classroom management and continued employment (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014; Rich & Almozlino, 1999) and are less attuned to the complex workings of the school culture operating outside their classroom walls (Cherubini, 2009; Fultz & Gimbert, 2009). Veteran teachers play a larger role as the socializing force within a school, and having experienced this phenomenon from both sides, they are more capable of describing the influence and composition of the school culture itself more accurately (Holland, 2009). Yet, on the other hand, research on veteran teachers has shown that with time they can become disengaged (Huberman, 1993), dissatisfied (Van Houtte, 2006), and less committed and enthusiastic (Goodson et al., 2006).

Another area in which veteran teachers' experiences tend to differ from novice teachers is in their experience and interactions with school leadership. The relationship between principals and teachers changes as a teacher's tenure extends, with communication between the groups declining as teachers mature (Gimble, 2011). However, despite the decline in communication, veteran teachers have undergone more leadership changes and experienced the impact of various leadership policies and practices throughout their careers, leading to more well-rounded perspectives on principals' routines and behaviours, and the effects of such actions on school culture (Day & Gu, 2009). Often, veteran teachers have the most wisdom and teaching expertise within a school (Carrillo & Flores, 2018; Day & Gu, 2009; Hargreaves, 2005). They have faced and overcome adversity in their careers and learned many things from their years of experience (Day & Gu, 2009). Overall, veteran teachers have had the time to appreciate many aspects of

teaching beyond simply their classroom, they have worked with a number of different leaders, and having been ‘in the trenches’ of education the longest, have the most to offer with respect to the impact of leadership on school culture.

### **Principal Leadership**

Extensive research confirmed that principal leadership is “second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 5). However, this finding is qualified because leadership effects on student learning are mediated by other school conditions and pathways (Li et al., 2016). Hallinger and Heck (1996) described three main pathways that mediate the effects of leadership on learning: the school culture, the academic structures and processes, and the people. In addition, various styles and models used by principals affect the effectiveness of their leadership on student achievement (Sebastian et al., 2019). A widely recognized definition views “leadership [as] a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2022, p. 6). It is this influence dimension of leadership that is key for the examination of principals’ capacity to influence school culture and affect student achievement.

Two leadership styles were considered most relevant to principals’ influence on culture: authentic leadership and transformational leadership. These styles were chosen due to their inherent relationship to each other and school culture (Gardner et al., 2011; Karadag & Öztekin, 2018; Ngang, 2011). Authentic leadership promotes positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency working with followers (Walumbwa et al., 2008). In general, authentic leadership focuses on intrapersonal (leader’s personality), interpersonal (leader-follower relationships), and developmental (nurturing capacity in leaders) aspects (Northouse,

2022). Authentic leadership implies a genuine kind of leadership—a hopeful, open-ended, visionary, and creative response to social circumstances—that is ethically sound, value sensitive, and consciously reflective (Begley, 2006). Authentic principals model proper behaviours since their actions are constantly relaying implicit messages to the school community (Karadag & Oztekin, 2018; Stolp, 1994). A principal who shows care and concern in all interactions is more likely to nurture a culture of collaboration and inclusiveness than a principal who is frequently unavailable or callous (Stolp, 1994). When school leaders model behaviours that are sincere and reflect their deeply held values, they in turn positively impact the mindset of their staff, leading to higher teacher retention rates and more inclusive and cohesive school cultures (Bird et al., 2012; Feng, 2016). Authentic school leaders who work together with their staff and encourage teacher collaboration have been shown to also positively impact both teacher motivation and student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which leaders encourage, inspire, and motivate followers towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives through empowerment and motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Components of transformational leadership include four attributes: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Transformational leadership focuses on the use of collaboration to change school culture, thereby inspiring greater productivity and satisfaction from both principals and teachers (Dumay & Galand, 2012; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). This form of leadership requires a principal to have an intimate knowledge and understanding of the various areas of need within their school as they aim to satisfy the needs of their staff and instill a sense of pride and value in their work (Northouse, 2022). Yang (2014) argued that principals' transformational leadership is the key to prompt school development through forming ideas, building a shared vision, power-

sharing, gaining credence, and experiencing success. According to Hauserman and Stick (2013), teachers who worked with highly transformational principals praised the positive organizational culture at their school. Griffiths (2004) found that principal transformational leadership showed indirect effects, through staff job satisfaction, on both school staff turnover (negative) and school performance (positive). The use of transformational leadership in principalship can transform the culture of a school and correlate positively to student learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, 2000, 2006; Stewart, 2006). As Atasoy (2020) concluded, transformational leadership executed by principals exerts a positive effect on teachers and contributes to positive school culture and the strengthening of organizational change processes within educational institutions.

### **School Culture**

Culture is understood to be composed of explicit and implicit shared norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions that shape how people think, feel, and act in schools (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Stolp & Smith, 1995). Schein (1985) provided one of the most widely accepted definitions of organizational culture, explaining it as:

a pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with problems ... that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 9)

Schein (2017) argued that an organizational culture can manifest itself and be analyzed at three distinct levels: artifacts—the visible and feelable structures and processes of an organization; espoused beliefs—the strategies, goals, and philosophies of an organization and; taken-for-granted basic underlying assumptions—the tacit beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of members of the organization. Deal and Peterson (2016) described school culture as “complex webs of



traditions and rituals that have been built up over time as teachers, students, parents, and administrators work together and deal with crises and accomplishments” (p. 4). School culture is a phenomenon that permeates all aspects of the school experience; it is ingrained in every aspect of schooling—from mission statements, mottos, the existence and nature of school field trips, assemblies, inter- and intra-scholastic competitions, clubs, and teams, to homework, discipline and safety policies (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Lukasik & Pikula, 2015; Wren, 1999). The messages and values learned through these experiences become norms that are internalized by students, leading to their socialization as members of the school society (Lynch et al., 2013). Deal and Peterson (2016) contended that the functions and impact of school culture are far-reaching; thus, leaders must be aware and appreciative of how it impacts student success and personal growth. Moreover, according to Fink and Resnick (2001), school principals are responsible for establishing a pervasive culture of teaching and learning in their school. As a result, positive school culture can play an essential role in supporting organizational change, enhancing organizational effectiveness, facilitating change for school principals, and reducing negative attitudes towards change (Atasoy, 2020).

### **Research Methodology**

This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach to examine veteran teachers’ perspectives of their principals’ influence on school culture due to its methodological focus on participants’ lived experiences with a particular phenomenon. More specifically, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was chosen, as this study focuses both on participants’ descriptions of their lived experiences of the phenomenon, and our interpretations as researchers of the meaning of these experiences, based on our theoretical and personal knowledge (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Laverly, 2003; Van Manen, 1990).

The participants who were recruited for this study had to meet the following inclusion criteria: a minimum of 20 years of teaching experience in the Ontario secondary school setting, never having held an administrative (vice-principal or principal) position, having undergone several leadership changes throughout their careers, and having retired from the teaching profession. The participants were recruited via snowball sampling beginning with a convenience sample of two teachers from the primary investigator's network of contacts. Eight participants were selected for the final sample (see Table 1). All of them had worked in either the separate or public school boards within Southwestern Ontario. Efforts were made to include a diverse group of participants with experience teaching a broad range of subjects within the constraints of the sampling methods and the local area demographics.

Data were obtained through two rounds of one-on-one interviews that took place in mutually convenient locations. The questions within the first interview were relatively broad in their scope to allow the participants to freely develop their accounts of their experiences (Creswell, 2013). The two main topics addressed in the interview were: 1) participants' descriptions of their experiences with principals' influences on school culture, and 2) the contexts which may have influenced these experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Questions were standardized to ensure that the same general themes were being explored with each participant, to use interview time efficiently, and to facilitate analysis of the responses (Patton, 2002). Upon completion of the first round of eight interviews, all responses were transcribed then analyzed via exploratory thematic analysis. Through this analysis process, several categories and themes were identified in the shared experiences of the participants (Guest et al., 2011). To continue the in-depth exploration of the influence of leadership on school culture and to clarify any uncertainties in the responses from the first round of interviews, the second round of interviews was conducted. Data were subjected to

two cycles of manual coding using Microsoft Office software and analyzed to determine themes. Fourteen overarching categories emerged based on identified links or relationships. These categories were then further consolidated to establish three main themes discussed in the next section.

## **Findings**

Three main themes emerged from the analysis of the data: a) effective leadership's impact on school culture; b) ineffective leadership's impact on school culture; and c) external factors mitigating the influence of school leadership on school culture. Interestingly, very few participants discussed principals who were neither completely effective nor ineffective leaders, displaying how positive and negative practices leave a more lasting impression than neutrality.

### **Effective Leadership's Impact on School Culture**

In their responses, veteran teachers highlighted their observations regarding the impact of effective school leadership on culture through passion and positive motivation; a supportive and servant mindset; positive leadership strategies, behaviours, and attributes; and a relationship-building orientation.

**Table 1**  
*Research Participants*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Teaching Experience (years)</b>	<b>Schools Worked In</b>	<b>Teaching Areas</b>	<b>Extracurricular Involvement</b>
Adam	Male	24.5	4	Construction and design	Coaching hockey
Carly	Female	28	3	Business, Computer Technology, Special Education	Assisting with school band and musicals
Emma	Female	20	Multiple	French Immersion	
Gabriel	Male	30	3	Chemistry and Physics	Coaching soccer, volleyball, and curling
Ned Law	Male	26	4	Music, Business, Religion	Assisting with school plays and musicals, coaching badminton, and curling
Kayden	Male	31	4	Science, Physical Education, Special Education	Coaching track and field
Michael	Male	31	1	Science, Math, Co-Op	Coaching track and field
Oliver	Male	35	6	Music, English	Assisting with the school choir, band, and theatre productions

First, veteran teachers noted that the reasons for pursuing principalship, and actions and behaviours in the position of authority, could either help or hinder a principal's perceived effectiveness. Several participants described 'good principals' as teachers who had served in the system long enough to become masters of the profession and moved on to principalship as the last stage in their careers because they believed they had acquired the knowledge and experience to contribute positively to their school community. These veteran-teachers-turned-principals were not ascending to the leadership position for personal gain, but rather wanted to use the role of principalship to increase their scope of influence and help more people than they could have simply as teachers. "Those were the best principals," mused Oliver, "the ones who never wanted to be principals but just stepped up to help". This selfless motivation was reflected in how principals conducted themselves when implementing new practices or celebrating school achievements. "It would be best if the principal stepped back from it; they should be the facilitator, not the Hollywood star" (Emma). Veteran teachers considered effective principals to be passionate about and devoted to the well-being and success of their entire school community and to demonstrate this through the shaping of a supportive and collaborative school culture.

A principal's perceived mindset while in the leadership position, as well as their approach to being a leader, played an important role in whether veteran teachers found them to be effective leaders. Many of the participants looked back favorably upon principals who had an "I am here to serve" orientation and would cater to the needs of the school, and support teachers in ensuring they provide students with the best educational experience possible. When the staff felt that their principal was there to help them and facilitate their jobs rather than micromanage or direct them, they felt more at ease and were more likely to devote more time and effort into their teaching. "You need to be given the freedom to explore, to try new things, time and resources and support

need to be there” (Gabriel). Several of the participants stated that when they knew they had the full support of their principal, they were more willing to take risks by trying new educational approaches and to think outside the box on how to best present their material.

In addition to being perceived to be selflessly motivated and employing a supportive approach to their role as a leader, effective principals employed the right strategies to be effectual in the eyes of their teacher colleagues. All participants spoke highly of principals who: had a vision for their school’s future and established policies and set clear expectations to achieve that vision; were present and visible both in the halls and in the classrooms; and strove to put their schools’ needs first. For Emma, “having a vision for the school and a plan as to how to achieve that vision” set an effective principal apart. Visibility was a leadership strategy that was repeatedly mentioned by all participants as critical to a principal who inspired positive change. Simply stated, “principals who were in the school a lot, were positive for the school” (Oliver). For veteran teachers, crucial to being an effective principal was putting their school and community first. This often meant advocating for necessary resources and supplies from the school board and not allowing the school board to dictate how their school was run: “teachers advocate the principals for the kids, principals advocate the board for the school, that’s the way it’s supposed to work” (Oliver).

Several key leadership behaviours were noted by veteran teachers that affected positive change in their schools: personally modeling how they expect staff and students to act, providing support whenever needed, correcting any mistakes through constructive and private criticism, and working together with a team towards a shared goal. When asked about the importance of positive behaviours in a principal, Adam thought a principal “should be a figurehead that everybody looks at and says: that’s a good school to go to, I’d love to go to that school because I heard he’s a good role model”. Beyond simply modeling the vision they had for their school, principals were also

viewed as effective when they were ready and willing to provide their staff with all necessary support. Ned Law placed more value on the advocacy side of supportive behaviours: “I always want somebody that’s got my back, and I have to feel that it’s there.” Michael furthered this notion by discussing a principal’s role in parent-teacher interactions: “The best principals were the ones who supported the teachers [even] if the parents heard different stories from their kids and blamed the teacher. Sometimes there are teachers who aren’t the greatest at their job ... but 90% of the time the teacher is right in my opinion and the student is just not willing to do anything.” A principal’s ability to establish and nurture positive relationships with all school community members was paramount to their perceived effectiveness as a leader. A principal who could develop a sense of camaraderie with their staff by being visible, approachable, and through meaningful personal and professional interactions was seen as a key contributor to the positive culture of a school. Michael stated: “I think the number one way that a principal or vice-principal can lead is by ... going to the staff functions, going out and watching the extra curriculars, showing an interest in things other than administrivia.” Participants were quick to point out that the most effective principals did not exclusively build strong relationships with teachers, but also took the time to nurture connections with the students and school community. Adam mentioned a principal who “took an interest” by coming to observe classes “and seeing how kids reacted with the teacher. He came in because he enjoyed it and he wanted to see how the kids enjoyed it”.

Although behaviours and strategies were often mentioned by participants when discussing the qualities of an effective leader, a principal’s personal attributes received most of the attention. General likeability, honesty, integrity, and an ability to be empathetic, personable, genuine, and assertive were among the traits that garnered the most attention. Carly spoke highly of her experiences with effective principals: “they just made you feel so welcomed, and they cared about

you, if you were having a rough time with something, they took you in and talked to you about it". The principals who demonstrated high emotional intelligence were able to connect with their staff and understand the turmoil and stresses associated with the day-to-day life of teaching. All participants agreed that having a supportive principal, not just emotionally, but in their actions (especially when it came to dealing with parents), was among the most important traits a principal could have. These feelings of support immediately translated into more confidence and creativity in terms of lessons and an overall improvement in the student experience. Having a leader who showed an understanding and appreciation for how difficult the teaching profession could be helped to alleviate some of the stress, especially when the leader was asking their staff to take on new or additional responsibilities: "Always acknowledging that I understand how hard you work, I understand there are challenges, let's just focus on this for now, and that's manageable. Ok, this administrator understands the effort we're putting in, and we're going to tackle one thing at a time" (Emma).

Having a positive school culture did not mean that things would run perfectly, but participants were quick to note that this situation was where a principal could have the greatest impact. As participating veteran teachers noted, when staff knew they could rely on the leader to meet any challenges that arose and have them addressed properly and efficiently, they could then focus their attention on delivering their programs and curriculum in a way that was best for their students, and the students reaped the benefits. When a school culture changed for the better, when teachers felt comfortable and supported at work, and when there was a general sense of unity and school spirit, then, as participants noted, many of the staff members would respond by giving more of themselves to the school community. When participants perceived that their opinions and ideas were truly being considered by the principal, or that they occasionally impacted the functioning of



the school, they reported feeling more satisfied and useful in their workplace. A positive shift in school culture caused more engagement in all school activities and nurtured a sense of belonging and pride in the students. In certain cases, participants noted how a principal could go beyond a secondary role in shaping the culture of a school and be the champion of positive change. Kayden described one principal: “[they were] sincerely interested in those kids having different experiences that would motivate them to be successful. The kids ... start[ed] to walk around with their jerseys in the school”. This lowered the incidents of rule-breaking and behavioural issues became less common because students felt as though they were part of something greater than themselves and were willing to work to maintain that community.

### **Ineffective Leadership’s Impact on School Culture**

Conversely, a number of leadership qualities were regarded by veteran teachers as detrimental or negative to the overall school culture. These included, ladder climbing, control-based and negative approaches to leadership, poor leadership strategies, negative behaviours and personal attributes, and broken relationships.

The reasons behind why ineffective principals decided to pursue their position, and what they chose to do while in this position of power usually revolved around self-promotion and career advancement, rather than improving their schools and serving others. Oliver summed it up succinctly: “They’re the ladder climbers and we’re one of the bottom rungs ..., so we got stepped on the hardest”. When the principal’s goal was personal career advancement, participants felt as though their leader did not care what happened within their school, as long as their image was being promoted. Their involvement in anything school-related became a “public spectacle” centered around the appearance of success and productivity. Programs and changes were initiated because they were fashionable or looked impressive on a resume, but there was no effort to follow

through on the task and affect lasting change. As such, all the principal's actions were perceived as being inauthentic and empty, which led to similarly hollow school culture. Worse, as Ned Law recalled, these aspirations "would occasionally lead to principals taking advantage of their staff for their own benefit."

Ineffective leaders were frequently associated with negative and individualistic mindsets. Many participants reflected unfavorably upon principals whose approach to leadership centered on control and micromanagement. This approach ultimately failed because "the breadth of the role and the responsibilities involved are too great to allow that to actually be effective. That works if you have one or two people under you. If you're responsible for hundreds, you cannot micromanage" (Emma). Effective principals were deemed to be focused more on establishing the overall goals and direction of the school, while trusting their teachers to actualize those expectations. Micromanagement of school staff by principals often had the opposite effect than desired as the school became disorganized and lacked proper direction and cohesion in the execution of long-range plans.

Specific strategies employed by principals could also impact school culture in a negative way. Unclear policies/expectations, skewed recognition of staff, lack of visibility, and altered priorities were among the factors that contributed to this inefficiency. A lack of clarity when communicating expectations and poor follow-through on implemented policies was very frustrating for staff keen to effect change in the school. As Michael aptly stated: "what's the sense in having the policy if you're not going by it?" Emma discussed one such principal who implemented a tradition which initially seemed positive, but had a more self-serving ulterior motive: "in the last administrator's regime there were the recognized individuals [each week], but what people began to see very quickly in those announcements, was [only] whoever was involved

in one of their projects would be recognized”. Absence from the school and inaccessibility of the principal was noted by Gabriel: “if the principal is seldom in the school or does not take the time to get to know the staff as individuals, then the culture is not as positive”.

Participants identified multiple behaviours that they believe leaders should avoid if they are trying to effect positive change in their schools. Amongst the worst of these behaviours were leading through fear, being two-faced or inappropriate, and being unsupportive of their staff. Kayden recalled a former principal who would regularly publicly reprimand staff to reinforce himself as the leader and authority. This behaviour started a cycle where the fear of reprisal meant that no one was willing to voice complaints against the principal’s actions, contributing to a toxic culture of fear. Adam mused: “I think it becomes drudgery to come into work when you’re not feeling support or being helped”. This decline in teacher job satisfaction and motivation in turn impacted the school culture as general morale amongst staff and students became low.

Although participants focused much more on the personal attributes that they found favourable in school leaders, lack of integrity and selfishness were regularly mentioned as being undesirable and harmful to the school culture. Interestingly, though infrequently discussed, participants felt very strongly that it was rather egregious if a principal demonstrated these negative attributes. “And it only takes that to happen once not necessarily to you personally, but to someone on staff, and all of a sudden the trust is gone” (Gabriel). Word of deceit or injustice by the principal spread quickly through the school, and a single act could cause a shift in the perception of that leader and their ability to effect positive change. This view was mirrored with respect to selfishness. Principals who were perceived to put themselves first above others were quickly cast in a negative light and lost the support and trust of their staff.

As a principal's ability to forge strong relationships contributed to their perceived effectiveness, it follows that broken or damaged relationships would result in a leader being identified as inept. Participants thought that this inability to connect with their colleagues was caused by a variety of factors, from a lack of empathy and support, to power imbalances or even a lack of in-person interactions. Participants mentioned many cases in which past ineffective school leaders would mishandle discipline issues, either by avoiding personal involvement at all costs, or by siding with the parent or student despite knowing the teacher is in the right. "You can't have dictators in the principal and the VP role" (Michael). A leader who emphasized the imbalance of power and wielded their authority to force school staff to accomplish their self-serving goals prevented any possibility of forging positive, reciprocal relationships.

Leader ineffectiveness often produced an environment in which positive and reciprocal relationships between principals and staff were rare, if not impossible to foster, and any overt influence the principal tried to exude on their schools' culture was immediately met with challenges and resistance. When the culture of the school took a negative toll on the motivation and mindset of the staff, teachers were far less inclined to dedicate the time, effort, and potential risk necessary to enact such strategies. Consequently, the repercussions of adverse shifts in culture were also borne by the students. The effects of a negative culture shift were usually felt in activities beyond the classroom before they filtered into the classroom itself. Participants noted that extracurriculars were often the first activities to suffer, as they are not contractually mandated activities and require voluntary teacher involvement. Accordingly, school spirit began to erode, and even the few extracurriculars which were still being offered began to experience a decline in participation. Though often a multi-factorial issue, the principal played a noticeable role in the lack of school spirit in some instances. The absence of interest and diminished support from the

principal negatively impacted school culture, which subsequently decreased the motivation of the student body and led to less interest and pride in school activities from students.

### **External Factors Mitigating the Influence of School Leadership on School Culture**

In addition to factors that demonstrated principals' direct role in shaping school culture, veteran teachers also mentioned factors that fell outside of the principal's realm of influence. These contextual and external influences, in the participants' opinions, also played a vital role in shaping the culture of their schools and limited, or modified, the influence a principal could exert.

Various contextual factors, in the eyes of veteran teachers, played a major role in the creation and shaping of that school's culture. Emma believed that every school actually has its own culture: "whether the factors that are the primary influence could be the history of the school, the location of the school, and because of the location its certain demographics, students and teachers of various cultural backgrounds, there are many, many factors that influence the culture of the school itself outside of the administration". Participants also listed variables such as staff cohesion and characteristics of the students or school community, which differed from school to school, but that a principal could not change or control. Depending on the school and how these factors combined, these factors often made up the foundation of the school's culture and rendered any attempts at modification futile. Throughout the interview process, it became clear that all participants viewed teachers as the gatekeepers to school culture: "well, if you're trying to change the school culture, you're going to have to focus on the teachers; they're up front" (Kayden). Having supportive colleagues was key to many participants to preserving the school culture. Furthermore, one teacher postulated that "a leader influences the staff; they also influence the students that way" (Oliver). The principal's influence may have been mediated by the teachers, but that influence will still trickle down to the students and will impact school culture from the top

down. The demographics, meaning the ethnicity, diversity, socioeconomic status, family structure and size of the student population and the school community, was one of the most influential factors in shaping school culture. As phrased by one participant: “everything that happens in the greater community happens in the school” (Oliver).

External factors which played a significant role in shaping school culture related to forces of a regulatory or political nature, unions, school boards, and the ministry of education, which all adjusted the role of a principal within the school culture. Over time each of these agents caused shifts in culture, while often curbing principals’ authority and resulting in principals having even less of an influence on their school culture. As Oliver outlined: “The old principals—the first four principals—they taught in an era where the Education Act empowered the principal and expected the principal to make sure that everything in his school ran the way it was supposed to be ... Back then, they were truly public servants, trusted by the public to serve them properly”. Veteran teachers recalled a time when principals were entrusted with free rein on almost all decisions related to their school and how they were slowly stripped of their decision-making abilities with regards to curriculum, staffing, and even direction. Furthermore, the leader’s role was further complexified by ministry and school board policies, which pulled the principals out of the schools to attend meetings and promote professional development, and the strained relationship with unions. In sum, the combination of contextual and external factors was perceived to acutely diminish a principal’s autonomy and capacity to enact meaningful change in a school's culture while dramatically altering the school culture and functioning in its own right.

## **Discussion**

In this section we discuss the findings about leadership effectiveness, which aligned with authentic and transformational leadership models; leadership ineffectiveness, consistent with models of irresponsible leadership; and leadership influence on school culture.

### **Leadership Effectiveness**

Effective school leadership in this study referred to leadership practices, behaviours, policies, approaches, and strategies that positively impacted school culture and were viewed as beneficial and constructive to the school community (Kythreotis et al., 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Lindahl, 2011; Quin et al., 2015). In general, effective leadership involved the principal showing a genuine interest in their school community—from simple gestures such as being physically present and visible during the school day to more substantial actions such as willingly sacrificing opportunities for personal gain or improved promotion odds for the sake of the school. These principals were perceived as effective by being role models who led by example, modeling their expectations of the students and staff through their actions as well as their words, and by providing ample support to all who were willing to follow their lead (Karadag & Oztekin, 2018; Stolp, 1994; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Participating veteran teachers perceived principals to be effective when they exhibited features of authentic and transformational leadership styles.

Authentic leadership occurs when the understanding of personal values in relation to the value orientations of others provides leaders, professionals, and communities to whom they are accountable with information on how they might best influence the practices of others towards the achievement of broadly justifiable social objectives (Begley, 2006). George (2003) found that authentic leaders have a genuine desire to serve others, they know themselves, and they feel free to lead from their core values. In this sense, principals in this study were viewed as authentic due

to their demonstrated passion that stemmed from clear purpose, behaviours that stemmed from values to serve and support, and connectedness that stemmed from a relationship-building orientation (George, 2003). The findings of this study were also consistent with the literature regarding the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and developmental perspectives on authentic leadership (Northouse, 2022). In accordance with the intrapersonal perspective, study participants believed that effective principals possessed innate qualities that marked them out as leaders, pursued leadership positions to make a difference rather than for personal gain, and possessed the ability to accurately and reliably self-evaluate and acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses in order to adjust to better serve their followers (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012; Gardner et al., 2011; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Waite et al., 2014). The main facets of the interpersonal perspective that were supported by the findings include strong relationship-building skills and reciprocity within the connections principals made, as well as a resonance between the principals' values and their followers' beliefs (Eagly, 2005; Liu et al., 2015). The developmental perspective of authentic leadership noted by the veteran teachers included: transparency in principals' practices; fostering self-awareness and motivation in their followers; avoiding favoritism while being open to opposing viewpoints; and being guided by strong, internalized moral standards (Gardner et al., 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013).

The descriptions of effective school leaders within the findings resonated with the effective and active characteristics of transformational leadership models (Bass & Riggio, 2006). First, principals' positive impact on school culture is related to *idealized influence*. This was demonstrated by veteran teachers' perceptions of leaders' attributes and behaviours, such as being visible, approachable, appreciative, supportive, and understanding. It is also related to the leaders' charisma or the innate qualities an effective principal possessed, such as honesty and integrity.



*Inspirational motivation* was highlighted by the principals' efforts to share the vision, to model the way, to inspire and encourage teachers to become committed to the vision and to achieve common goals. It involved motivating followers to reach beyond their status quo and to push themselves to greater heights. *Intellectual stimulation* was demonstrated by leadership's support for teachers to deal with challenges and to facilitate their jobs rather than to micromanage or direct them. It involved the principal encouraging and supporting followers to find creative solutions to current problems, while having a willingness to adapt and be open to new ideas. Finally, *individualized consideration* was evident through creating positive environments where individual needs of teachers were considered. It also involved a principal tailoring their interactions to each staff member to best suit their needs, forging stronger and deeper relationships.

The above four factors were also strongly related to *developing people*, one of Leithwood and Jantzi's (2006) dimensions of the practice of transformational leadership in education. Overall, this dimension was amplified by the finding that an ability to establish, grow, and nurture positive relationships with all members of their school community was paramount to the principals' perceived leader effectiveness. Furthermore, data analysis showed connection to two other dimensions of this model, namely, *redesigning the organization* and *setting directions*. The development of a collaborative school culture tied directly to Leithwood and Jantzi's (2006) idea of *redesigning the organization*. Transformational leadership relies on the empowerment of followers. Participants repeatedly described an open and collaborative culture as the means through which they felt empowered and became more willing to commit more of their time and energy to ensure the students' needs were being met. Finally, *setting direction* (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006), related to principals' creating a shared vision for the school through collaboration with all stakeholders, as well as communicating high expectations to all and inspiring their

followers to meet those expectations in their practices. Veteran teachers regularly mentioned that seeking input and feedback and involving teachers at a personal and individual level in the creation of future plans for the school enabled staff to feel as though their opinions were valued and respected.

### **Leadership Ineffectiveness**

Principals were perceived to be ineffective school leaders when their practices and qualities ran counter to the traits typically associated with authentic and transformational leaders. In fact, their practices share much in common with models of irresponsible leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Martins & Lazzarin, 2019; Oplatka, 2016; Pearce et al., 2014). In general, this led to a hollow school culture due to the principal's disingenuous nature. Any attempts to positively shift the culture or implement new policies/practices were met with resistance and disdain by staff. The practices participants perceived to be ineffective on the part of school leadership closely mirror Oplatka's (2016) five features of irresponsible leadership.

The first feature of irresponsible leadership is a narrow view of education. According to Oplatka (2016), irresponsible leaders view student achievement as the main outcome of the schooling process and thereby focus most of their attention and efforts on outcomes as a means to increase the image of the school in the public eye, usually neglecting important issues or taking advantage of others. A principal who saw their position as transitory on the path towards higher rank within the educational field was often neglectful of much of the minutia of the day-to-day functioning of their school in favour of grandiose acts and public spectacles which they could use to improve their resume and reputation. Related is the second feature of irresponsible leadership—a business-like view of the student—whereby leaders care less about the greater good and more

about attracting ‘successful’ students to their school, again to raise their public standing (Oplatka, 2016).

According to Oplatka (2016), the third feature irresponsible leaders possess is a narcissistic and ego-centrist view. They are intolerant of criticism, unwilling to compromise, and motivated by their selfish needs (Maccoby, 2012). These traits were all supported in participants’ perspectives of ineffective school principals. Data showed instances where principals engaged in public reprimand of staff to reinforce their authority and put themselves first above others, which contributed to a toxic culture. The fourth feature of irresponsible leadership is self-centered decision-making (Oplatka, 2016). Participants’ responses echoed the literature as they consistently divulged that ineffective principals engaged in favoritism and promotion of initiatives above all else as a means of augmenting their own status to their superiors. Lastly, Oplatka (2016) stated that irresponsible leaders lack emotional awareness and tend to have poor emotional regulation. A principal who possessed poor emotional control would also be more likely to lead in a controlling, power-imbalanced, and fear-based manner, which inhibited the formation of positive relationships between themselves and their school community, and furthered the trend towards a negative school culture.

### **Leadership Influence on School Culture**

Regardless of how effective, authentic, or transformational a school principal was, the study participants believed that their influence on culture was constrained by the context and external factors which surrounded them (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Furthermore, there was a discordance between the findings of this study and the literature with respect to the degree to which the principal could exert their influence on the school culture. The literature postulates that leaders who exhibit authentic and/or transformational practices will be capable of exerting a strong and

lasting influence on their school's culture while also positively impacting student achievement and outcomes (Karada & Oztekin, 2018; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Liu et al., 2015). Participants, however, were quick to point out that although a principal's practices could modestly shift school culture in a certain direction, oftentimes this influence was significantly mitigated, or occasionally negated entirely by external factors such as government policies and societal influences.

Contextual factors include the unique culture and demographical composition of each school, as well as the social forces that impact the school community from within. Many participants noted that each school has its own unique culture, shaped largely by its history and traditions, as well as the demographics of both the staff, students, and the whole school community (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2017; Tłuściak-Deliowska et al., 2017). Depending on how these contextual factors have come together and how ingrained they are in the school's culture, a principal's power to influence or enact change could be rendered negligible (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Rintoul & Bishop, 2019). As such, a principal must work within the confines of the environment they have been placed in and adapt their practices to fit the needs of that specific school if they are to be accepted and enabled to achieve positive change (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2017). In fact, Avolio and Gardner (2005) argued that a positive organizational context is important for developing effective, authentic leaders. Such contexts support followers for being actively involved in performing their job roles and responsibilities, as well as in contributing to the leader's own development. This is especially important in bringing teachers, who are viewed as gatekeepers of the culture, on board through a supportive and relational approach.

Beyond contextual elements, the influence of political and regulatory forces can also severely hamper a principal's authority and ability to effect change (Goodwin et al., 2003; Rintoul & Bishop, 2019). In Ontario, the influence of teachers' unions, the government, school boards and

parent groups on decisions regarding policies and practices of school leadership have effectively relegated principals to the role of a middle manager rather than a leader (Rintoul & Bishop, 2019; Williams, 2003). Principals have been burdened with countless administrative roles and responsibilities but are bereft of autonomy in terms of actual leadership decisions such as staffing choices and goal setting for the future direction of their schools (Beusaert et al., 2016; DuFour & Mattos, 2013; Rintoul & Bishop, 2019). This combination of external factors has also significantly weakened the influence a principal can exert on the culture of their school, while in and of itself dramatically altering the school culture and functioning in its own right (Fullan, 2018; Rintoul & Bishop, 2019; Williams, 2003).

### **Conclusion and Implications**

Veteran teachers' perceptions demonstrated the positive and negative influence that effective or ineffective leadership can have on school culture. Although this study's findings were limited to only the veteran teachers' perspectives, it was evident that features of authentic and transformational leadership were perceived as being effective and empowering in principals' practices and capable of promoting positive impacts on culture. Effective leadership's impact on culture occurred when principals that veteran teachers worked under were authentic in their practices and led by example when they were selflessly devoted to the well-being and success of their entire school community and would demonstrate this through the shaping of a supportive and collaborative school culture. The most effective leaders, in teachers' views, avoided paternalistic, top-down approaches to leadership, choosing instead to work alongside their staff in matters of problem-solving and decision-making. Additionally, these principals displayed strong and positive personal attributes such as honesty and approachability, which enabled them to establish and nurture a sense of comradery within their schools. This positive relationship-building, coupled

with the respect and empowerment that staff gained through their principals' practices, permeated through the entire school culture, and resulted in a better educational experience for all involved.

Conversely, negative leadership's impact on culture was observed by veteran teachers when principals' practices were seen as self-serving and inauthentic. Their principals' focus on self-promotion led to them neglecting elements of their school community which they deemed unimportant, and eventually resulted in hollow and negative school culture. When implementing new policies or practices, ineffective principals' expectations were poorly communicated and unclear, giving rise to confusion and disarray. These principals' tendencies towards control-based and individualistic leadership would often result in unsupportive, micromanaging, and rigid practices. All these factors combined to produce an environment in which positive and reciprocal relationships between principals and staff were rare, if not impossible, to foster, and any overt influence the principal tried to exude on their schools' culture was immediately met with challenges and resistance.

Within the limitations in scope and reach, the findings of this study differed from the literature in the level of influence school leaders were perceived to exert in shaping their school's culture and affecting student achievement. Data analysis suggests that this influence, at least locally, is significantly less potent than the literature argues, as a principal's impact was perceived to be significantly mitigated, or occasionally even negated, by external factors such as government policies and societal influences. Practically speaking, positive leadership practices were perceived to be more influential than negative practices, teachers viewed themselves as the gatekeepers of school culture, and reduced autonomy rendered a principal's potential influence on school culture nearly negligible. Ultimately, it was perceived to be the teachers, and in a broader sense, the greater school community, who were the true nexus of impact within the school culture. This is not

surprising given that teachers were the main source of data in this study; however, further studies would do well to solicit the principals' perspectives in this regard.

Several research and practice implications stem from this study. By understanding how veteran teachers perceive the leadership practices observed in past principals, future principals can be more effectively recruited and trained to lead, be authentic in their practices, and enact positive and lasting change through the empowerment of, and collaboration with all members of their school community. More research should be undertaken to explore how principals can best exert a positive influence on their schools while working within the confines of the mitigating factors of their environments. The strength and influence of those mitigating factors, including but not limited to the social and political forces at play within a school and education system, and the deterioration of principal autonomy stemming from ministry and union policies, should merit special attention. The quality and efficacy of principal training and certification programs, as well as professional development opportunities for school leaders, should also be explored and evaluated in greater detail. Further research should also be undertaken into determining if some leadership traits and behaviours are more responsive to training and if some are innate personality dimensions that cannot be changed and should therefore be screened against.

## References

- Ajjawi, R., & Higgs, J. (2007). Using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate how experienced practitioners learn to communicate clinical reasoning. *Qualitative Report*, 12(4), 612-638.
- Algera, P. M., & Lips-Wiersma, M. (2012). Radical authentic leadership: Co-creating the conditions under which all members of the organization can be authentic. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 23(1), 118-131.
- Atasoy, R. (2020). The relationship between school principals' leadership styles, school culture

- and organizational change *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 16(5), 256-274.
- Avolio, B. J., & Gardner, W. L. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(3), 315-338.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.001>
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Beusaert, S., Froehlich, D. E., Devos, C., & Riley, P. (2016). Effects of support on stress and burnout in school principals. *Educational Research*, 58(4), 347-365.
- Begley, P. T. (2006). Self-knowledge, capacity and sensitivity: Prerequisites to authentic leadership by school principals. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44(6), 570-589.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230610704792>
- Beijaard, D., Verloop, N., & Vermunt, J. (1999). Teachers' perceptions of professional identity: An exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, 749-764.
- Bird, J. J., Wang, C., Watson, J., & Murray, L. (2012). Teacher and principal perceptions of authentic leadership: Implications for trust, engagement, and intention to return. *Journal of School Leadership*, 22(3), 425-461.
- Carrillo, C., & Flores, M. A. (2018). Veteran teachers' identity: What does the research literature tell us? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 48(5), 639-656.
- Caspersen, J., & Raaen, F. D. (2014). Novice teachers and how they cope. *Teachers and Teaching*, 20(2), 189-211. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2013.848570>
- Cherkowski, S., Kutsyuruba, B., & Walker, K. D. (2020). Positive leadership: Animating purpose, presence, passion, and play for flourishing in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 58(4), 401-415. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-04-2019-0076>.
- Cherubini, L. (2009). Reconciling the tensions of new teachers' socialisation into school culture: A review of the research. *Issues in Educational Research*, 19(2), 83-99.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches*



- (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Sage.
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2009). Veteran teachers: Commitment, resilience and quality retention. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 15(4), 441-457.
- Day, C., Stobart, G., Sammons, P., Kington, A., Gu, Q., Smees, R., & Mujtaba, T. (2006). *Variations in teachers' work, lives and effectiveness (VITAE)*. Department for Education and Skills.
- Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of organizational life*. Addison-Wesley.
- Deal, T. E., & Peterson, K. D. (2016). *Shaping school culture*. Jossey-Bass.
- DuFour, R., & Mattos, M. (2013). Improve schools. *Educational leadership*, 70(7), 34-39.
- Dumay, X., & Galand, B. (2012). The multilevel impact of transformational leadership on teacher commitment: Cognitive and motivational pathways. *British Educational Research Journal*, 38(5), 703-729.
- Eagly, A. H. (2005). Achieving relational authenticity in leadership: Does gender matter? *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(3), 459-474.
- Eilam, B. (2009). The secrets of successful veteran biology teachers: Metaphors of evolution, regeneration, and adaptation. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 15, 493–513. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600903057260>
- Feng, F.-I. (2016). School principals' authentic leadership and teachers' psychological capital: Teachers' perspectives. *International Education Studies*, 9(10), 245-255.
- Fink, E., & Resnick, L. B. (2001). Developing principals as instructional leaders. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(8), 598-610.
- Fullan, M. (2018). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact*. Jossey-Bass.
- Fultz, D., & Gimbert, B. (2009). Effective principal leadership for beginning teachers' development. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 4(2), 1-16.
- Gardner, W. L., Coglisier, C. C., Davis, K. M., & Dickens, M. P. (2011). Authentic leadership: A review of the literature and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(6), 1120-

1145.

George, B. (2003). *Authentic leadership: Rediscovering the secrets to creating lasting value*. Jossey-Bass.

Gimbel, P. A., Lopes, L., & Greer, E. N. (2011). Perceptions of the role of the school principal in teacher professional growth. *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 7(4), 19-31.

Glover, D., & Coleman, M. (2005). School culture, climate and ethos: Interchangeable or distinctive concepts? *Journal of In-service Education*, 31(2), 251–271.

Goodson, I., Moore, S., & Hargreaves, A. (2006). Teacher nostalgia and the sustainability of reform: The generation and degeneration of teachers' missions, memory, and meaning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42, 42–61.10.1177/0013161X05278180

Goodwin, R. H., Cunningham, M. L., & Childress, R. (2003). The changing role of the secondary principal. *NASSP Bulletin*, 87(634), 26-42.

Griffiths, R. (2004). Knowledge production and the research–teaching nexus: The case of the built environment disciplines. *Studies in Higher education*, 29(6), 709-726.

Gruenert, S., & Whitaker, T. (2017). *School culture recharged: Strategies to energize your staff and culture*. ASCD.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2011). *Applied thematic analysis*. Sage.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1996). Reassessing the principal's role in school effectiveness: A review of empirical research, 1980-1995. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 32(1), 5-44.

Hargreaves, A. (2005). Educational change takes ages: Life, career and generational factors in teachers' emotional responses to educational change. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(8), 967-983. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.06.007>

Hauserman, C. P., & Stick, S. L. (2013). The Leadership Teachers Want from Principals: Transformational. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(3), 184-203. <https://doi.org/10.2307/canajeducrevucan.36.3.18>

Heck, R., & Hallinger, P. (1999). Conceptual models, methodology, and methods for studying school leadership. *The 2nd handbook of research in educational administration*.

McCutchan.

Holland, P. E. (2009). The principal's role in teacher development. *SRATE Journal*, 18(1), 16-24.

Huberman, M. (1993). *The lives of teachers*. Teachers College Press.

Hughes, G. D. (2012). Teacher retention: Teacher characteristics, school characteristics, organizational characteristics, and teacher efficacy. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 105(4), 245-255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2011.584922>

Karadag, E., & Öztekin, O. (2018). The effect of authentic leadership on school culture: A structural equation model. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 6(1), 40-75.

Kythreotis, A., Pashiardis, P., & Kyriakides, L. (2010). The influence of school leadership styles and culture on students' achievement in Cyprus primary schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*. 48, 218-240.

Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3), 21-35.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1990). Transformational leadership: How principals can help reform school cultures. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 1(4), 249-280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345900010402>

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999). Transformational school leadership effects: A replication. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 10(4), 451-479.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2000). The effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 112-129.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2006). Transformational school leadership for large-scale reform: Effects on students, teachers, and their classroom practices. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 17(2), 201-227.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning. A review of research for the Learning from Leadership Project*. The

Wallace Foundation.

- Li, L., Hallinger, P., & Ko, J. (2016). Principal leadership and school capacity effects on teacher learning in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(1), 76-100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-03-2014-0035>
- Lieberman, A., & Pointer Mace, D. H. (2009). The role of 'accomplished teachers' in professional learning communities: Uncovering practice and enabling leadership. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 15, 459-470. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600903057237>
- Lindahl, R. A. (2011). The state of education in Alabama's K-12 rural public schools. *The Rural Educator*, 32(2), 1-12.
- Liu, S.-m., Liao, J.-q., & Wei, H. (2015). Authentic leadership and whistleblowing: Mediating roles of psychological safety and personal identification. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 131(1), 107-119.
- Łukasik, J. M., & Pikuła, N. G. (2015). The selected aspects of school culture in teachers' perception. *Pedagogy*, 1, 78-92.
- Lumpkin, A. (2008). Teachers as role models teaching character and moral virtues. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 79(2), 45-50.
- Lynch, A. D., Lerner, R. M., & Leventhal, T. (2013). Adolescent academic achievement and school engagement: An examination of the role of school-wide peer culture. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42(1), 6-19.
- Maccoby, M. (2012). *Narcissistic leaders: Who succeeds and who fails*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Martins, L.-P., & Lazzarin, M. D. L. (2019). *Unmasking irresponsible leadership: Curriculum development in 21st-century management education*. Routledge.
- Meister, D. G., & Ahrens, P. (2011). Resisting plateauing: Four veteran teachers' stories. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(4), 770-778.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.
- Nettles, S. M., & Herrington, C. (2007). Revisiting the importance of the direct effects of school

- leadership on student achievement: The implications for school improvement policy. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 82(4), 724-736.
- Ngang, T. K. (2011). The effect of transformational leadership on school culture in Male' primary schools Maldives. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 2575-2580.
- Nichols, J. D., & Zhang, G. (2011). Classroom environments and student empowerment: An analysis of elementary and secondary teacher beliefs. *Learning Environments Research*, 14(3), 229-239.
- Northouse, P. G. (2022). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Sage.
- Oplatka, I. (2016). "Irresponsible leadership" and unethical practices in schools: A conceptual framework of the "dark side" of educational leadership. In J. Brooks & A. Normore (Eds.), *The dark side of leadership: Identifying and overcoming unethical practice in organizations*. (pp. 1–18). Emerald Group Publishing.
- Orlando, J. (2014). Veteran teachers and technology: Change fatigue and knowledge insecurity influence practice. *Teachers and Teaching*, 20(4), 427-439.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2014.881644>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(3), 261-283.
- Pearce, C. L., Wassenaar, C. L., & Manz, C. C. (2014). Is shared leadership the key to responsible leadership? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 28(3), 275-288.
- Picard, K., & Kutsyuruba, B. (2017). Teachers' engagement in professional development: A collective case study. *Educational Policies and Current Practices*, 2(2), 89-100.
- Quin, J., Deris, A., Bischoff, G., & Johnson, J. T. (2015). Comparison of transformational leadership practices: Implications for school districts and principal preparation programs. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 14(3), 71-85.
- Quinn, R. E. (2015). *The positive organization: Breaking free from conventional cultures, constraints and beliefs*. Berrett-Koehler.
- Rich, Y., & Almozlino, M. (1999). Educational goal preferences among novice and veteran teachers of sciences and humanities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15(6), 613-629.

- Rintoul, H., & Bishop, P. (2019). Principals and vice-principals: Exploring the history of leading and managing public schools in Ontario, Canada. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 51(1), 15-26.
- Rumschlag, K. E. (2017). Teacher burnout: A quantitative analysis of emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. *International Management Review*, 13(1), 22-36.
- Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. Jossey-Bass.
- Schein, E. H., & Schein, P. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership*. Jossey-Bass.
- Shein, P. P., & Chiou, W. B. (2011). Teachers as role models for students' learning styles. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 39(8), 1097-1104.
- Sebastian, J., Allensworth, E., Wiedermann, W., Hochbein, C., & Cunningham, M. (2019). Principal leadership and school performance: An examination of instructional leadership and organizational management. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 18(4), 591-613. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2018.1513151>
- Shamir, B., & Eilam, G. (2005). "What's your story?" A life-stories approach to authentic leadership development. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(3), 395-417.
- Stewart, J. (2006). Transformational leadership: An evolving concept examined through the works of Burns, Bass, Avolio, and Leithwood. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 54, 1-29.
- Stolp, S. (1994). *Leadership for school culture*. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 91).
- Stolp, S., & Smith, S. C. (1995). *Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values & the leader's role*. ERIC.
- Sun, J., & Leithwood, K. (2012). Transformational school leadership effects on student achievement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 11(4), 418-451.
- Thorburn, M. (2011). "Still game": An analysis of the life history and career disappointments of one veteran male teacher of physical education in Scotland. *Educational Review*, 63(3), 329-343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2011.571762>

- Thůściak-Deliowska, A., Dernowska, U., & Gruenert, S. (2017). How school achievements interplay with school culture and principal behaviors: A comparative study. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 6(1), 10–22.
- Van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1228-1261.
- Van Houtte, M. (2006). Tracking and teacher satisfaction: Role of study culture and trust. *Journal of Educational Research*, 99, 247–254.  
<https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.99.4.247-25>
- Van Manen, M. (1990). Beyond assumptions: Shifting the limits of action research. *Theory into Practice*, 29(3), 152-157.
- Veldman, I., Van Tartwijk, J., Brekelmans, M., & Wubbels, T. (2013). Job satisfaction and teacher–student relationships across the teaching career: Four case studies. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 32, 55-65.
- Waite, R., McKinney, N., Smith-Glasgow, M. E., & Meloy, F. A. (2014). The embodiment of authentic leadership. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 30(4), 282-291.
- Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Wernsing, T. S., & Peterson, S. J. (2008). Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of Management*, 34(1), 89-126.
- Walumbwa, F. O., & Wernsing, T. (2013). From transactional and transformational leadership to authentic leadership. *The Oxford handbook of leadership* (pp. 392-400). Oxford University Press.
- Williams, T. R. (2003). Ontario's principal scarcity: Yesterday's abdicated policy responsibility—today's unrecognized challenge. *Australian Journal of Education*, 47(2), 159-171.
- Wren, D. J. (1999). School culture: Exploring the hidden curriculum. *Adolescence*, 34(135), 593-593.
- Yang, Y. (2014). Principals' transformational leadership in school improvement. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 28(3), 279-288.

Youssef-Morgan, C. M., & Luthans, F. (2013). Positive leadership. *Organizational Dynamics*, 42(3), 198-208.

**Maciej Gebczynski** holds a MED from Queen's University. He has a BSc degree with an Honours Specialization in Biology and Biochemistry and a BED degree from Althouse College at Western University and recipient of the Faculty of Education Students' Council Award for Practice Teaching Excellence. He is currently teaching biology and French immersion at the secondary school level in the London District Catholic School Board. [mgebczynski@ldcsb.ca](mailto:mgebczynski@ldcsb.ca)

**Benjamin Kutsyuruba** is Professor in Educational Leadership, Policy, and School Law in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. For 10 years, he served as an Associate Director of Social Program Evaluation Group (SPEG) at Queen's University. His current research projects focus on positive leadership, flourishing in schools, educator wellbeing, and teacher induction and mentoring in international settings. [ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca](mailto:ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca)